

Isaiah 23-25

- The final oracle - Tyre
 - Tyre is an ancient Phoenician city on the coast of the Med
 - Today it's part of southern coast of Lebanon
 - It's a city that began on the mainland
 - Later it moved to an off shore island about a half mile away
 - It was a heavy protected and fortified city
 - Tyre was a seaport of worldwide importance in its day
 - It was the principle seaport for ships traveling between Palestine and the western world
 - Tyrians were a sea-going people with a large fleet and they colonized many other cities around the Med and beyond

[Is. 23:1](#) ¶ The oracle concerning Tyre.

Wail, O ships of Tarshish,
For Tyre is destroyed, without house or harbor;
It is reported to them from the land of Cyprus.

[Is. 23:2](#) Be silent, you inhabitants of the coastland,

You merchants of Sidon;
Your messengers crossed the sea

[Is. 23:3](#) And were on many waters.

The grain of the Nile, the harvest of the River was her revenue;
And she was the market of nations.

[Is. 23:4](#) Be ashamed, O Sidon;

For the sea speaks, the stronghold of the sea, saying,
"I have neither travailed nor given birth,
I have neither brought up young men nor reared virgins."

[Is. 23:5](#) When the report reaches Egypt,

They will be in anguish at the report of Tyre.

[Is. 23:6](#) Pass over to Tarshish;

Wail, O inhabitants of the coastland.

[Is. 23:7](#) Is this your jubilant city,

Whose origin is from antiquity,
Whose feet used to carry her to colonize distant places?

[Is. 23:8](#) ¶ Who has planned this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns,
Whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth?

[Is. 23:9](#) The LORD of hosts has planned it, to defile the pride of all beauty,
To despise all the honored of the earth.

[Is. 23:10](#) Overflow your land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish,
There is no more restraint.

[Is. 23:11](#) He has stretched His hand out over the sea,
He has made the kingdoms tremble;
The LORD has given a command concerning Canaan to demolish its strongholds.

[Is. 23:12](#) ¶ He has said, " You shall exult no more, O crushed virgin daughter of Sidon.

Arise, pass over to Cyprus; even there you will find no rest."

[Is. 23:13](#) ¶ Behold, the land of the Chaldeans — this is the people which was not; Assyria appointed it for desert creatures — they erected their siege towers, they stripped its palaces, they made it a ruin.

[Is. 23:14](#) Wail, O ships of Tarshish,
For your stronghold is destroyed.

- The oracle begins announcing Tyre's judgment in a curious way
 - The ships of Tyre are docked in Cyprus when they will hear that their home city and port are gone
 - They are called the ships of Tarshish because Tyre had used it's ships to found multiple colonies in different places around the world all called Tarshish
 - The inhabitants of the coastland are silenced
 - Isaiah calls them merchants of Sidon, another Phoenician city
 - Messengers that crossed the sea
 - Tyre was the market of nations, the place that grain of the Nile left for sale in other ports
 - Bringing revenue back to Egypt
 - Tyre is to be ashamed of their fate, such that the sea is even unwilling to admit they ever existed
 - In v.5 Egypt is anguished to hear of Tyre's passing
 - Making her demise all the more remarkable is her long history
 - The city had existed for about 2,300 years by Isaiah's day

- Isaiah asks in v.8 who planned this event?
 - The Lord planned it
 - To defile the pride of beauty and to despise the honored of the earth
 - Then in v.13 we're given the source of their destruction
 - The Chaldeans, the Babylonians
 - Isaiah adds a parenthetical explanation of how it could be the Babylonians
 - In Isaiah's day the Assyrians had conquered the kingdom of Babylon
 - This was an earlier Babylonian kingdom
 - In about 100 years, the Babylonians would rise again and defeat the Assyrians
 - Later they would destroy Tyre
 - But in Isaiah's day the idea that Babylon could be a threat to anyone seemed impossible, since they were vanquished by the Assyrians
- Then a curious turn

[Is. 23:15](#) Now in that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot:

[Is. 23:16](#) Take your harp, walk about the city,

O forgotten harlot;

Pluck the strings skillfully, sing many songs,

That you may be remembered.

[Is. 23:17](#) It will come about at the end of seventy years that the LORD will visit Tyre. Then she will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth.

[Is. 23:18](#) Her gain and her harlot's wages will be set apart to the LORD; it will not be stored up or hoarded, but her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who dwell in the presence of the LORD.

- After the Babylonians capture Tyre and disperse the people, a period of seventy years will ensue
 - God states that the city must remain desolate for 70 years

- Why seventy years?
 - Interestingly, Judah suffers a similar fate, being exiled for 70 years while in captivity to the same Babylonians
 - The 70 year period makes clear that God's hand is upon the judgment
 - It's by His design, not chance
- Then after the 70 years, the Lord "visits" Tyre, in the sense that He takes up action again in the city
 - He permits it to return to its profitable business of trading with the world
 - Isaiah compares this trade to playing the harlot, selling itself out to be able to do business with the world
 - If we wonder why the Lord would permit the iniquity of the city to re-emerge, He has his reasons
 - His answer in v.18 is that Tyre's wages would become the financing vehicle for God's people and for the Temple
- We see this happen 70 years after the Babylonian destruction of Tyre and Jerusalem, just as Isaiah predicted

[Ezra 3:1](#) ¶ Now when the seventh month came, and the sons of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem.

[Ezra 3:2](#) Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers arose and built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God.

[Ezra 3:3](#) So they set up the altar on its foundation, for they were terrified because of the peoples of the lands; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening.

[Ezra 3:4](#) They celebrated the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the fixed number of burnt offerings daily, according to the ordinance, as each day required;

[Ezra 3:5](#) and afterward there was a continual burnt offering, also for the new moons and for all the fixed festivals of the LORD that were consecrated, and from everyone who offered a freewill offering to the LORD.

[Ezra 3:6](#) From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, but the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid.

[Ezra 3:7](#) Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and food, drink and oil to the Sidonians and to the Tyrians, to bring cedar wood from Lebanon to the sea at Joppa, according to the permission they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

- The industry of Tyre became the means by which the Jews could find sufficient materials to reconstruct the Temple in Jerusalem
 - God ensured that Tyre's destruction lasted only until He needed their industry to support His people in their task of rebuilding

- Having ended the oracles, let's review the list
 - Babylon = enemy and his forces will be defeated, but Israel rises from the ashes
 - Philistines = throne of David will rise again, even if it appears to have faded, and it will crush all opposition
 - Moab = the Lord will offer refuge to a small remnant of gentiles, sheltered in Israel's promises and share in her kingdom
 - God will hold Israel accountable and will bring judgment against Ephraim
 - Cush = Israel's enemies will be transformed into nations that pay homage to Zion
 - Egypt = But the healing of these nations is not without consequences for their sins against Israel, even leading to consequences in the kingdom
 - Edom & Arabia = Upon Christ's return the Lord will prepare a place of rescue for the remnant of Israel from within this enemy's land
 - Every one of Israel's neighbors plays a part in Israel's triumph and restoration at the Lord's return
 - And each receive judgment
 - Like watching your favorite football team win the Super Bowl and having the team members of every rival carry your team off the field on their shoulders

- Having finished this section, we move into a new section affectionately called Isaiah's Little Apocalypse
 - It goes from here through 27

- It's essentially a mini version of what's found in chapters 5-20 of Revelation, which describes Tribulation and the coming Kingdom
 - And it even shares much of the same structure and order as Revelation
- This is also a good point to remind ourselves of Isaiah's recurring themes
 - God's sovereign authority and control over all
 - The sinfulness of mankind and the inevitability of judgment for sin
 - The coming judgment of Israel for transgressing the covenant
 - The remnant of Israel and the eventual restoration of Israel in the Kingdom
- All of these themes have been on display in the earlier chapters
 - And they remain front and center in these next four

[Is. 24:1](#) ¶ Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants.

[Is. 24:2](#) And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor.

[Is. 24:3](#) The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word.

[Is. 24:4](#) The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away.

[Is. 24:5](#) The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant.

[Is. 24:6](#) Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.

- The world behold is in the future tense, indicating future vision
 - The Lord will lay the earth waste, devastate it, distort it's surface and scatter it's inhabitants
 - This happens to the entire world, so this is clearly an event unlike anything since the flood of Noah
 - And among the people, all class distinctions cease
 - Priests/people, servants/masters...social and economic

- The earth completely laid waste, exalted people fade away
 - And it is comes under this judgment because it has been polluted by an earth full of guilty people and fell under a curse
 - What curse does the world suffer under? The one God brought about in the Garden (Gen 3:17)
 - And more specifically, men transgressed laws, violated statutes, and broke the covenant
 - Causing the inhabitants of the earth to be burned, few are left
- As you would imagine, life on Earth is pretty grim

[Is. 24:7](#) ¶ The new wine mourns,
The vine decays,
All the merry-hearted sigh.

