

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Chapter 22

Theme: The folly of Judah even under threat of Assyria and a great difference in character of two princes.

Outline:

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- 5-7 The Foreign Armies Approaching
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Preparatory Reading: II Kings 18-19; Isaiah 7-8,10; Isaiah 36-37.

Related Links:

- A. *Exposition of Isaiah 7* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-7.pdf>.
- B. *Exposition of Isaiah 8* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-8.pdf>.
- C. *Exposition of Isaiah 10* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-10.pdf>.
- D. *Hezekiah: Life and Lessons (outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/hezekiah-lessons.pdf>.
- E. *Virgin Daughter of Zion (slides)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/virgin-daughter-of-zion.pdf>.

Introduction:

- A. Our God is the King of nations, but He is also King of righteousness, and He rewards good and evil.
- B. God chose Isaiah's ministry for Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, and Isaiah includes much about it.
- C. The event and timing of this chapter is Sennacherib's invasion of Judah during the reign of Hezekiah.
 - 1. Shebna and Eliakim, the two princes of Hezekiah later in the chapter, had roles against Assyria.
 - 2. The defense preparations are consistent with what the Bible tells us about Hezekiah at this time.
 - 3. The invaders included Persians (Elam) and Syrians (Kir), nations in Assyria (II Kgs 16:9; Am 9:7).
 - 4. The invaders only approached it; they did not take captives or raze it like Nebuchadnezzar or Titus.

***** *The Fearful Situation in Jerusalem – Verses 1-4* *****

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

- A. The burden here is against Jerusalem by virtue of clear identification later (Is 22:9-10).
- B. How is the city, often called Mt. Zion, called a valley city here by the inspired prophet?
 - 1. Remember how Babylon was described in its chapter – desert of the sea (Is 21:1).
 - 2. Consider how Jerusalem will soon be identified in a peculiar way – Ariel (Is 29:1).
 - 3. Jerusalem as a city was above the Judean plain but below area mountains (Ps 125:2).
 - 4. By comparing scripture with scripture, we find God calling it a valley (Jer 21:13).

5. With several mountains forming the city (Zion, Moriah, etc.), there were valleys.
 6. With Jerusalem now reduced by moral measures, it was more like a valley city.
- C. Why is Jerusalem, with Epicureanism and Fatalism now in it, called a city of vision?
1. Because God's temple was there and the ministry of many prophets and priests.
 2. Prophets were called *seers* (I Sam 9:9); God revealed by *visions* (I Sam 3:1; Is 11:1).
 3. Recall that David desired God's house for His beauty and to inquire (Psalm 27:4).
- D. The prophet opens God's indictment against Jerusalem by asking about current actions.
1. What was the problem, God asked, for so many people to be on their housetops?
 2. Housetops were where the fearful went for a better view of the streets or approach.
 3. Housetops were where the fearful went to mourn or pray (Isaiah 15:3; Jer 48:38).

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

- A. God asked, because the city once had lots of exciting business and noise – a joyful city.
1. When times are good and life secure, there is joyful activity in streets (Zech 8:4-5).
 2. But the grievousness of war is terrible and ruins such peace and joy (Lam 2:11-12).
- B. Jerusalem had dead, not courageous in battle, but while fleeing, by famine, suicide, fear.

3 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.

- A. The rulers considered here have fled from far – they were rulers of Judah's fenced cities.
1. Remember, when Sennacherib first entered Judah, he took walled cities (Is 36:1).
 2. They were not the rulers of Jerusalem, for Hezekiah and immediate crew were fine.
- B. These terrified men, some were slain as in the previous verse, kept very close company.
1. They joined with others going AWOL from the approaching army of the Assyrians.
 2. They were physically together for there is comfort in numbers when facing danger.
 3. Instead of being in their individual places of duty to protect, they had fled together.
 4. Now they were in the same place together, cowering in Jerusalem, terrified to fight.
 5. They had archers with them – think! – the weapons that could strike from a distance.
- C. It is too bad (in some respects) that we do not have an imminent threat of ruin to test us.
- D. Instead we have the reality of pleasure and prosperity that ruin men's character and zeal.

