

Book of Isaiah



Chapter 22

*Theme: The burden of the valley of vision
(Jerusalem); the history of Shebna and Eliakim*

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Chapter 22

We should bear in mind that part of this prophecy is worded as if it had already happened when the prophet spoke it; but such wording must be understood in this way -- that at the actual time of fulfillment, the past-tense statements (as in Isa. 22:8-14) were true.

Four Main Parts to the Prophecy:

1. Consternation in Jerusalem in view of invasion by the Assyrians (Isa. 22:1-3)
2. Grief at the true state of things in the city itself (Isa. 22:4-8)
3. Preparations for the defense of the city (Isa. 22:9-11)
4. Moral state of the inhabitants of the city in view of the vision ¹

This burden evidently refers to Jerusalem, as we shall point out under the comments on the verses. The burdens began way off at a distance in Babylon, and they have continued to come nearer to Jerusalem. Now the storm breaks in all of its fury upon the Holy City.²

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.

As in the first series of oracles, 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.

" . . . Jerusalem is found cannibalizing itself to make itself safe, without a thought of looking to the Lord (verses 8-11); Shebna is portrayed as the man concerned only for his own worldly glory, before and after death (verses 16-18); and Eliakim is at risk of becoming the focal point of the security of others to his own and their downfall (verses 23-24)."

The first part of the oracle deals with self-sufficient Jerusalem (vv. 1-14). At present there was joy in the city (vv. 1-2a), but in the future there would be sorrow (vv. 2b-7). Past actions (vv. 8-11) had produced the present joy, and they determined future consequences (vv. 12-14).³

¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?

[valley of vision] Jerusalem was the valley of vision, so-called because this prophecy and many others came by visions seen in the valley near and inside the city. There is no doubt from Isa. 22:9-10 but what Jerusalem is meant.

[What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?] Question 35. Next, Isa. 22:16.

[gone up to the housetops] The people were so alarmed about the invading armies outside the city that they fled to the housetops -- a true picture of an Eastern city in confusion. The flat roofs were often used as living quarters, and especially as gathering places during any excitement. From the roofs people could clearly see what was happening down the roads or in the streets. Isaiah pictured the entire city as being on the housetops during this commotion (Isa. 22:1-2).⁴

The "valley of vision" refers to Jerusalem, as Isa. 22:4, 8, 9, and Isa. 22:10 imply. The expression, "valley of vision," is another of Isaiah's paradoxical statements. Mountain of vision would be understood, because the mountain is the place of the far view. Moses stood on Mount Nebo to view the Land of Promise. Our Lord looked over Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. But in Scripture a valley symbolizes a place of sorrow, humbleness, and death. Because the vision here is one of sorrow and coming battle, the valley is the proper place for this vision. Curiosity and fear send people to the housetop to inquire about the approaching danger. See the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in Isa. 36 and Isa. 37. In the last siege our Lord warns these people to leave the housetops and flee (see Matt. 24:16-17).⁵

"The Valley of Vision" refers to the city of Jerusalem, where God revealed himself. Jerusalem would be attacked unless God's people returned to him. Instead, they used every means of protection possible except asking God for help. They wanted to trust in their ingenuity, their weapons, and even their pagan neighbors (see 2 Chronicles 32 for the description of a siege of Jerusalem).⁶

This oracle (see comments on 13:1) pertains to the Valley of Vision (cf. 22:5). Often Jerusalem is referred to as a mountain (e.g., Mount Zion), but here the city is called a valley. This also fits because a valley—the Kidron—runs between two hills directly east of the city. From this city God was revealing Himself to Isaiah; hence it was called the Valley of Vision. Jerusalem was filled with people (in commotion and tumult; cf. v. 5) from the surrounding towns and villages in Judah. (Sennacherib wrote that he had captured 46 towns of Judah.) The important people (leaders) had escaped but were captured (v. 3) by the Assyrians. People still inside the city of Jerusalem went up on the flat housetops (v. 1) to observe the enemy outside the city walls. Because the Assyrian advance had caused the destruction of many of Isaiah's people (v. 4), he lamented (cf. his remorse in 15:5-7; 21:3-4).⁷

⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The burden against the Valley of Vision: This is Jerusalem, a city on a hill but surrounded by still higher hill, and in the midst of three valleys. Since Jerusalem was a center for the worship of God and some of the prophets of God (including Isaiah), it is called the Valley of Vision.

“It is strange to find a prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem in a section that deals with the nations. But since Judah had chosen to behave like her neighbors and to desert the Lord, she deserved to be judged.” (Wolf)⁸

The prophet employed another enigmatic title that implied a contrast with the actual condition of the place described to indicate the object of this oracle (cf. 21:1). "Valley of vision" refers to Jerusalem (cf. vv. 5, 9-10).

Isaiah pictured it as the depressed place (cf. Ps. 125:2) where he received a depressing vision, namely, the inevitable judgment that would come on the city. In this valley there was a notable lack of vision among God's people when it came to seeing things from His perspective. The mention of a valley suggests the valleys that surrounded Jerusalem on three sides, the Kidron Valley on the east and the Hinnom Valley on the west and south.

". . . Jerusalem was an enclosed place, hidden and shut off from the world, which Jehovah had chosen as the place in which to show to His prophets the mysteries of His government of the world."

Isaiah thought the residents of Jerusalem had behaved inappropriately by going up on their flat housetops to rejoice. Some turn of events in his day had resulted in the people feeling very secure. Perhaps Sargon's attack on Ashdod followed by his return to Assyria in 711 B.C., or God's deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib in 701 B.C. (cf. 37:36), was the historical occasion for their rejoicing.⁹

²Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain *men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.*

Results of a blockade.

[joyous city] This indicates revelry in the city in spite of impending danger and death (Isa. 22:12-14).

[dead in battle] The ones slain were those who fled the city and were captured and killed, for those who remained in the city were saved by God destroying the Assyrian army (Isa. 37:33-38).¹⁰

Your slain men are not slain with the sword: When Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, the men of Judah did not bravely die in battle. They died either being starved to death in the siege of the city, or as they fled in cowardly retreat.¹¹

⁸ <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-22.html>

⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

¹¹ <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-22.html>

“Either by famine or pestilence in the siege, as many died, Jeremiah 14:18; Jer_38:2, or in their flight, as others were; both which were inglorious kinds of death.” (Poole)

Such rejoicing was inappropriate, however, because Isaiah saw in his vision that they would fall to an enemy, not because of combat but starvation. This happened when the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and took it in 586 B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 25:3-4; Jer. 52:6). Jerusalem, as well as Babylon, would fall (cf. 2:6-22; 21:1-10).

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³All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, *which* have fled from far.

[All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far] This verse expresses the idea that the people in Jerusalem were debilitated by fear, being helpless against the great armies on the outside who demanded surrender (Isa. 36:1-22).¹³

⁴Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

“Spoiling:” to Sennacherib, 70 gold, 800 talents of silver (2 Kgs 18:15,16).

[Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people] These two verses express the overwhelming grief over the trouble that was to come to Judah (Isa. 36-37).¹⁴

"My people" are, of course, the people of Israel.

Isaiah had warned his people, but they did not repent; thus, they experienced God's judgment. Because of his care for them, Isaiah was hurt by their punishment and mourned for them. Sometimes people we care for ignore our attempts to help, so they suffer the very grief we wanted to spare them. At times like that we grieve because of our concern. God expects us to be involved with others, and this may sometimes require us to suffer with them.¹⁵

¹² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

¹⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

¹⁵ Life Application Study Bible.

I will weep bitterly; do not labor to comfort me: We usually think of Jeremiah as the “weeping prophet.” But Isaiah also said “I will weep bitterly” when he saw God’s judgment coming against God’s people.¹⁶

Therefore Isaiah rejected the attempts of his fellow citizens to get him to participate in their celebration. The terrible end of the city drew tears from him that the present rejoicing could not stop. Isaiah was a compassionate person because he identified with his countrymen in their suffering.¹⁷

⁵For *it is* a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.