[Is. 24:8](#) The gaiety of tambourines ceases,
The noise of revelers stops,
The gaiety of the harp ceases.

[Is. 24:9](#) They do not drink wine with song;
Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

[Is. 24:10](#) The city of chaos is broken down;
Every house is shut up so that none may enter.

[Is. 24:11](#) There is an outcry in the streets concerning the wine;
All joy turns to gloom.
The gaiety of the earth is banished.

[Is. 24:12](#) Desolation is left in the city
And the gate is battered to ruins.

[Is. 24:13](#) For thus it will be in the midst of the earth among the peoples,
As the shaking of an olive tree,
As the gleanings when the grape harvest is over.

- The vine decays, ending the production of wine
 - And the merry-hearted groan
- All music ceases, and revelry ends
 - Imagine that during Tribulation life as we know it ends
 - People aren't enjoying life at all
 - No nice relaxing times with drink and music and celebration
- All life is like Haiti after the earthquake

- Only there is no one to bring relief
 - The entire world suffers together
- Unimaginable grief and mourning and suffering
- The full measure of God's wrath against sin is experienced
- The reference in verse 12 uses a definite article inflection to indicate a singular city, likely Babylon as it's described in Rev 18
 - The result of this destruction is that the world is reduced to a remnant
 - While we have long been familiar with the idea of Israel being a remnant, now we're seeing the world itself in that state
 - They are like an olive tree after a shaking or after a grape harvest
 - Only a few left on the vines and branches
- Now we see a break in Isaiah's message

[Is. 24:14](#) They raise their voices, they shout for joy;

They cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the LORD.

[Is. 24:15](#) Therefore glorify the LORD in the east,

The name of the LORD, the God of Israel,

In the coastlands of the sea.

[Is. 24:16](#) From the ends of the earth we hear songs, "Glory to the Righteous One,"

- Without naming them, Isaiah says "they" will shout for joy
 - They will cry from east and west concerning the Lord and glorify the God of Israel
 - From the ends of the earth, they praise the Righteous One
- How does this happen in the midst of such devastation?
 - Well, clearly some men are coming to faith in God during Tribulation
 - And though their physical world is falling apart, their spiritual world has become new again
- Here's where we see the structure of Isaiah and the structure of Revelation matching up

- In the book of Revelation, the events are broken up in a repeating pattern
 - After the prophecy of the Church in chapters 1-5, the books turns to the events of Tribulation on Earth
 - In chapter 6 the first violent events of Tribulation take place with the breaking of the seal judgments
 - The events are devastating
- Let's read some of those events from Revelation and compare them to Isaiah's description

[Rev. 6:4](#) And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

[Rev. 6:5](#) ¶ When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come ." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

[Rev. 6:6](#) And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."

[Rev. 6:7](#) ¶ When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come ."

[Rev. 6:8](#) I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

- Compare these details to Isaiah
 - Many men are dying
 - The availability of goods is constrained
 - Interestingly, the new wine is taken away, as Isaiah says
 - But the existing wine and oil are spared
 - This is why Isaiah can say in v.9 that those who drink the strong drink see it as bitter
 - It brings no joy in light of the circumstances and likely the cost
 - Then later in Rev 6

[Rev. 6:12](#) ¶ I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;

[Rev. 6:13](#) and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

[Rev. 6:14](#) The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

- Here we see the Earth itself reshaped as Isaiah predicted
 - Mountains and islands moved around
 - See v.1 of Isaiah 24
- Then finally in Rev 6:

[Rev. 6:15](#) Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;

[Rev. 6:16](#) and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

[Rev. 6:17](#) for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

- Here we see the picture Isaiah provided of classless society experiencing the Tribulation
 - Like in v.2
- Then the pattern changes in both Isaiah and Revelation
 - In Isaiah, we see men coming to know and praise the Lord amidst the calamity
 - Likewise in Rev, we turn the page to chapter 7 and we see this

[Rev. 7:1](#) ¶ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

[Rev. 7:2](#) And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

[Rev. 7:3](#) saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

[Rev. 7:9](#) ¶ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;

[Rev. 7:10](#) and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, ¶ " Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

- Even as the Lord is pouring our wrath on the Earth for sin, He is at work raising up a new generation of believers
 - Isaiah makes the same transition, alluding to this new wave of evangelism in vs. 14 - the first part of 16
 - Then Isaiah returns to the events of Tribulation

[Is. 24:16](#) From the ends of the earth we hear songs, " Glory to the Righteous One,"
But I say, " Woe to me! Woe to me! Alas for me!
The treacherous deal treacherously,
And the treacherous deal very treacherously."

