

would have greatly increased men's confidence in God and in the dependability of His Word. Today we derive similar blessing from the predictions of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow (cf. 1 Peter 1:11- 12).

All of God's Word is true and all of it is important, but at various times certain parts of it become particularly important. Some sections that meant a great deal a few centuries ago may not have so much meaning for us today, and some sections that bring much blessing to us today may have been quite difficult to understand a few centuries ago.

Chapter 23 deals explicitly with Tyre and Sidon, great cities of ancient times that were situated where they could get ample supplies of papyrus from Egypt and thus were able to keep their records on convenient but perishable material. The little information about them that has been preserved on stone monuments or in records of other lands provides only a very sketchy idea of their history in ancient times. Tyre was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar at about the middle of the time when the people of Judah were enduring Babylonian captivity. Later on Tyre was rebuilt and became a very important center of commerce. It would seem likely that most of verses 1 to 17 is a description of events at this time. If we knew the full history they would doubtless be quite understandable to us. At present I am not sure whether verse 18 refers to something that occurred in antiquity or whether it looks forward to the millennium.

You refer to the phrase "in that day" in verse 15. It is some times said that this phrase is a technical term to refer to the end time, but examination of its usage does not support such an idea. It is often used of end times, but it is also often used of earlier periods. In this phrase in Hebrew the word "that" looks to what follows rather than to what precedes. In modern English the Biblical phrase "in that time" would in most cases mean "there will be a time when," or "in the time of which I am about to speak." This is contrary to the English usage to which I am accustomed, but it is quite in line with some modern as well as ancient languages. The same phrase occurs in Isaiah 2:20; 3:7, 18, and 4:1 and 2. In 4:1 it refers to the coming time when there will be loss of many soldiers, and thus fits with the events that precede. In 4:2 it looks forward to a later period. This phrase is quite clearly not a technical term for a particular point in the plan of God.