

Isaiah 23:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

Analysis

In that day shall Tyre be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king—The shiv'im shanah (seventy years) parallels Judah's exile (Jeremiah 25:11). The phrase 'according to the days of one king' (kimey melek echad) is enigmatic: either the typical reign of a long-lived monarch, or metaphorically 'one kingdom's era.' Seventy years suggests a lifetime—a generation that never knew Tyre's glory. **After the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot**—The verb shiyr (sing) takes a dark turn with the simile: as a zonah (prostitute/harlot) sings to attract clients.

Verses 16-17 elaborate the prostitute metaphor: Tyre, forgotten and aging, must return to her 'trade' (a wordplay: etan means both 'wages' and 'prostitute's hire'). This isn't prophecy of moral improvement but of pragmatic resumption of commerce after judgment's pause. The underlying critique: Phoenician trade was always spiritual prostitution—selling herself to any buyer, forming alliances based on profit not principle, worshiping wealth above God. After seventy years, she returns to the same sin. The partial restoration demonstrates that divine judgment, even when lifted, doesn't automatically produce repentance. Only the gospel transforms hearts.

Historical Context

Historically, Tyre did partially recover after Babylonian destruction and Persian-period subjugation. By Alexander's time (332 BC) she had regained enough prosperity to resist his siege. However, she never fully recovered her ancient dominance. The prophecy's main fulfillment may be typological: cycles of judgment, partial restoration, and final judgment pattern human history until Christ's return.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that even after judgment, Tyre returns to the same sins rather than repenting?
2. How does the prostitute metaphor reveal the spiritual nature of commerce conducted without regard for God's justice?
3. Why does temporary relief from judgment often fail to produce lasting change in individuals or nations?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה H1961	כִּימָּה י' H3117	הָהּ וְאֵל H1931	וְנִשְׁכַּח חַת H7911	לְצָר H6865
And it shall come to pass in that day	And it shall come to pass in that day	shall be forgotten	shall Tyre	
שְׁבַע יָמִים H7657	שָׁנָה H8141	כִּימָּה י' H3117	מֶלֶךְ H4428	אֶחָד H259
of seventy years	years	And it shall come to pass in that day	king	of one
מֵקֵץ H7093	שְׁבַע יָמִים H7657	שָׁנָה H8141	וְהָיָה H1961	לְצָר H6865
after the end	of seventy years	years	shall Tyre	sing
				as an harlot
				H2181

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 25:22 (Kingdom): And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea,