

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

The OT prophets spoke of the events of their day in terms of your plan and purpose: “Who has purposed this [destruction] against Tyre...the LORD of hosts” (Isa 23:8–9; cf. Jer 4:28; Zech 1:6). This means that the ebb and flow of history is guided by your hands, and nothing happens without your consent. I say with joy, “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable” (Ps 145:3)!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the last of Isaiah’s oracles to the nations. Isaiah spoke these oracles to the people of Judah because he wanted them to realize how foolish it would be to make alliances with the very nations you had doomed to judgment. The oracle against Babylon (Isa 21:1–10) echoed Isaiah’s earlier oracle, and it reminded Judah that although Babylon seemed like a strong ally against Assyria, its destruction was certain (Isa 21:9; cf. Rev 18:2). The oracle against Arabia revealed that within one year, the splendor of Kedar would be gone, and almost nothing would remain of her mighty bowmen. This teaches me that the strength and power of men cannot stand against your will. I must place my trust in you alone! Hezekiah was listening closely to Isaiah’s oracles, and the knowledge of your coming wrath on the nations seemed to embolden him. In 705 BC, he rebelled against Assyria and declared war on the Philistines, defeating them as far as Gaza. In preparation for an Assyrian reprisal, he stopped the Gihon spring and diverted the water into Jerusalem. As if to remind Judah that she was not exempt from judgment, Isaiah proclaimed an oracle against Jerusalem. He condemned the people for rejoicing in their military strength and defensive strategies rather than in you. “You made a reservoir between the walls for the waters of the ancient pool, but you did not look to the One who made it, or consider the One who created it long ago” (Isa 22:11 HCSB). The people could “see” the importance of strong walls and plenty of water, but they didn’t “see” the importance of honoring and trusting the God who made them! Hezekiah, although a godly king, was surrounded by officials who did not share his whole-hearted devotion to you. The time would soon come when you would put them all to the test. The oracle against Tyre foretold the demise of the economic superpower of Isaiah’s day. Tyre and Sidon were cities of the sea-faring Phoenicians. They were the “merchants of the nations” (Isa 23:3). Because of their pride and arrogance, you purposed to defile and dishonor them. Their strongholds would fall and their ships, the pride of Tyre, would not be able to save them. This reminds me not to put my trust in wealth and possessions. Instead, I should use them to serve and honor you.

Reflection

You orchestrated the political circumstances of Hezekiah’s day in order to call Judah to repentance. Instead, they celebrated their strength and toasted their accomplishments (Isa 22:12–13). When trouble comes in my life, do I turn to you in humility and faith, or do I smugly trust in my own cleverness?

Request

Father, if you are sovereign over the nations of the world, I know that you can guide and protect me! Help me to keep my trust anchored in you and to wait on you for grace and help in time of need.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for sharing your oracles against the nations. They reveal you as the God who rules over all!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Great King of Nations, Hear Our Prayer](#)” – John H. Gurney.

Meditation Verse: Isaiah 23:9.