4 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.

- A. This total change in atmosphere in Jerusalem – the spoiling of the Jews – crushed Isaiah.
1. Isaiah told those near him not to observe or intervene, for he was fully inconsolable.
 2. Leaders and rulers must have the public good deep in their consciences and actions.
 3. He could by vision see the whole city and all the problems, some of which follow.

- B. When a leader, even a ministerial leader, must weep, sometimes it is better in private.
 1. He sought the privacy here for he had already determined against being consoled.
 2. The grief and trouble he could see against the church by vision was overwhelming.

***** *The Foreign Armies Approaching – Verses 5-7* *****

5 For 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.

- A. Isaiah saw God’s judgment of Judah as a terrible day by Sennacherib’s Assyrians army.
 1. There was trouble of all kinds – the grievousness of war cannot be rightly overstated.
 2. The foreign army in Judah would trample down everything in its path (Is 7:17-25).
 3. They would break down the walls of the cities, a very serious blow to infrastructure.
- B. There were two other kinds of trouble – the total perplexity and crying to the mountains.
 1. Israel mocked the perplexity of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, but now they had their own.
 2. They cried out of fear with loud voices that reached the mountains and echoed back.
- C. Learn this lesson! The decreative and efficient cause of this turmoil was their Lord God!
 1. You do not know fear or trouble until God purposes you will tremble in perplexity.
 2. The idea most Christians have of God does not allow for such chastening like this.
 3. This is the Lord GOD of hosts – Jehovah God of angels – turned against His people.
 4. If you resist long enough, due to His longsuffering, He becomes an enemy (Is 63:10).

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

- A. Remember that Assyria was an empire – consisting of many nations and mercenaries.
 1. Therefore, there will be overlap with other empires, for they used the same peoples.
 2. Isaiah has already used several plural references to nations (Is 5:26; 13:4; 17:12-13).
 3. Elam = Persians = or Iran today, which was a part of the large Assyrian territory.
 4. Kir = Syrians = migrated from Mesopotamia to north of Israel (II Kgs 16:9; Am 9:7).
 5. This obviously is not Kir of Moab, which we found to be Kirharaseth (Isaiah 15:1).
- B. The Persians here are noted for their archers and use of horses in and out of chariots.
- C. The Syrians here are noted for shields, so together there is plenty of offence and defense.

7 And 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. The very best valleys for orchards or vineyards or livestock or homes will be occupied.
- B. An occupying, marauding army is another of the very destructive aspects of warfare.

- C. The king of Assyria sent a great army to present itself at the gate of Jerusalem (Is 36:2).
1. Rabshakeh brought this army from Lachish to Jerusalem. This need not be 185,000.
 2. It seems that Sennacherib kept the main body of the army at Lachish (II Chron 32:9).

***** *The Foolish Trust in Preparations – Verses 8-11* *****

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

- A. Sennacherib's army found and destroyed Jerusalem's defense – likely the fenced cities.
1. Walled cities throughout Judah provided refuge for farmers and protected Jerusalem.
 2. But when God is in a military campaign like this, the covering or defense is nothing.
 3. The French, foolish as can be, trusted the Maginot Line that Hitler's panzers ignored!
- B. The foolish, faithless Jews of Jerusalem (not Hezekiah) looked to defense preparations.
1. Armor is often defensive or protective items, not offensive weapons, but can be both.
 2. The house of the forest? Armory in Jerusalem of Lebanese wood (I Kgs 7:2; 10:17)!
 3. Hezekiah had prepared armaments (II Chr 32:5), and it was to those the city looked.
- C. Hezekiah made defensive measures, but he trusted in God like we should (Prov 21:31).

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

- A. The Jews examined their walls, found the weak spots, and repaired them (II Chr 32:5).
- B. They altered the water flow to keep it from the Assyrian army (Is 22:11; II Chr 32:3-4).
- C. The Jews trusted armaments, but Hezekiah trusted in God (II Kings 18:5; Prov 21:31).

