

Sermon #67 — *Isaiah Series*

Title: **“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF
ALL GLORY”**

Text: Isaiah 23:1-18

Subject: *The Who of History*

God’s Determination to Stain Man’s Pride

Date: Sunday Evening — December 23, 2018

Readings: *Lindsay Campbell and Rex Bartley*

Introduction:

Let’s read Isaiah 23 together. This chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy is about God’s judgment upon Tyre. I encourage you to read Ezekiel 27 and 28 together with this chapter Inspiration together, as soon as you are able to do so, while this message is fresh on your mind. That which we are about to read is a prophecy of historic facts. They are all now matters of historic record. But this precisely accurate prophecy, now confirmed in every detail by history, was not written by the finger of God to prove the inspiration of Holy Scripture to infidels.

If you read this chapter together with Ezekiel 27 and 28, you will see that “*The Burden of Tyre*” is to be understood allegorically. For Tyre we might substitute London, Paris, New York, Moscow,

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, or the countries in which those great cities of commerce are found. More broadly, for Tyre, we might substitute the whole world and all the nations of it. — Have you found Isaiah 23? Read the Word of the Lord with me.

Proposition: God rules the world to save his elect, and does so in such a way as to stain the pride of all glory. — That is Isaiah’s message to us in these 18 verses of Holy Scripture.

“The Burden of Tyre” — That is how this prophecy begins. It is a prophecy of divine judgment. It describes God’s utter destruction of Tyre. It was to be a destruction so thorough and complete that not one house would be left standing.

Tyre was for Israel both a great blessing and a great curse. King Hiram of Tyre supplied David and Solomon great timbers for the building of the temple and other projects. Hiram gave Solomon ships and sailors, so that Israel could build their commerce by sea. But later, Tyre gave Jezebel to Ahab, one of

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

Israel’s worst and most ungodly, idolatrous kings. —
Read on...

UTTERDESTRUCTION

1st — In verses 1-7, we are given a prophecy of **Tyre’s utter destruction**. The wheels of divine justice may grind slow, but they grind to powder.

(Isaiah 23:1-7) The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them. (2) Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished. (3) And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, *is* her revenue; and she is a mart (**the market place**) of nations. (4) Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, *even* the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, *nor* bring up virgins. (5) As at the report concerning Egypt, *so* shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre. (6) Pass ye

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle. (7) *Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.*”

This entire chapter relates to the destiny of Tyre. History has confirmed the prophecy to the letter.

- The Tarshish of the chapter is Spain.
- Chittim is the island of Cyprus.
- The word “*merchant*” is the same word that is commonly translated “Canaanite.”

The Canaanites, you will remember, are the people whose land God promised to his Israel, the people whose land God gave to his Israel. But they were a people Israel could never destroy. They were always there, always troubling, always stirring up trouble.

- The Canaanites often pretended to be Israel’s friends, but never were.
- The Canaanites often pretended to worship the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel, the only true and living God; but the Canaanites were idolaters. Even when they pretended to worship

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

the Triune Jehovah, they were promoting the worship of Baal.

This prophecy was delivered when Tyre was in the height of prosperity, enjoying her position as the market place of the world (Ezekiel 28:1-21; Zechariah 9:3-4).

(Zechariah 9:1-4) “The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus *shall be* the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, *shall be* toward the LORD. (2) And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise. (3) And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. (4) Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.”

In the light of God’s judgment upon Tyre, let us be wise and hear the counsel of God our Savior
(Mark 8:36-37).

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

(Mark 8:36-37) “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

(Luke 12:16-21) “And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: (17) And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? (18) And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. (19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. (20) But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? (21) So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

- The wealth of the world is nothing!
- The fame of the world is nothing!

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

- The power of the world is nothing!
- The praise of the world is nothing!
- “*Christ is all!*”
- Luke 10:42

“Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways” (Haggai 1:5) — Christ died for us that we might live unto him (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). The Lord Jesus has saved us by his grace that we might be his witnesses unto all men. He has redeemed us with his blood that we might proclaim redemption everywhere. He has sent us forth into this world for the building of his house (the church), the ingathering of his sheep, to build his kingdom. He has provided us with everything needful for the work. And we take what he puts in our hands (time, talent, money, and life) and devote it to our own pleasure! We are alive to everything else, are excited about everything else, and devote ourselves to everything else except our Redeemer and his cause in our day! — “*Consider your ways!*”

“Consider your ways!” — What do we get for our love of the world, for our devotion to it? We eat like

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

kings, and never have enough. We drink and gorge ourselves, and remain hungry and thirsty. We buy the finest clothes money can buy, and want more. We save our money and can never save enough, putting it “*into a bag with holes*” (Haggai 1:6). We run every man after his own things, looking for much, and it comes to little, because God blows it away. Why? Because God’s house, God’s cause, God’s worship is despised and neglected (Haggai 1:7). We crave satisfaction, but seeking it in the things of the world, we find nothing but drought in our souls (Haggai 1:10-11).

