

# What is the significance of the city of Sidon in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Sidon-in-the-Bible.html>

Jesus mentioned the city of Sidon in Matthew 11:21-v22: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.” Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician sister cities known for their opulence and wickedness. Because Israel failed to overthrow Sidon in their conquest of the Promised Land (Judges 1:31), Sidon’s idolatry and pagan practices continued, even leading Israel to copy its sins (Judges 10:6-16; 1 Kings 11). To a Jewish audience in Jesus’ day, Sidon was synonymous with wickedness.

Sidon, also called Zidon, was a port city located in modern Lebanon on the Mediterranean coast, with its sister city Tyre approximately 22 miles (36 kilometers) to the south. Sidon was located within the boundaries given to the tribe of Asher (Joshua 19:28), but Asher never controlled it, due to Israel’s failure to completely abolish the Canaanites as God had instructed them (Deuteronomy 20:17; Judges 1:31). The Old Testament mentions Israel’s business dealings with Sidon, including obtaining materials for the building of the temple (1 Chronicles 22:4). Sidonians are also mentioned as helping rebuild the temple in Ezra’s time (Ezra 3:7). The wicked Queen Jezebel was a Sidonian who married King Ahab caused Israel much trouble (1 Kings 16:31). The city of Zarephath, near Sidon, was where a widow took care of Elijah, and the Lord provided oil and flour for her through the famine; later, the widow’s son became ill, and Elijah raised him from the dead (1 Kings 17:8-24).

There seems to have been a church in Sidon during New Testament times, probably established by the believers who left Jerusalem and went to Phoenicia after the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 11:19). Early on in Paul's voyage to Rome as a prisoner, his ship anchored at Sidon, and Paul was allowed "to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs" (Acts 27:3).

The Old Testament has several prophecies against both Tyre and Sidon that predicted a complete overthrow (Isaiah 23; Jeremiah 25; 27; 47; Ezekiel 26–28; Joel 3; Amos 1:9–10; Zechariah 9:1–4). Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre from 585–572 BC. Alexander the Great conquered Tyre in 322 BC, completely destroying the city. The Persian king Artaxerxes conquered Sidon. In short, God's prophesied judgment came to pass.

The New Testament mentions that crowds from Tyre and Sidon came to see and listen to Jesus (Mark 3:7–8), and inhabitants from Sidon were present at Jesus' Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17–18). Later, Jesus traveled through Sidon (Mark 7:31). It was a woman from Sidon who impressed Jesus with her great faith (Matthew 15:21–28). So, when Jesus used Tyre and Sidon as examples of how hardened the people of Israel had become, the Jews understood what He meant. It was a great privilege to live in a day and a region where the Messiah demonstrated His power, and only stubborn fools would see the signs He performed and reject Him. Even the ancient Sidonians, Jesus said, would have repented if they had seen what Israel had seen Jesus do.

When Jesus praised the faith of the Syrophenician woman, He showed us that nationality and heritage have no bearing on our standing with God. He looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 139:23). His statement that "it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you" (Matthew 11:22) means that God holds us accountable

for all we've been given. We will be judged according to the truth God has revealed to us. Because the Jews of Jesus' day were privileged to see and hear the Son of God, their judgment for rejecting Him will be greater than for those who never heard (see Luke 12:47-48; Hebrews 10:29). Sidon symbolizes the wickedness of this world's system, but Jesus' acceptance of a Sidonian shows us that Jesus by no means rejects the person who comes to Him in faith (John 6:37).