

## *ISAIAH 22 | Valley of Vision Oracle*

### *Judah's Covering Removed*

1 The oracle concerning the [Kidron] valley of vision.

What do you mean that you have gone up, all of you, to the housetops, 2 you who are full of shoutings, tumultuous city, exultant town? Your slain are not slain with the sword or dead in battle. 3 All your leaders have fled together. Without the bow they were captured. All of you who were found were captured, though they had fled far away. 4 Therefore I [Isaiah] said:

Look away from me. Let me weep bitter tears. Do not labour to comfort me concerning the destruction of the daughter of my people [Jerusalem].

5 For Lord Yahweh of hosts has a day of tumult, trampling, and terror in the valley of vision [the Kidron valley], a battering down of walls and a shouting to the mountains. 6 And Elam bore the quiver with chariots and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield. 7 Your choicest valleys were full of chariots, and the horsemen took their stand at the gates. 8 He [Yahweh] has taken away the covering of Judah.

### *Human or Divine Solution?*

In that day you [Judean leaders] looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest, 9 and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many. You collected the waters of the lower pool, 10 you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall. 11 You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look (נבט) to him who did it, or see (ראה) him [Yahweh] who planned it long ago.

### *Eat and Drink, for Tomorrow We Die*

12 In that day Lord Yahweh of hosts called for weeping and mourning, for baldness and wearing sackcloth. 13 But behold, joy and gladness, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. 14 Yahweh of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: Surely this iniquity will not be atoned for you until you die, says Lord Yahweh of hosts.

### *Shebna Fired*

15 Thus says Lord Yahweh of hosts,

Come, go to this steward (סִכְנָן), to Shebna, who is over the [Davidic] household (עַל־הַבַּיִת), and say to him:

16 What have you to do here, and whom have you here, that you have cut out here a tomb for yourself, you who cut out a tomb on the height and carve a dwelling for yourself in the rock? 17 Behold, Yahweh will hurl you away

violently, you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you, 18 whirl you around and around, and throw you like a ball into a wide land. There you will die, and there will be your glorious chariots, you shame (קָלוֹן) of your master's [Hezekiah's] house. 19 I will thrust you from your office, and you will be pulled down from your station.

*Eliakim Hired*

20 In that day I [Yahweh] will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 21 and I will clothe him with your robe, will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he will be a father (אָב) to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22 And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He will open, and none will shut. And he will shut, and none will open. 23 And I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honor (כְּבוֹד) to his father's house. 24 And they will hang on him the whole honor (כְּבוֹד) of his father's house, the seed and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons.

25 In that day, declares Yahweh of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a secure place [Eliakim and his seed] will give way, and it will be cut down and fall, and the load that was on it will be cut off, for Yahweh has spoken.

## Commentary

### 1. Overview

- a. This is the ninth of ten oracles concerning the nations in Is 13-23.
- b. The historical context of this chapter is 2 Ki 18-19; 2 Ch 32; and Is 36-37, all of which describe Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 bc.
- c. The first half of the chapter (vv. 1-14) is general. The second half of the chapter (vv. 15-25) is specific. Both pictures teach the same message.<sup>1</sup>
- d. The primary messages are:
  - (1) Yahweh's divine discipline is coming on Judah and Jerusalem. Therefore it's no time to "eat, drink, and be merry" or to built extravagant tombs. Instead it's a time to look to Yahweh (vv. 1-14).
  - (2) Yahweh will distinguish those who respond to his discipline in the wrong way (Shebna) from those who respond in the right way (Eliakim). God will shame those who choose pride and unbelief (Shebna). God will honor those who choose humility and faith (Eliakim)(vv. 15-25).