“Consider your ways!”— The Lord God, our heavenly Father dampens our enjoyments and tinges them with sorrow to expose our evil, to get our attention, to draw our hearts away from the world and remind us of the bounteous blessings of his grace upon us, to bring our hearts home to Christ. — “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world!*” (Hebrews 12:5-13; Colossians 3:1-3)

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

(Colossians 3:1-3) “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

We should use worldly things as wise pilgrims like staves to help us make our journey through this world. So long as they help us forward in our way, we should make use of them and value them accordingly. Better yet, we should use all earthly, material, carnal things as the priests of God to carry the Ark of God from place to ace. But when they become troublesome hindrances and cumbersome burdens, we would be wise to throw them away. **Samuel Rutherford** wisely warned, “Do not build your nest in any of the trees of this forest. They are all marked to be burned.”

We will have that upon which we set our hearts. But there is something better to set your heart on than this world. — Christ is better! — “*Seek ye first the*

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Soon, this world and all that is in it must be burned! Tyre must be destroyed. The joyous city must fall. The Canaanites must be driven out of the land. — How? — By whom?

WHO AND WHY

2nd — In verse 8 the prophet raises a question and then answers it in verse 9. **Here is the who and why of all things.** I do not think there is a passage in the whole of Isaiah’s prophecy that is more instructive and more comprehensive in explaining the wonders of God’s adorable providence in the out-working of his grace, to show man’s nothingness, God’s supremacy, and God’s determination to stain the pride of man that these two verses.

(Isaiah 23:8-9) “Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning *city*, whose merchants *are* princes, whose traffickers *are* the honourable of the earth? (9) The LORD of hosts

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, *and* to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.”

There is a “who” to history. And that “who” s our God. He who has taken this counsel against Tyre, he who has taken this counsel against the merchants, and princes, and traffickers, and honorable of the world is God our Savior.

God writes history. History is his-story. God reconstructs geography. He is not merely the Geologist of the globe, but its Geographer. The God who built up the rocks manages all the surface work. God readjusts the map of the world. He alters names, boundaries, and capacities. The four seasons are his servants. He tells them what to do. Precisely at this time Chittim (Cyprus) revolted against Tyre and the Phoenician colonies began to be restless and joined Sennacherib when he attacked the mother city.

Who did it? God shook the kingdoms: Egypt, Ethiopia, Babylon, Syria, Israel, Judah, quaked down to their foundations, while Tiglath-Pileser built and

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

enlarged the Assyrian Empire. Yet, in due time his neck was to be wrung and he was to be thrown away.

There are many kings, but they all have a King over them — eternal, immortal, invisible, the only Potentate. **All others are painted figures.** Christ our God, the King of Glory, reigns everywhere, always, over all things, absolutely! All gates fly back at his coming. All doors lift themselves up to welcome him and acknowledge his right to come. There cannot be two Almightyes! There can be only one Supreme! And that one Almighty, that one King, that one Supreme, that one God is Jehovah our Savior.

Things are not ordered by the whims and moods of petty toy-kings and politicians. They come and go. They die of disease, like dogs. They are but a puff of smoke, a vapor, just like you, just like me. — Flesh! — Grass! — Nothing more! — *“The LORD reigneth!”*

Why does God do things the way he does them? What is his purpose in everything he does? — *“The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of*

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.” — “That no flesh should glory in his presence!” **God is determined to stain all pride, to smear the glory of man in the muck and mire of his own excrement.**

- In Providence (Romans 8:28)
- In Redemption (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)
- In Grace (Ephesians 1:3-14)
- In Judgment (John 5:25-28)

GOD’S INSTRUMENTS

3rd — Read verses 10-14 and see **the instruments by which God performs his work.**

(Isaiah 23:10-14) “Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: *there is* no more strength. (11) He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant *city*, to destroy the strong holds thereof. (12) And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

rest. (13) Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, *till* the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; *and* he brought it to ruin. (14) Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.”