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

- A. These Jews to an excess and with little or no faith measured and counted their building.
1. They would need to know the defenders and residents in each sector of the city.
 2. Based on their census, which without faith was sin, they allocated food and weapons.
- B. Houses that gave the enemy an advantage or hindered the city's defense, they destroyed.
1. When you start destroying homes in a city for defense, you know the fear is great.
 2. They took every precaution to protect themselves – their error was emphasizing it.
- C. Let us be men of faith like Hezekiah and put our trust in God rather than anything else.

11 Ye 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.

- A. Here is the second reference to altering water for their defense (Is 22:9; II Chr 32:3-4).
 - 1. There are two walls in Jerusalem mentioned when Chaldeans came (II Kings 25:4).
 - 2. Hezekiah had also built an additional wall that is referenced elsewhere (II Chr 32:5).
- B. But God rebuked them for forgetting the Maker of Jerusalem that had designed the city.
 - 1. They should have looked first to the God of Jerusalem and His blueprints for safety.
 - 2. They emphasized their engineers to reroute the water and rebuild walls, but not God.
 - 3. God had designed it – *beautiful for situation* – for Melchisedec and Jebusites earlier.
- C. While preparations are wise and acceptable, the emphasis must always be faith in God.
 - 1. Hezekiah made defensive measures, but he trusted in God like we should (Pr 21:31).
 - 2. God had made Jerusalem ... the water and its supply ... and is always a better wall.
 - 3. Where is your trust? ... for health? ... for marriage? ... for business? ... for promotion?
 - 4. Where is your trust? ... for children? ... for recession? ... for pestilence? ... for nation?
 - 5. When you line up and do what others do, God will not bless – you took His name.
 - 6. Fearing God, loving God, and obeying God will multiply efforts more than anything!
 - 7. Hezekiah, trusting God the most, prayed boldly and took his medicine, in that order.

***** *The Fatalistic Choice of Pleasure – Verses 12-14* *****

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

- A. In that terrible time of fear by the approaching Assyrian army, God called to repentance.
 - 1. The very situation should move men to examine themselves to repent (Eccl 7:14).
 - 2. Isaiah and other prophets of the time called Judah to repent (Is 1:19-20; 3:10-11).
 - 3. From Moses' warnings to Solomon's prayer, repentance was right for times like this.
 - 4. There are times to cry, mourn, fast, and beg God in self-examination and repentance.
 - 5. Note the terms here – this is not praying before meals or attending a prayer meeting.
- B. Difficult times may require greater efforts, but only after finding all your sins to repent.
- C. There are times to do these things to restore the joy of salvation (Jas 4:8-10; Rev 2:5).
 - 1. When the judgment falls it will be too late, for then God has chosen to punish you.
 - 2. When death approaches or arrives, it will be too late, for you will meet Him in sin.

13 And 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.

- A. Instead of self-examination and repentance, faithless Jews in Jerusalem chose to party.
- B. They took a fatalistic, epicurean, stick-my-head-in-the-sand approach to the preaching.

1. It was fatalistic, for they accepted death in the end, but they would party until death.
 2. It was epicurean, for they exalted joy, gladness, gorging on meat, and drinking wine.
 3. It was ignorant, for such activities never make a man better or help him think right.
- C. Many Christians are like it today. They are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.
1. No matter what combination of fatalism, epicureanism, or ignorance, they are fools.
 2. They are easily visible to all – for they usually choose their little lives over the Lord.
 3. Their future is certain – God will not allow His own to get away with such idolatry.
 4. They reject sound doctrine, for they want fables and entertainment (II Tim 4:3-4).
 5. They rail against fire-and-brimstone preachers as Neanderthal errors of Puritans.
 6. They want Christian joy as they call it in such excess it defiles anything Christian.

14 And 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.

- A. What a revelation! What horrible news! But well deserved by these fun-loving idiots!
- B. While Benny Hinn may get a word of wisdom about a kidney stone, Isaiah did of death.
- C. Those that had said they would party until they died, would arrive at death very soon.
- D. These wicked men would not participate in general mercy but rather die in presumption.