[the valley of vision] The second time Jerusalem is called the valley of vision (Isa. 22:1,5,9-10).

Jerusalem was being besieged and the people inside the walls could do nothing about it. The people realized that the enemy's advancing to the very walls of Jerusalem was a day of judgment brought on by the Lord, the Lord Almighty (cf. vv. 12, 14-15, 25). The attack was not happenstance; it had come because of the people's disobedience (cf. vv. 12-14). In the city people were in tumult and terror as they saw the enemy camped outside waiting for an opportunity to get inside to sack and burn the city (v. 5). The Hebrew words for "tumult," trampling, and "terror" sound much alike. They are mehûmâh, mebûsah, and mebûkah. Soldiers from Elam, east of Assyria with its capital at Susa, and Kir, perhaps an Assyrian province (2 Kings 16:9; Amos 1:5; 9:7), joined the Assyrian warriors. Perhaps Isaiah mentioned these two areas of the Assyrian Empire to point out (by a figure of speech known as a merism) that troops from all over the empire were now gathered at Jerusalem's very door. Enemy chariots were in the valleys around Jerusalem, and at the city gates enemy horsemen were ready to attack (Isa. 22:7). Since Judah was defenseless, this was certainly a frightening time!¹⁸

The Lord Himself would bring this fate on Jerusalem. The residents would then panic, be subjugated and confused, and cry to the surrounding mountains for help as the city walls broke down.

⁶And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men *and* horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.

[Kir] Kir was a city in Media (2Ki. 16:9; Amos 1:5; 9:7). This was not Kir of Moab (Isa. 15:1). (2 Kgs 16:9): Tiglath-Pileser transported captives of Damascus; Amos 9:7 = orig of Syrians.

[Elam] This is Persia, and Kir of this verse is Media, indicating that the armies of the Medes and Persians were with Assyria in these invasions of Palestine and surrounding countries. It was not

¹⁶ <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-22.html>

¹⁷ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

until nearly 200 years later that the Medes and Persians became independent of Assyria and Babylon, and so, at this time they were serving the Assyrians (Isa. 22:6-7).¹⁹

The enemy would be Elam, an ally of Babylon's to her east, and Kir, whose exact location is unknown but was the destination of some Israelites taken into Assyrian captivity (cf. 2 Kings 16:9; Amos 1:5; 9:7). It was also the place (city or land) from which the Arameans originated (cf. Amos 9:7). Isaiah did not identify the main enemy, Babylon herself, but only two of her allies here, perhaps to emphasize the size (by merism) and or distance of the foe.²⁰

⁷And it shall come to pass, *that thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.*

a [full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate] This indicates the greatness of the armies that were with the Assyrians and shows why Judah's case seemed utterly hopeless -- and such it was, without God (Isa. 37:36-38).²¹

This enemy would conquer the countryside around Jerusalem and then set up a siege of the city outside her walls at her very gates.

⁸And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.

Armory mentioned in 1 Kings 7:2-5; 10:17; 14:27; 39:2.

[he discovered the covering of Judah] He (the invader) discovered the covering of Judah; that is, he subjected Judah to all kinds of insults and reproach (Isa. 36:4-22).

[thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest] Thou -- Hezekiah, the king of Judah, who looked to the armor in the house of the forest as the only means of defense. He also tried to conserve the city's water supply and tore down houses to fortify the breaches in the walls. He made many preparations for defense, but had not yet looked to God and trusted in Him for deliverance from the Assyrians (Isa. 22:8-11). It wasn't until after the threats of Rabshakeh and the personal message from Isaiah that Hezekiah sought God and trusted in Him for help (Isa. 36:4 -- Isa. 37:38).²²

Such an attack would be possible because the Lord would remove His defensive screen from around the city. The reason was that the people had relied on physical implements of warfare for their security rather than on Him. Evidently the "house of the forest" of Lebanon was an armory in Isaiah's day (cf. 1 Kings 7:2-5; 10:17).²³

¹⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²⁰ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

²¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁹Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

Hezekiah's Tunnel: reservoir N of city (2 Chr 32:4); Hezekiah had a tunnel dug for 1750 ft to bring water underground through Ophel to the Pool of Siloam. Can be traversed today when visiting Jerusalem.