The Lord God made the Chaldeans, who were in Isaiah’s day nothing. Like a mushroom, they sprang up overnight.

How distressing it is to the proud to be brought low. It is even more so when the Lord makes use of contemptible instruments. That is a humbling that is crushing. **But God’s crushing of our souls is salvation.**

(Jeremiah 31:18-20) “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself *thus*; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed *to the yoke*: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou *art* the LORD my God. (19) Surely after that I was turned, I repented;

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

and after that I was instructed, I smote upon *my* thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. (20) *Is* Ephraim my dear son? *is he* a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.”

(Hosea 2:6-23) **THEREFORE**, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. (7) And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find *them*: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now. (8) For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal. (9) **THEREFORE** will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness. (10) And now will I discover her lewdness in the

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. (11) I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. (12) And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These *are* my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. (13) And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD. (14) **THEREFORE**, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. (15) And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. (16) And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, *that* thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. (17) For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

name. (18) And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. (19) And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. (20) I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. (21) And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; (22) And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. (23) And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, *Thou art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God.”

(Luke 15:13-19) “And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

substance with riotous living. (14) And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. (15) And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. (16) And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! (18) I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, (19) And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.”

(Luke 15:20-24) “And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. (21) And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. (22) But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe,

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet: (23) And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry: (24) For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

Illustration: *Christ’s Wrestling with Jacob*

A GRACIOUS MINGLING

4th — **In verses 15-18 we see the Lord God wisely and graciously mixing among his Israel the people of Tyre.**

(Isaiah 23:15-18) “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. (16) Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered. (17) And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. (18) And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

Three times Isaiah declared that the time of Tyre’s bondage and captivity would be 70 years, exactly the same time and place as Israel’s. **I cannot avoid seeing the obvious.** Tyre was mingled and mixed with Israel by the hand of God because God has an elect remnant in Tyre who must be called and saved by his omnipotent mercy and almighty grace.

Scattered through all nations and among all people, there is a remnant according to the election of grace who must and shall be saved at God’s appointed “time of love.”

- Loved and Chosen from Eternity
- A Covenant People
- A People for Whom Christ is Surety

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

- Sanctified and Preserved in Christ
- Redeemed with Christ’s Precious Blood
- A People for Whom the Triune Jehovah Rules the World

I’m not guessing about this. This is not just a shot in the dark. **Some of those Tyrenians** carried into Babylonian captivity were God’s at the same time Israel was in Babylonian captivity, while they were in Babylon met the living God. Perhaps you are asking, “Pastor, How do you know that?” I’m glad you asked.

- In the days of Nehemiah certain men of Tyre lived in Judah. They came back from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (Nehemiah 13:16).
- When Paul came to Tyre preaching the gospel, he found disciples there (Acts 21:1-4).
- The overthrow of Tyre was for the saving of God’s elect among the Tyrenians.

Babylon shall fall. And the merchants of the earth and the wealth of the nations shall bring their treasures to Zion (Revelation 17 and 18).

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

At this present hour, our great God is performing his own purposed grace in all the commotions of the earth, among all kingdoms and people. He is gathering his dispersed to himself from the four corners of the earth.

(Isaiah 43:1-15) “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. (2) When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. (5) Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; (6) I will say to

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; (7) *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. (8) Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. (9) Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, *It is* truth. (10) Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (11) I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour. (12) I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when *there was* no strange *god* among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God. (13) Yea, before the day *was* I *am* he; and *there is* none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

(14) Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry *is* in the ships.
(15) I *am* the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.”

What a blessed theme of endless praise this will be for our souls in heaven! — *“And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing”* (Isaiah 23:18).

(Revelation 15:1-3) “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. (2) And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. (3) And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.”

“How truly blessed is it to see, in the rise and fall of nations, that the Lord is carrying on his own gracious purposes; that all the events of nations, kingdoms, and empires, are but ministering to that little handful of people, whom God hath formed for himself, and to show forth his praise!” — *Robert Hawker*

My mind is lost in amazement, as I behold the mercy, love, and grace of God, watching over, preserving, and saving his elect!

(Numbers 23:9) “For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.”

(Deuteronomy 33:28) “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob *shall be* upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.”

“TO STAIN THE PRIDE OF ALL GLORY”

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.”

Amen.