

Isaiah 23:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.

Analysis

Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle (דָּמּוּ יִשְׁבֵּי אֵי)—The command to 'be still' or 'be silent' (dommu) opens the lament over Tyre. The Hebrew conveys stunned silence in the face of catastrophe, not peaceful rest. **Thou whom the merchants of Zidon have replenished**—Zidon (Sidon) and Tyre were sister Phoenician cities dominating Mediterranean trade. The verb milleu (replenished/filled) indicates Tyre's prosperity came through Sidonian maritime commerce.

The 'isle' (i) may refer to coastal Tyre itself (built partly on an island) or Cyprus and other Mediterranean trading posts dependent on Phoenician shipping. This oracle's judgment fell through Nebuchadnezzar's 13-year siege (585-572 BC) and later Alexander's conquest (332 BC). Tyre's fall demonstrated that economic dominance provides no security against divine judgment—a warning echoed in Revelation 18's description of commercial Babylon's collapse.

Historical Context

Tyre, located on the Phoenician coast (modern Lebanon), was the ancient world's premier trading empire by Isaiah's time (8th century BC). Its ships dominated Mediterranean commerce, establishing colonies as far as Spain. The city's wealth and apparent invincibility made its prophesied destruction shocking to contemporaries.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What modern economic powers or systems seem too big to fail, yet remain under God's sovereign judgment?
2. How does reliance on commercial success create a false sense of security that blinds us to spiritual vulnerability?
3. Why does God command silence before announcing judgment—what does this reveal about appropriate responses to divine action?

Interlinear Text

דָּמוּ	יֹשְׁבֵי	אֵי	סֵחֶר	צִיד וֶן
Be still	ye inhabitants	of the isle	thou whom the merchants	of Zidon
H1826	H3427	H339	H5503	H6721
עָבָר	יָם	מְלֵאוֹן:		
that pass over	the sea	have replenished		
H5674	H3220	H4390		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 47:5 (Parallel theme): Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.