### 2. Judah's Covering Removed (Is 22:1-8).

- a. **Is 22:1-11** 1 The oracle concerning the valley of vision. What do you mean that you have gone up, all of you, to the housetops, 2 you who are full of shoutings, tumultuous city, exultant town? Your slain are not slain with the sword or dead in battle. 3 All your leaders have fled together. Without the bow they were captured. All of you who were found were captured, though they had fled far away. 4 Therefore I said: Look away from me. Let me weep bitter tears. Do not labor to comfort me concerning the destruction of the daughter of my people. 5 For Lord Yahweh of hosts has a day of tumult, trampling, and terror in the valley of vision, a battering down of walls and a shouting to the mountains. 6 And Elam bore the quiver with chariots and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield. 7 Your choicest valleys were full of chariots, and the horsemen took their stand at the gates. 8 He has taken away the covering of Judah.
- b. Yahweh gives Isaiah an oracle concerning the "valley of vision" (v. 1).
  - (1) The valley of vision is the Kidron valley, the most important valley in world history, from which the Assyrian army will besiege Jerusalem.
  - (2) **2 Ki 18:17** 17 The king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway to the Washer's Field.
  - (3) This is the same conduit of the upper pool we see in Is 7:3 (Ahaz) and 36:2 (Hezekiah).
- c. Isaiah questions why the Judeans have gone up to their housetops (vv. 1-2).
  - (1) They could be watching the Assyrians advance, watching the Assyrians retreat, and/or partying on the flat roofs.<sup>2</sup>
- d. Isaiah crashes the party by telling the Judeans what will ultimately happen (vv. 2-3).

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<sup>1</sup> J. N. Oswalt, *NICOT*, 416.

<sup>2</sup> J. N. Oswalt, *NICOT*, 409.

- (1) He speaks of events that will take place about 115 years later, in 586 bc, when the Babylonians capture Judah's leaders and destroy Jerusalem (see 2 Ki 24-25). Again Isaiah sees beyond Assyria to Babylon.
- e. Isaiah weeps over Jerusalem's ultimate destruction and refuses to be comforted (v. 4).
  - (1) He's like Jesus and Paul
    - (a) **Mt 23:37-38** 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate.
    - (b) **Ro 9:1-3** 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Messiah for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.
- f. God has a future day of tumult/trampling/terror in the Kidron valley (v. 5).
  - (1) The Hebrew words for tumult, trampling, and terror sound much alike. They are *mehûmâh*, *mebûsâh*, and *mebûkâh*.<sup>3</sup>
  - (2) After his 701 bc campaign, Sennacherib wrote he captured 46 cities in Judah.
  - (3) The Kidron valley is the location of six great battles.
    - (a) God saves Jerusalem in 701 bc. He doesn't save Jerusalem in 586 bc. He doesn't save Jerusalem in 70 ad. He doesn't save Jerusalem during the Tribulation. He will save Jerusalem in Re 19 and Re 20. So there are three not savings and three savings.
- g. Jerusalem will be surrounded by the Assyrian army (vv. 5-8)
  - (1) Walls will be battered down, and shouting will be heard (v. 5).
  - (2) Charioteers from Elam and infantry from Kir will arrive (v. 6).
    - (a) By this time, Kir was an Assyrian province (2 Ki 16:9).
  - (3) Jerusalem's choicest valleys will be filled with chariots, and horsemen will stand in her gates (v. 7).
  - (4) God will take away Judah's protective covering (v. 8).

### 3. Human Solution or Divine Solution? (Is 22:8-11).

- a. **Is 22:8-11** 8 In that day you [Judean leaders] looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest, 9 and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many. You collected the waters of the lower pool, 10 you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall. 11 You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to your Maker, or see him who planned it long ago.
- b. The human solution for Hezekiah and Judah relies on:
  - (1) Weapons (v. 8).
    - (a) **1 Ki 7:2** 2 [Solomon] built the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Its length was a hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits, and it was built on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars.
    - (b) **1 Ki 10:17** 17 [Solomon] made 300 shields of beaten gold. Three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

<sup>3</sup> John A. Martin, *BKC*, 1:1069.

