

Isaiah 22

Verses 1-14 give input relating to the coming destruction of *Jerusalem* at the hands of the Babylonians. Keep in mind that Isaiah was allowed to see these events before they actually occurred. In fact, it was many years after Isaiah's death that they came to fruition, for Assyria was the world power in Isaiah's day, not Babylon.

Is. 22:1 The oracle concerning the valley of vision. What is the matter with you now, that you have all gone up to the housetops?

When I, personally, was in Jerusalem, I realized that even though the city is situated on a mountain, there are much larger mountains surrounding it. Therefore, it feels as though it sits in a *valley*. Because Isaiah received this *vision* (prophecy) in Jerusalem, located in a *valley* so to speak, the phrase, “*valley of vision*” is used.

Remember that what Isaiah is describing here took place after his death and during the ministry of the prophet Jeremiah. I will, therefore, write this section using the past tense—since, from our frame of reference, the event has already occurred.

In Jeremiah's day, the inhabitants of Jerusalem retreated to their *housetops* to get a better view of the enemy, the Babylonian army.

Is. 22:2 You who were full of noise, You boisterous town, you exultant city; Your slain were not slain with the sword, Nor did they die in battle.

Before Babylon attacked, Jerusalem had been *full of noise*, a lively and energetic city. During the attack, however, many of the inhabitants died due to *famine*—not by means of *the sword* (read 2 Kings 25:1-3, Jeremiah 52:6, Lamentations 1:19, 2:12, 2:19, 4:4-5, 4:9).

Is. 22:3 All your rulers have fled together, And have been captured without the bow; All of you who were found were taken captive together, Though they had fled far away.

Even though *the men of war*, along with *the king* (King *Zedekiah*), played the coward and were the first to flee from Jerusalem, they were later *captured* by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25:4-7; Jeremiah 52:7-8). Sin truly makes children of men. Why else would the common people be abandoned by their leaders and left defenseless against their captors?

Is. 22:4 Therefore I say, "Turn your eyes away from me, Let me weep bitterly, Do not try to comfort me concerning the destruction of the daughter of my people."

Isaiah wept *bitterly* when he was allowed to see the future *destruction* of God's people at the hands of the Babylonians. The Hebrew word for “*weep*” points to agony, an overflowing type of lamentation.

Is. 22:5 For the Lord God of hosts has a day of panic, subjugation, and confusion In the valley of vision, A breaking down of walls And a crying to the mountain.

Isaiah saw the future *panic, subjugation, and confusion* that God's people would suffer at the hands of the Babylonians. Jerusalem, *In the valley of vision*, fell in 586 B.C. at the hands of King *Nebuchadnezzar* (2 Kings 25:8-10).

Is. 22:6 And Elam took up the quiver With the chariots, infantry, and horsemen; And Kir uncovered the shield.

Elam (which is Persia—read the notes associated with Isaiah 21:2) and *Kir* are listed because they were located in the region of Mesopotamia—the location from which Babylon would spring forth after Isaiah's day and overthrow the Assyrians. This means that Isaiah saw the Babylonian armies marching toward Jerusalem over 100 years before the actual event. Be sure to remember that the events of verses 1-14 will transpire, not in Isaiah's day, but after he has died and his prophetic ministry has been completed.

Is. 22:7 Then your choicest valleys were full of chariots, And the horsemen took up fixed positions at the gate.

Isaiah saw the Babylonian armies filling the *choicest valleys* around Jerusalem and taking *up fixed positions at the gate*.

Is. 22:8 And He removed the defense of Judah. In that day you depended on the weapons of the house of the forest,

God *removed the defense of Judah* in the sense that *Judah* was not prepared for the coming Babylonian invasion (as is confirmed in verses 9-11). The phrase, "*the house of the forest*," makes reference to the royal armory of *Judah* (1Kings 10:17), an armory that did not contain sufficient weaponry to war against the enemy. Had *Judah* chosen to walk with Jehovah, she would have been prepared for anything that came her way. Sin truly brings about slothfulness.

Is. 22:9 And you saw that the breaches In the wall of the city of David were many; And you collected the waters of the lower pool.

It was after the Babylonians had breached *the wall of the city* that the people attempted to collect their emergency water supply. It was too late.

Is. 22:10 Then you counted the houses of Jerusalem, And you tore down houses to fortify the wall.

It was also after the Babylonians had breached the wall of the city that the people began *to fortify the city wall*. They had to use materials from their own *houses* to do so because they were so ill-prepared.

Is. 22:11 And you made a reservoir between the two walls For the waters of the old pool. But you did not depend on Him who made it, Nor did you take into consideration Him who planned it long ago.

The old pool, evidently the pool of Siloam, had been repaired; but the people were totally ill-prepared for what awaited them. Their lack of trust in God had resulted in disorganization and incompetence—the fruit of an unruly lifestyle.