Hezekiah actually took these precautions in defending Jerusalem (see 2Chron. 32). One of the things he did was to put a wall around the fountain so that the city would not run out of water. You can still see it in the land today.

This section refers to the future. As Dr. F. C. Jennings puts it, "The history eventuated in the deliverance of Jerusalem, the prophecy in its capture; therefore the history does not fulfill it." Just what siege and enemy is in the mind of the prophet? Persia is mentioned by name, but Jerusalem was in ruins while Persia was in power. Apparently all the enemies who have come up against Jerusalem are before us here, from the Assyrians, who only laid a siege but did not enter the city, to the last enemy from the north who will threaten the city but will not enter. The interval between these two has seen this city captured more than any other. This is the burden of Jerusalem.²⁴

¹⁰And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.

The people would try many forms of defense, but all would fail because they did not depend on the Lord who had made the city what it had become. Strong walls and adequate water would be their hope rather than their God. Hezekiah's strengthening Jerusalem's walls and securing her water source were not wrong in themselves. The people's reliance on these physical securities was their sin.²⁵

¹¹Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

The leaders of Judah did what they could to prepare for war: They got weapons, inspected the walls, and stored up water in a reservoir. But all their work was pointless because they never asked God for help. Too often we take steps that, although good in themselves, really won't give us the help we need. We must get the weapons and inspect the walls, but God must guide the work.²⁶

¹²And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

Baldness: prohibited to priest (Lev 21:5; Cf. Ezek 44:20; Job 1:20).

²⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²⁵ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

²⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

[in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth] In that day -- not the Millennium in this instance, but the time the Assyrians laid siege to Jerusalem (Isa. 36-38). God called for repentance, fasting and prayer, but instead the people went into revelry and pleasure even in view of the short time they thought they would have on earth (Isa. 22:12-14). God assured them that they would continue this way until death (Isa. 22:14).²⁷

¹³And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.

Cf. Paul: 1 Cor 15:32.
[Cf. Isaiah 36 and 37.]

[let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die] Paul quoted this in 1Cor. 15:32 in connection with the resurrection. These people reasoned that since they would die soon at the hands of the besieging Assyrians, they might as well enjoy life while it lasted. This is the attitude of the ungodly who have no hope of a life to come. Among the Egyptians life's brevity was emphasized by putting the image of Osiris in a coffin. This reminded them that they would die one day, and warned them to avoid evils that would shorten life. Here the idea of a short life only made men want to live in sinful pleasure as long as possible (Isa. 22:12-14).²⁸

The people said, "Let's feast and drink," because they had given up hope. Attacked on every side (22:7), they should have repented (22:12), but they chose to feast instead. The root problem was that Judah did not trust God's power or his promises (see 56:12; 1 Corinthians 15:32). Today we still see people living without hope. There are two common responses to hopelessness: despair and self-indulgence. But we need not act as if we had no hope. As we face difficulties, our proper response should be to trust God and his promises.²⁹

When the people saw the enemy they should have repented, realizing they were helpless before the Assyrians. Pulling out their hair (cf. Ezra 9:3; Neh. 13:25) and wearing sackcloth (cf. comments on Isa. 3:24) were signs of mourning. But instead of mourning (22:12) the Jerusalemites "lived it up" in revelry (cf. v. 2), banqueting, and wine-drinking in the face of their impending death (tomorrow we die, v. 13). They did not believe God was powerful enough to save them and to follow through on His promises. Therefore a pronouncement of woe came to the people through Isaiah: this sin of lack of trust in the Lord would not be atoned for. Eventually the curses of the Mosaic Covenant (Lev. 26:14-39; Deut. 27:15-26; 28:15-68) would come on the nation of Judah.³⁰

Normally ancient Near Easterners used cattle and sheep for producing milk and wool; they did not slaughter them to eat very often because these animals produced valuable products. Killing them to eat, therefore, expresses the people's utter despair and their self-indulgence, thinking

²⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²⁹ Life Application Study Bible.