[Is. 24:17](#) Terror and pit and snare
Confront you, O inhabitant of the earth.

[Is. 24:18](#) Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit,
And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare;
For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake.

[Is. 24:19](#) The earth is broken asunder,
The earth is split through,
The earth is shaken violently.

[Is. 24:20](#) The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard
And it totters like a shack,
For its transgression is heavy upon it,
And it will fall, never to rise again.

[Is. 24:21](#) So it will happen in that day,
That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high,
And the kings of the earth on earth.

[Is. 24:22](#) They will be gathered together
Like prisoners in the dungeon,
And will be confined in prison;
And after many days they will be punished.

[Is. 24:23](#) Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed,
For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
And His glory will be before His elders.

- The first person pronoun in v.16 is from the perspective of a witness of these events, one who is present on the Earth but is not one of the believers in the earlier verses
 - Isaiah repeats one of his favorite phrases

- The treacherous deal treacherously
 - It's a statement of nature not changing apart from God's power
- The contrast is between the believers transformed by God's Spirit
 - And the rest of humanity who doesn't turn from their ways even despite all that is happening to them

[Rev. 9:20](#) ¶ The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;

[Rev. 9:21](#) and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

- So Isaiah returns to describing the events of Tribulation
 - He paints very broad strokes here, summarizing many details with a few short verses
- In vs. 17-18 describe the inescapability of the events
 - Men are caught up regardless of how they try to escape
- The physical earth is torn apart in the course of these events
 - It appears like a drunken sailor, as if you could view the Earth wobbling from a distance in space
- Then Isaiah moves to the end effect of Tribulation
 - All sinners are gathered together as prisoners in the dungeon
 - Confined in prison
 - And after many days they are punished
 - This is a description of how men are held for 1,000 years in Hadfes awaiting the Great White Throne judgment

[Rev. 20:1](#) ¶ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

[Rev. 20:2](#) And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

[Rev. 20:3](#) and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

[Rev. 20:4](#) ¶ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

[Rev. 20:5](#) The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

[Rev. 20:6](#) Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

[Rev. 20:7](#) ¶ When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison,

[Rev. 20:8](#) and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.

[Rev. 20:9](#) And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

[Rev. 20:10](#) And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

[Rev. 20:11](#) ¶ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

[Rev. 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

[Rev. 20:13](#) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

[Rev. 20:14](#) Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

[Rev. 20:15](#) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- Isaiah summarized these events in two verses
 - In v.22 he described the punishment of the wicked including the period of waiting
 - In v.23 he describes the reign of Christ on earth during the 1,000 years

- Then in chapter 25, Isaiah gives another glimpse at how the first moments of the new kingdom play out

[Is. 25:1](#) ¶ O LORD, You are my God;

I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name;
For You have worked wonders,
Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.

[Is. 25:2](#) For You have made a city into a heap,

A fortified city into a ruin;
A palace of strangers is a city no more,
It will never be rebuilt.

[Is. 25:3](#) Therefore a strong people will glorify You;

Cities of ruthless nations will revere You.

[Is. 25:4](#) For You have been a defense for the helpless,

A defense for the needy in his distress,
A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat;
For the breath of the ruthless
Is like a rain storm against a wall.

[Is. 25:5](#) Like heat in drought, You subdue the uproar of aliens;

Like heat by the shadow of a cloud, the song of the ruthless is silenced.

[Is. 25:6](#) ¶ The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain;

A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow,
And refined, aged wine.

[Is. 25:7](#) And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples,

Even the veil which is stretched over all nations.

[Is. 25:8](#) He will swallow up death for all time,

And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces,
And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken.

[Is. 25:9](#) And it will be said in that day,

“Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us.
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.”

[Is. 25:10](#) For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain,

And Moab will be trodden down in his place
As straw is trodden down in the water of a manure pile.

[Is. 25:11](#) And he will spread out his hands in the middle of it

As a swimmer spreads out his hands to swim,
But the Lord will lay low his pride together with the trickery of his hands.

[Is. 25:12](#) The unassailable fortifications of your walls He will bring down,

Lay low and cast to the ground, even to the dust.