Is. 22:12 ¶ Therefore in that day the Lord God of hosts, called you to weeping, to wailing, To shaving the head, and to wearing sackcloth.

God desired that His people repent, but they chose to disregard His plea.

Is. 22:13 Instead, there is gaiety and gladness, Killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, Eating of meat and drinking of wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die."

Instead of repenting, they scoffed at God's warning through His prophets.

Is. 22:14 But the Lord of hosts revealed Himself to me, "Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you Until you die," says the Lord God of hosts.

Scoffing such as that described by verse 13, which defies the chastisements of God, cannot be purged through any other means than physical death. This verse, by no stretch of the imagination, teaches that these Jews had an opportunity to repent after death. Read 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 to see that *there was no remedy* for their disobedience—no second chance.

Is. 22:15 ¶ Thus says the Lord God of hosts, "Come, go to this steward, To Shebna, who is in charge of the royal household,

Shebna was over the entire *household* of the king in the sense that his power was superceded only by the king (of Judah). Therefore, *Shebna* would have been responsibility for much of Judah's ill-preparedness.

Is. 22:16 'What right do you have here, And whom do you have here, That you have hewn a tomb for yourself here, You who hew a tomb on the height, You who carve a resting place for yourself in the rock?

Shebna was more consumed with the beauty of his personal *tomb* than the welfare of the people. He, therefore, abused his position for the purpose of personal gain.

Is. 22:17 'Behold, the Lord is about to hurl you headlong, O man. And He is about to grasp you firmly,

The notes associated with the following verse cover this verse as well.

Is. 22:18 And roll you tightly like a ball, To be cast into a vast country; There you will die, And there your splendid chariots will be, You shame of your master's house.'

The Lord would *cast* *Shebna* out of the land, meaning that his body would never rest in his tomb. The *vast country* into which *Shebna* was banished is uncertain, maybe Assyria.

Is. 22:19 "And I will depose you from your office, And I will pull you down from your station.

Before *Shebna's* exile, he would first suffer humiliation through losing his position of authority. This is confirmed by 2Kings 18:18, 18:37, 19:2, Isaiah 36:3, and 37:2; for *Shebna* is made reference to as a *scribe* while *Eliakim* is referenced as serving *over the household* of the king. Therefore, after *Shebna's* demotion to *scribe*, *Eliakim* would fill his position and serve over the household of the king, a fact confirmed by the next few verses.

Is. 22:20 "Then it will come about in that day, That I will summon My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah

God would *summon* His *servant Eliakim* for the purpose of honoring him.

Is. 22:21 And I will clothe him with your tunic, And tie your sash securely about him, I will entrust him with your authority, And he will become a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

God would *clothe* Eliakim with Shebna's *tunic* and *sash* and give him Shebna's *authority*. Unlike Shebna, Eliakim would care for the people as a *father* cares for his children.

Is. 22:22 "Then I will set the key of the house of David on his shoulder, When he opens no one will shut, When he shuts no one will open.

Eliakim would possess *the key of the house of David*. The phrase, "*When he opens no one will shut, When he shuts no one will open,*" points to the fact that any decision Eliakim made would stand unless it was overruled by the king himself. This also meant that Eliakim determined who would be allowed to see the king. He, therefore, held *the key* of the king who sat on David's throne; for all of the kings of the southern kingdom of Judah could trace their lineage back to King *David*. It is Jesus who holds this *key* today (Revelation 3:7).

Is. 22:23 "And I will drive him like a peg in a firm place, And he will become a throne of glory to his father's house.

Eliakim would be *a peg in a firm place*. The word "*peg,*" however, is not pointing to a peg used to hold the outside edge of a tent. The *peg* that Isaiah is alluding to was driven into the center pole of the tent, the most important pole of the entire structure. It was on this *peg* that the tent's owner would hang his most treasured belongings. This *peg*, Eliakim, would be driven *in a firm place*; and *his father's house* would hang its entire *glory* on him due to his integrity, obedience, and faithfulness. What power he would possess!

Is. 22:24 "So they will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, offspring and issue, all the least of vessels, from bowls to all the jars.

The notes associated with the preceding verse apply here as well. Obviously, Eliakim would be an important figure in the life of the nation.

Is. 22:25 "In that day," declares the Lord of hosts, "the peg driven in a firm place will give way; it will even break off and fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut off, for the Lord has spoken."

This verse must apply to Shebna—not Eliakim. As is stated in the notes associated with Isaiah 22:15-19, Shebna was demoted due to sin. Thus Shebna, the previous *peg driven in a firm place* (v.25), did eventually *give way*, causing *the load hanging on him to be cut off* and given to another peg driven in a firm place, Eliakim.