³⁰ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

there was no future left for them (cf. 1 Cor. 15:32).

However, they would not repent but rejoice in their apparent security, believing that if they could not save themselves, nothing else could (cf. Rev. 9:20-21). Isaiah saw in the present rejoicing over security (vv. 1b-2a) the same attitude of self-sufficiency that would doom the Jerusalemites in the future.

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14And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

For this iniquity there will be no atonement for you: What is this sin that can't be forgiven? The sin of ignoring God, of refusing to humble yourself before the LORD and repent. Jerusalem was doing everything except the essential thing they had to do to prepare for the attack, and because they rejected the LORD, there would be no atonement for them.

“Our hearts are top-full of harlotry, ready to shift and shirk in every by-corner for comfort; to hang their hopes on every hedge, rather than to roll themselves upon God, ‘the hope of Israel.’” (Trapp)³²

The Lord had revealed to Isaiah that He would not forgive their unbelief in Himself. As long as they continued to trust in themselves rather than in Him, He would not save them. Unbelief persisted in until death is the only sin that God will not forgive. In the unsaved it results in eternal damnation, and in the saved it results in the loss of some eternal reward plus temporal punishment in some cases. However, as long as people can repent there is hope. Repentance was still possible for Isaiah's original audience when he gave this message. The warning passages in Hebrews explain that a time can come when people are no longer able to repent.³³

15Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, *even* unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say,

Shebna: Shebna was a foreigner and a man of considerable influence, displaced by Eliakim (vv20-25); later he apparently became Hezekiah's scribe (36:3; 37:2).

“This”: contemptuous.

Syriac name!? No father listed.

Sepulcher of pride.

Treasurer: once by king's son (2 Chr 26:21; job created in days of Solomon, 1 Kgs 4:6; 18:3).

³¹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³² <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-22.html>

³³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

[Shebna] Shebna means youthfulness. Two Shebna's in Scripture:

1. A treasurer who was succeeded by Eliakim (Isa. 22:15-25).
2. A scribe who served along with Eliakim (Isa. 36:3,11,22; 37:2; 2Ki. 18:18,26,37; 19:2).³⁴

Shebna was secretary of the treasury, a cheap politician under Hezekiah. Apparently he was misappropriating funds (see 2Kings 18:18; 2Kings 19:2; Isa. 36:3; Isa. 37:2).³⁵

The term for “steward” (soken, Heb.) occurs only here in the O.T. but is found in the literature of surrounding peoples as the title of a high government official. The description “who is over the house” indicates that this corrupt official probably occupied the position of prime minister, second only to the king (cf. 1 Kin 4:6; 16:9; 18:3; 2 Kin 15:5).

The Lord commanded Isaiah to go to Shebna, who was steward (ruler) over the royal household (cf. Joseph; Gen. 39:8-9; 1 Kings 4:6; 18:3). This was the highest office of state in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, and sometimes the heir to the throne occupied it (cf. 2 Chron. 26:21). As the royal steward, Shebna stood nearest to the king and represented the king.³⁶

¹⁶What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?

[hewed thee out a sepulchre] Many tombs in the East were hewn out of solid rock, sometimes below ground, but more often in the mountainsides. Some were large chambers with narrow cells on each side for the bodies of the dead, as many as 30 to 60 in some cases. Shebna had hewn a sepulchre for himself on high, that is, high in the mountain; but he was not to be put there. He was to go into captivity and be buried in a strange land (Isa. 22:16-19).³⁷

Shebna was building a tomb to perpetuate his name. It was ironical, as he was to die and be buried in a foreign land (vv. 17-18).³⁸

Isaiah's question is almost identical to the one in verse 1, tying Shebna's error to that of the people of Jerusalem. He had no personal right, or a right by reason of his position, to prepare a permanent and prominent tomb for himself. A person's tomb made a statement about his importance, and Shebna wanted to guarantee his future recognition by building himself a respectable monument in Jerusalem (cf. Haman; Esth. 3:1-2). Archaeologists have found the remains of a grave hewn by one Shebna on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem.³⁹