- (c) **2 Ch 32:5** 5 [Hezekiah] also made weapons and shields in abundance.
- (d) Later, Hezekiah showed the Babylonian envoys the contents of this house.
  - 1) **Is 39:2** 2 And Hezekiah welcomed them gladly. And he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his whole armoury, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.
- (2) Walls (v. 10).
  - (a) **2 Ch 32:5** 5 [Hezekiah] set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall, and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David.
- (3) Water (vv. 9, 11).
  - (a) **2 Ch 32:2-4** 2 When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, 3 he planned with his officers and his mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city, and they helped him. 4 A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?
  - (b) **2 Ch 32:30** 30 This same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.
  - (c) The reservoir refers to the Pool of Siloam that Hezekiah connected to the Gihon Spring by his now-famous underground water tunnel, which extends 1,777 feet and was carved out of solid rock.<sup>4</sup> Hezekiah had a tunnel dug under the old city of Jerusalem south of the temple mount. This tunnel connected the spring of Gihon in the Kidron Valley on the east side of the city to the pool now known as the Pool of Siloam on the west side.<sup>5</sup> For the first time, Jerusalem had a protected water supply.
- (4) These preparations are prudent, and Isaiah does not condemn them. But he does condemn the order of priorities.<sup>6</sup>
- c. In their war preparations, Judah did not look to Yahweh or consider his plan (v. 11).
  - (1) Notice the two “looks” in v. 8 and v. 11. The contrast is between looking to human solutions and looking to divine solutions. God has a plan, and only a few Judean are paying attention to that plan. In actuality, God is setting up the Assyrian army for destruction so that he may be glorified.

#### 4. Epicurus in Judah (Is 22:12-14).

- a. **Is 22:12-14** 12 In that day Lord Yahweh of hosts called for weeping and mourning, for baldness and wearing sackcloth. 13 And behold, joy and gladness, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink, for

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<sup>4</sup> John A. Martin, *BKC*, 1:1070.

<sup>5</sup> J. N. Oswalt, *NICOT*, 413.

<sup>6</sup> J. N. Oswalt, *NICOT*, 405.

tomorrow we die.<sup>7</sup> 14 Yahweh of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: Surely this iniquity will not be atoned for you until you die, says Lord Yahweh of hosts.

- b. God called the Judeans to humility and trust (v. 12).
  - (1) **Ps 51:17-18** 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. 18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem.
- c. Instead, the Judeans engage in a big “Night before Destruction” party (v. 13).
  - (1) The Judeans figure they might as well feast before they die. Perhaps they can momentarily forget the terrible events ahead. Instead of humbling themselves before God, they engage in one final act of self-indulgence.
  - (2) In the West, many live their lives as if at a “Night before Destruction” party. Virtues like commitment, contentment, discipline, moderation, and sacrifice are minimised. We believe no one will judge us or hold us accountable.
- d. There is no hope for the Judeans who adhere to this Epicurean philosophy (v. 14).
  - (1) The Judeans are committed the unforgivable sin of unbelief.<sup>8</sup>