***** *God Demoted Shebna the Treasurer – Verses 15-19* *****

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

- A. We are not told very much about these two men and the reversal of their political offices.
 1. Yet, there is great warning and encouragement to faithfulness on a personal basis.
 2. The previous section of this chapter dealt with national tragedy; this with individual.
 3. We are not told much of Euodias and Syntyche, but Paul got our attention (Phil 4:2).
 4. You may forget national sin and its punishment, for God rewards men one at a time.
 5. Sinners will be rewarded with demotion and destruction, righteous with promotion.
 6. We pray for our nation, if we might be some of the righteous few to save Sodom.
 7. Only truly righteous souls save Sodom by prayer, so it is you personally (Jas 5:16).
- B. Every man shall bear his own burden; there will be no excuse or escape (Gal 6:3-5).
- C. References, titles, and few events are recorded (II Kgs 18:17 – 19:5; Isaiah 36:1 – 37:5).
- D. Shebna was the treasurer for Hezekiah and over the king's or David's house (Is 22:22).
 1. Little can be said about him, and becomes speculative, but our God did not like him.
 2. His name is but noise to *Hezekiah* (strength of Jehovah) or *Eliakim* (God raised up).
 3. He was likely a foreigner – by name, no father named, and no political conscience.
 4. He very well could have been a holdover, an incumbent, from the wicked king Ahaz.
 5. Jewish tradition says he pressed the fortifications and communicated with Assyria.

6. His office may have been comparable to a prime minister or chief of staff for us.
 7. The authority and influence of *government, father, key of the house of David, glory*.
- E. So let us assume an incumbent officer from Ahaz, the wicked father of king Hezekiah.
- F. But let every reader get the real lesson – God judges individual men for their actions.
1. The God of heaven sees the affairs of nations and judges them, but also each person.
 2. Every man shall bear his own burden; there will be no excuse or escape (Gal 6:3-5).

16 What 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?

- A. God by His servant Isaiah, the man of God for those people, confronted this high officer.
1. God deals with His people most of the time by ministry of prophets (Hosea 6:4-7).
 2. God chose Paul to war against first-generation Christians of the N.T. (II Co 10:1-6).
 3. Paul charged Timothy and Titus to do the same with 13 chapters (II Timothy 4:1-4).
- B. Isaiah – *Who do you think you are ... building a glorious, kingly tomb for your honor?*
1. By what authority, your own or what sponsors, do you engage in this arrogant idea?
 2. Who gave you a right to burial in Jerusalem – get buried in your own pagan country?
 3. From Jerusalem’s history, we know there was a royal cemetery (II Chron 21:20).
 4. What are you doing while alive, without approval, building a monument to yourself?
 5. Isaiah criticized or mocked this monument of a tomb to himself in Jerusalem’s rock.
 6. Jesus our Lord deserved such a tomb for His short stay, but not Shebna (Matt 27:60).
 7. Graving is cutting or marking stone, and this man was cutting out a stone sepulcher.
- C. There are many points that could be made or estimated about the evil of his tomb plans.
1. Men should wait for others to determine the marker of a grave, especially politicians.
 2. A foreigner already enjoying Judah’s goodness, he should have been buried at home.
 3. As a politician, he should live frugally for the benefit of those trusting his policies.

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

- A. God’s sentence – *Listen! You will not die in peace for a state funeral and burial here!*
- B. Note *surely* – God will send a strong enemy to carry you away to an ignominious burial.
- C. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you, or the opposite.
- D. The fulfillment is not given to us, but he mighty have been hauled off by Sennacherib.

18 He 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.

- A. Note *surely* – God will violently reverse your fortune and throw you away to a far place.

1. As a sling or discus thrower, the violent turn's centrifugal force will send you flying.
 2. The violent toss of a ball with additional centrifugal force can send it great distances.
- B. You will die in another nation – maybe Assyria – with a fitting dishonorable discharge.
- C. The chariots you rode in for glory in Jerusalem will shame Hezekiah's administration.
- D. Jews claim he defected to Sennacherib, who abused him by tying him to tails of horses.