A large tomb belonging to a royal official with Shebna's title has been excavated on the eastern edge of the valley of Kidron across from the City of David (in today's Silwan neighborhood), but

³⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

³⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁶ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

³⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

the inscription in the tomb is damaged, and we do not know the official's name. Archeological evidence points to an 8th-century date for the tomb, suggesting the possibility that it is the tomb described here. If so, Isaiah's prediction that Shebna would never enjoy his magnificent tomb is either incorrect or merely rhetorical, for the owner of that tomb was in fact interred there.⁴⁰

17Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

[cover thee] Shebna tried to exalt himself by making a beautiful tomb so he could be buried with the rich and royal in a prominent place; but God, by sending him into captivity, was to cover him, that is, bring him down to a humble and common place in life so that he would be as much ashamed in the end as he had planned to be proud. He was to have his face covered like those who mourn, or as a man's face is covered for execution (Esther 7:8).⁴¹

18He will surely violently turn and toss thee *like* a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory *shall be* the shame of thy lord's house.

Shebna would not die in peace in Jerusalem as he anticipated. God would throw him, like a balled up rag that cannot control where it is going, into a distant land where he would die. Presumably the Assyrians took him captive. His emblems of greatness would also end up there rather than in the place where he wished to be remembered. His attitude of selfglorification made him unworthy of the office he occupied, in Isaiah's view (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12).⁴²

19And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

20And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:

Eliakim: "God will raise up."

[Two ancestors of Christ (Mt 1:12; Lk 3:30); 1 priest, contemporary of Nehemiah (Neh 12:41); 1 king of Judah (2 Kgs 23:34; 2 Chr 36:4).

Hilkiah: "My portion in Jehovah."

Eliakim was the statesman who succeeded Shebna. Eliakim was an unselfish man. He and Shebna are in contrast here. Isaiah has brought together these men who are more than paradoxes -- they are opposites. Shebna pictures the Antichrist, and Eliakim pictures Christ. The language is typical.⁴³

⁴⁰ Olive Tree, Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁴¹Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁴² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

The Lord also predicted that He would appoint Eliakim to a special position of authority, complete with the symbols of that authority, to replace proud Shebna. In chapters 36—37 Shebna and Eliakim appear as officials who were both serving King Hezekiah when Sennacherib invaded Jerusalem (701 B.C.). Thus Shebna's humiliation and Eliakim's exaltation apparently occurred sometime after that. Eliakim would become a father to the people of Jerusalem in that he would care for them sacrificially at God's appointed time.⁴⁴

Tenfold Exaltation of Eliakim

1. I will call him (Isa. 22:20).
2. I will clothe him (Isa. 22:21).
3. I will strengthen him.
4. I will commit the government to him.
5. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.
6. I will give him the key of David (Isa. 22:22).
7. He shall have authority to open and shut and none shall hinder him.
8. I will make him permanent (Isa. 22:23).
9. He shall be exalted to his father's house.
10. He shall have all the glory of his father's house (Isa. 22:24). Compare the tenfold fall of Shebna in The 27th Prophecy in Isaiah.⁴⁵

[Eliakim] Eliakim, God Establishes. Four Eliakim's:

1. Son of Hilkiah (Isa. 22:20; 36:3,11,22; 2Ki. 18:18,26,37; 19:2)
2. A king of Judah (2Ki. 23:34; 2Chr. 36:4)
3. A priest after the exile (Neh. 12:41)
4. A Judahite in the line of Christ (Mt. 1:13; Lk. 3:30)⁴⁶

²¹And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

Girdle: priest.

[thy government into his hand] Rulership of the treasury (Isa. 22:15,21).

[a father] A father -- counselor or guide; a statesman of distinction.

²²And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Here the prophecy looks forward to Christ (Rev 3:7).

