

**Lesson 14**  
**Isaiah 22-23**

**Jerusalem denounced and Tyre's fall**

**Memory verse:** . "A person may think their own ways are right, but the LORD weights the heart" (Proverbs 21:2 NIV)

In Isaiah 22, we will read of the judgment God for Judah. The people of Judah were behaving like their pagan neighbours, so it was only right that Isaiah should include them in the list of nations God would judge. Yes, in His mercy, the Lord would deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrian army, but He would not deliver them from Babylon. The sins of Judah would cause her to decline and ultimately go into captivity in Babylon.

As in the first series of prophecies, God's people occupy the fourth place in this second series, which points further into the future, surrounded by the nations of the world. In the first series the Northern Kingdom was in view, but in the second series Judah takes the spotlight. Three aspects of life in Judah receive separate attention in this chapter: the city of Jerusalem (vv. 1-14), the individual Shebna (vv. 15-19), and the family of Eliakim (vv 20-25). All three sections reveal the thoroughness of Israel's sin of seeking security in the world rather than in the Lord, namely: self-sufficiency.

In chapter 23, we read about the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians were a merchant people whose land approximated what is today known as Lebanon. Their ships plied the Mediterranean coasts, where their many colonies assured them of an abundant supply of the world's wealth. Tyre and Sidon were key cities. Both David and Solomon made use of workers and building materials from Phoenicia (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings 5:8-9). King Ahab married the Phoenician princess Jezebel, who promoted Baal worship in Israel (1 Kings 16:29-33).

The first cycle of prophecies closed by revealing that Egypt, the political oppressor of the Israelites, would come into equal status with Israel in the future (Is. 19:25). The second cycle similarly closes by disclosing that Tyre, the materialistic corrupter of God's people in the past, would come into a relationship of holiness (Is. 23:18). Thus the climax of both revelations of judgment was the divine blessing of the Gentiles. There are also parallels between Babylon, the first prophecy in the first series, and Tyre, the last prophecy in the second series. Babylon was the great land power of the ancient world, and Tyre was the great sea power. Babylon gained her power through warfare, whereas Tyre gained hers through peaceful trading. The descriptions of both cities meld into the view of future Babylon presented in Revelation 17 to 18. There the religious and commercial aspects of future Babylon are strongly reminiscent of Tyre. Note also the reference to a prostitute in both passages.

The prophecy in chapter 23 consists of two parts: a poem describing Tyre's fall (vv. 1-14) and a prediction of Tyre's ultimate commitment to the Lord and His people. Tyre was the major city of Phoenicia at this time, and undoubtedly represents the other towns allied with it in the region, in some of the references in this chapter. Similarly, Jerusalem represented all of Judah when used in a collective sense.

**Scripture reading:** Isaiah Chapter 22:5-14; 23:10-18

Things to learn: 1) Sin of Unbelief 2) Leadership Accountability 3) The fall of Phoenicia

**Discussion Questions:**

1) Why did Isaiah called Jerusalem, "the valley of vision" and prophesied against the people in Is. 22:1-14?

2) What understanding do we have on God's dealings with leaders from Is. 22:15 – 25?

3) The Phoenicians will be judged by God (Is. 23:1-18). Explain what will happen and how the judgment is inter-related with other nations in the last eleven chapters.