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

- A. The Lord is the first person pronoun *I* here. Do not mind the frequent changes of person.
1. Isaiah had God in the third person (Is 22:17-18), but then he switched to first here.
 2. The third person male singular *he* here is Hezekiah by reference to his lord (Is 22:18).
 3. Being pulled down from a state, or office, is a demotion usually done by executive.
- B. Hezekiah personally demoted him from being treasurer and over the house of David.
1. Comparing scripture – Shebna was treasurer here – but only scribe to Rabshakeh.
 2. Promotion cometh from the Lord, and demotion comes from Him also (Ps 75:6-7).
 3. Like Pharaoh and Haman, God may have wanted him to suffer before getting to die.
- C. It is always a joy to see righteous men promoted quickly and beyond any expected role.

***** *God Promoted Eliakim to Treasurer – Verses 20-25* *****

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

- A. Learn a lesson – there is always someone to take your place that will be better than you.
- B. God and Hezekiah demoted Shebna, and they at the same time promoted Eliakim to it.
- C. You should love slavery or being another man's servant, as God called Eliakim here.
- D. Here are the great men of the earth – described as God's servant – are you one, reader?

21 And 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.

- A. Think of what you read here! These words are to Shebna about Eliakim! Painful indeed!
- B. The robes, girdle, and authority that Shebna so loved would be transferred to Eliakim.
- C. Eliakim my servant will faithfully discharge the high office and take care of this nation.
- D. It does not matter who you are or your office, God raises up and puts down (Dan 2:21).

22 And 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.

- A. God declared to Shebna that He would give the great authority of the office to Eliakim.
- B. We still use terminology like this when we give a visiting dignitary keys to the city.
- C. Shoulders are often used for bearing the greater burdens of state, as with Christ (Is 9:6).
- D. We must not go too far, but Jesus used these words to describe Himself (Rev 1:18; 3:7).

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

- A. God would settle Eliakim solidly in office, as his name also means – *God will establish*.
 - 1. The similitude of a nail is used here for not moving and for hanging burdens on it.
 - 2. God chose the office; God chose the man; God establishes His chosen man in office.
- B. God promised that Eliakim would bring great honor to his family by his use of office.
 - 1. What a contrast with the ignominious end of Shebna detailed in the verses above.
 - 2. The family of Hilkiyah, no matter how many, would rejoice and benefit by his reign.
- C. We must not see what is not here, but Jesus surely was promoted for His Father's throne.

24 And 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.

- A. The similitude here is of a wall-hanging by a sturdy nail in sure place to hold up much.
 - 1. While we may suspend clocks or pictures this way, we also do so with shields, etc.
 - 2. The practice was to suspend valuable things for public display and additional beauty.
- B. The family of Hilkiyah would all depend on and benefit gloriously from his use of office.
 - 1. We are not told, but Eliakim may have been of the family of David by some relation.
 - 2. There is contrast between Shebna shaming David's house and Eliakim the opposite.
- C. Hilkiyah's family tree – the offspring and issue – is compared here to vessels for wine.
 - 1. The nail to hold them up would be sufficient for all of them from very small to large.
 - 2. Some Bible similitudes, like this one, are wonderful in their creative imagery of fact.
- D. We could, if we desired without direct Bible, see Christ as a nail for His Father's house.

25 In 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.

- A. A nail similitude for Shebna had not been made yet (Is 22:15-19), so it is in conclusion.
- B. The coming terrible reversal of fortune would most surely occur by the word of Jehovah.
- C. This verse is to finish with Shebna – who thought he was a nail in a sure place forever.
 - 1. He was hard at work to build himself a monumental tomb – he hoped to die in office.

2. God would remove Shebna, the nail here, from office, cut him down, and drop him.
- D. The burden that was on him should be cut off – the family of Shebna would be ruined.
 1. Those vessels, like with Eliakim before, would be cut off and not have any support.
 2. Think of all the sycophants and leeches following a man like Shebna – all dumped.
- E. Never do anything to cause the LORD of hosts to be disappointed and cut you down.
- F. Always remember that you are not your own, but others depend on your faithfulness.