⁴⁴ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁴⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

[the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder] Eastern keys were large and Eastern merchants were often seen carrying them on the shoulder. A key was an emblem of authority, evidence of property or trust. See Mt. 16:19; Rev. 1:18; 3:7; 9:1; 20:1.⁴⁷

This verse reminds us of the words of Christ in the New Testament: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Rev. 3:7). How wonderful it is, my friend, to place our lives in the hands of Him who is able to close or open any door!⁴⁸

Eliakim would bear authority to administer the affairs of David's royal house, which the key on the shoulder symbolizes. His decisions would be binding, as when one unlocks or locks a door with a key (cf. Matt. 16:19; 18:18; Rev. 3:7).

²³And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

Peg: prince (Zech 10:4? Ezra 9:8).

[as a nail in a sure place] It was the custom to build pegs into the house to hang things on. Unlike temporary nails in plastered walls, these were very permanent. On such pegs trophies, shields, swords, gold and silver vessels, changes of clothing, and other valuable things were hung, for show (Isa. 22:23-24; cp. Ezra 9:8).⁴⁹

Shebna, the palace administrator, was just as materialistic as the rest of the people in Jerusalem (22:13). He may have been in the group favoring an alliance with foreigners, thus ignoring Isaiah's advice. The Lord revealed that Shebna would lose his position and be replaced by Eliakim (22:20). Eliakim would be the "nail in the wall" driven firmly in place (22:23). Unfortunately, Eliakim too would fall (22:25).⁵⁰

He would also serve as a tent peg holding the royal house and all Jerusalem stable against the winds of adversity. He would bring glory to his father's house. He would be such a strong figure that many people would rely on him and commit much responsibility to him.⁵¹

²⁴And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

"...over his house": Joseph, Gen 41:40; 45:8. All that belonged to or proceeded from the family.

⁴⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁴⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁵⁰ Life Application Study Bible.

⁵¹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

²⁵In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that *was* upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

Cut-off? Dan 9:26.

Burden: 1 Pet 2:24; 1 John 2:2; 2 Cor 5:19; Eph 2:16; Col 2:14.

[the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall] This is figurative of the fall of Shebna from his office (Isa. 22:15-19), as the previous verses (Isa. 22:20-24) were figurative of the exaltation of Eliakim to take his place.⁵²

"In that day" refers to the Great Tribulation period, as we have seen, and this verse refers to Shebna as he pictures the Antichrist. A great many people will put their trust in the Antichrist who is to come. They will look to him for help. They will think he is Christ, but he will be just a nail that will fall.

My friend, have you ever had that experience? You drive a good nail into the wall, hang a heavy coat on it, and it comes down. The Lord Jesus Christ is the nail in a sure place. Shebna was a nail that came down, and so will all others who are like him. Are you hanging everything you've got on the nail that is in a sure place? Many people are not. They are hanging everything they have on something that is not sure. For instance, they make investments. A man told me, "I trusted a lawyer, and he made a mistake." He wasn't a nail in a sure place. Some folk have even trusted a preacher and have found that he was not a nail in a sure place. Only Christ is a nail in a sure place. I hope you are hanging your life and everything you have on Him.⁵³

Unfortunately, Eliakim would not be able to carry all the weight of responsibility committed to him and would fail. Thus the people's trust in another human being, even a very capable person, would prove misplaced. They could only safely trust in the Lord Almighty; He is the only one who would not fail them. One writer believed that Eliakim would not fail.⁵⁴

This oracle reproved the people of Jerusalem for trusting in the arm of flesh to protect them from their enemies. Isaiah epitomized and condemned this attitude by citing Shebna's self-confident behavior. He also showed that trusting in even the most capable of people, such as Eliakim, would prove disappointing. Rather their trust should be in their sovereign, almighty Lord.

Christians face temptations similar to the ones Isaiah identified here. We may fail to trust the Lord first and to pray for His guidance, resting rather on our own or another's ability to solve problems. We may become so preoccupied with our own interests and reputations that we fail to serve the Lord and people. We may also put too much hope in our leaders and not enough in our God.⁵⁵

⁵² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁵³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁴ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁵⁵ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>