## 5. Shebna Fired (Is 22:15-19).

- a. **Is 22:15-19** 15 Thus says Lord Yahweh of hosts, Come, go to this steward (סֵכֶן), to Shebna who is over the [royal] household, and say to him: 16 What have you to do here, and whom have you here, that you have cut out here a tomb for yourself, you who cut out a tomb on the height and carve a dwelling for yourself in the rock? 17 Behold, Yahweh will hurl you away violently, you strong man (גִּבּוֹר). He will seize firm hold on you, 18 whirl you around and around (הִצְנִיף וְהִצְנִיף), and throw you like a ball into a wide land [probably Assyria]. There you will die, and there will be your glorious chariots, you shame of your master’s [Hezekiah’s] house. 19 I will thrust you from your office, and you will be pulled down from your station.
- b. Shebna was likely the leader of the anti-Yahweh, anti-Isaiah, Judeans (v. 15).
  - (1) Shebna, along with Eliakim and Joah, Hezekiah’s messengers, parlayed with Sennacherib’s messengers. By the time the Assyrians besieged Jerusalem, Eliakim had replaced Shebna as head over Hezekiah’s house. Shebna continued as secretary (Is 36:3, 11).
    - (a) **2 Ki 18:18** 18 When [the Assyrians] called for the king [Hezekiah], there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary (סֵכֶן), and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder.
    - (b) **2 Ki 18:37** 37 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.
    - (c) **2 Ki 19:2** 2 [Hezekiah] sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz.
- c. Yahweh questions Shebna why he has cut out a tomb for himself (v. 16).
  - (1) Shebna was building his tomb on the Mount of Olives, a coveted burial location. He likely thought that by being buried in a prominent grave site, his name would

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Da 5.

<sup>8</sup> J. A. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 186.

live on. Being buried on the Mount of Olives, just east of temple, is serious business. This is where: (1) Jesus often met with his disciples; (2) where he was arrested; (3) where he ascended to heaven; and (4) where he has promised to return. It's as if God intervened to ensure Shebna's body would not be buried in that very special place.

- (2) Possibly, Shebna's tomb was found by a French archaeologist in 1871. Look up "Shebna inscription" on Wikipedia.
- (3) Shebna typifies the self-centered leader who puts his own interests first. Instead of providing leadership and vision for Judah, he fixated on the building of his own tomb. When he should be acting in the best interests of his people, formulating far-seeing policies based on God's word, he is focused on the immediate future and only as it bears on him.<sup>9</sup> His attitude is, "Whatever else may happen to others, I'm going to be just fine." He doesn't really care about the people he is supposed to be leading. He subscribes to the philosophy of "personal peace and affluence," as enunciated by Francis Schaeffer.
- d. Yahweh promises to hurl throw Shebna like ball into Assyria (vv. 17-18).
  - (1) Shebna will be like a wadded up scrap of paper tossed into the rubbish bin.
- e. Shebna will die in far from Jerusalem, near his "glorious chariots" that will be confiscated by the Assyrians (v. 18).
- f. Shebna has brought shame to Hezekiah's house (v. 18).
- g. God will thrust Shebna from his office (v. 19).

## 6. Eliakim Hired (Is 22:20-25).

- a. **Is 22:20-25** 20 In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, 21 and I will clothe him with your robe, bind your sash on him, and commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22 And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut, and he shall shut, and none shall open. 23 And I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house. 24 And they will hang on him the whole honor of his father's house, the seed and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons. 25 In that day, declares Yahweh of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a secure place will give way, and it will be cut down and fall, and the load that was on it will be cut off, for Yahweh has spoken.
- b. Eliakim will replace Shebna as the head of Hezekiah's household (vv. 20-21).
  - (1) **Is 36:22** 22 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary....
- c. As opposed to Shebna, Eliakim will be a fatherly leader (v. 21).
- d. Yahweh will reward Eliakim with great authority in the house of David (v. 22).
  - (1) **Mt 16:19** 19 I [Jesus] will give you [Peter] the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
- e. Yahweh will fasten Eliakim like a secure peg (v. 23).

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<sup>9</sup> J. N. Oswalt, *NICOT*, 416.

- (1) Through Yahweh enablement, Eliakim will serve as prime minister for a long time, providing stability for Judah during Hezekiah's reign.
- f. Eliakim will bring honour to his father's house (vv. 23-24).
- g. A day will come, however, when even Eliakim and his seed will give way (v. 25).
  - (1) Good human leaders may give temporary relief, but ultimately we are to trust in God alone.

## **7. Application.**

- a. We are to turn to divine solutions before we turn to human solutions.
- b. We are to place the interests of those we lead above our own personal interests.
- c. We are to lead as godly fathers and mothers, thinking about the long-term.