

Isaiah Chapter 22

Verses 22:1-14

The valley of vision refers to Jerusalem, located on the hills surrounded by dominating mountain ranges.

The gathering storm of judgment will dump its greatest torrents on Jerusalem herself.

The coming Babylonian invasion will cause the people to go up to the housetops to observe the siege of the city.

Verses 22:1-7

Why is Jerusalem in such terror?

Her slain men are not slain with the sword, but with famine; or, slain with fear, disheartened.

Their rulers fled, but were overtaken.

The servants of God, who foresee and warn sinners of coming miseries, are affected by the prospect.

But all the horrors of a city taken by storm, faintly shadow forth the terrors of the day of wrath.

Kir and Elam are pictured as mercenaries of Babylon.

The choicest valleys which had known the blessing of prosperity, will then be full of chariots of the invading army.

The prophet calls for weeping, mourning and sackcloth (repentance), but instead the people have developed the attitude of eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.

Isaiah 22:1 "The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?"

“Valley of Vision” referred to Jerusalem, since God often revealed Himself to Jerusalem in visions.

However, the unrepentant inhabitants display a marked lack of vision in their oblivion to the destruction that awaited them.

“What aileth thee now?”

The prophet reproached the people for celebrating with wild parties when they should have been in deep repentance because of their sins.

Apparently, he anticipated a condition that arose in conjunction with Jerusalem's fall to the Babylonians (in 586 B.C.).

But similar incursions by the Assyrians (in either 711 or 701 B.C.), from which the LORD delivered the city, had prompted the revelry among the people.

It was a custom of the people, in and around Jerusalem, to rest on the roofs of their houses.

It appears much of their recreation took place there as well.

We remember from another lesson that we decided that "burden" meant prophecy.

It appears that Isaiah had seen this vision from a low area near Jerusalem, looking up to the city.

It seems they have overlooked weightier things and become idle.

They are all on the housetop most of the time.

This is describing a society fixing its mind on worldly pleasure.

Isaiah 22:2 "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."

"Stirs", in the verse above means crashing, or loud clamor.

It appears from this, they did not even go to fight against the enemy that was now encamped around them.

It really seems there was no armed combat at all in the city, but they were surrounded by the enemy.

The city was wholly given to pleasure.

"Sword ... battle":

Death came through starvation or disease as the Babylonians besieged the city.

Isaiah 22:3 "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."

It seems the rulers have given up without a fight.

The rulers of importance here, does not just mean the ruler, but all in authority.

It really appears they quickly saw they were trapped, and tried to escape.

The enemy caught them and put leg or arm chains on them, and hooked them together with the others.

Rather than defend the city the way they ought, the leaders fled to save their own necks and in doing so, were captured (2 Kings 25:4-7).

The archers are completely surrounding the city, so they are the ones who have captured those fleeing the city.

Isaiah 22:4 "Therefore said I, Look away from me: I will weep bitterly, labor not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people."

Isaiah's pain was deep.

He could not participate in the revelry because he saw the reality of the spiritual issues.

The terrible outcome of the land and the people is so great, that Isaiah's grief is overwhelming just telling of it.

I will weep bitterly; or, "I will be bitter", or, "bitter myself in weeping".

It denotes the vehemence of his grief, the greatness of his sorrow, and the strength of his passion.

Because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people; his countrymen, which were as dear to him as a daughter to a tender parent.

Now spoiled, plundered, and made desolate by the ravages of the enemy, in many cities of Judea.

In war, it seems sometimes the women are spoiled, as well as the stealing of gold and silver in the land.

This could be one of several times, such as the trouble Jerusalem will have at the end of the age.

We can even apply this to the society we live in today.

The lifestyle of most is one based on pleasure of the flesh.

Even much church worship is based on an appeal to the flesh of man over the spirit of man.

Isaiah 22:5 "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."

The physical "breaking down of the walls", could be speaking specifically of the wall that surrounds old Jerusalem.

In the spiritual sense, "breaking down of the walls", could be loosening up one's moral values.

For it is a day of trouble.

To Hezekiah, and also Jerusalem, and all the inhabitants of the land.

And of treading down; and of perplexity by the Lord of hosts in the valley of vision.

In Jerusalem, besieged, and threatened with desolation.

Which threw the king and his nobles, and all the inhabitants, into the utmost perplexity, confusion, and distress.

And all this was not merely from men, nor was it by chance, but by the permission and appointment of God.

To humble his people for their sins, and bring them to a sense and acknowledgment of them.

Breaking down the walls: of the fenced cities, with their battering rams, at the time they besieged and took them.

And of crying to the mountains: looking and running to them for help and succor, for shelter and protection.

And crying so loud, by reason of their distress, as that it reached the distant mountains, and made them echo with it.

For it is a day of trouble and of treading down.

When our enemies trample on everything sacred and dear to us, and endanger all our best interests.

On a former occasion when the city was about to fall, terror had reigned among the citizens.

It was to occur again, leaving no room for merriment.

“The valley of vision”:

A prophecy concerning Jerusalem, so called, because it lay in a valley, encompassed about with mountains, and which was the habitation of the prophets or seers, and the seat of vision and prophecy.

"Vision", came from a word which means revelation.

This could be a valley of prophecy.

Notice, where this perplexing is coming from, the Lord GOD of hosts.

Isaiah 22:6 "And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men [and] horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield."

“Elam ... Kir”:

These lands had representatives in the Assyrian army that besieged Jerusalem.

The fact that they carried the quiver, means they were ready to fight.

It appears they were equipped for fairly faraway places.

They were equipped with chariots.

It also appears, that Kir discovered their weakness.

Isaiah 22:7 "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."

Valleys lying both in and around Jerusalem are to be full of enemy troops.

This shows a readiness to fight, which we did not see in the previous verses of this chapter.

The difference being, the others were pleasure seekers.

These Elamites were equipped for war and standing ready.

They had arranged guards to stay at their gate at all times.

They were not foot soldiers.

They had horses.

Verses 22:8-14

The weakness of Judah now appeared more than ever.

Now also they discovered their carnal confidence and their carnal security.

They looked to the fortifications.

They made sure of water for the city.

But they were regardless of God in all these preparations.

They did not care for His glory in what they did.

They did not depend upon Him for a blessing on their endeavors.

For every creature is to us what God makes it to be; and we must bless Him for it, and use it for Him.

There was great contempt of God's wrath and justice, in contending with them.

God's design was to humble them, and bring them to repentance.

They walked contrary to this.

Actual disbelief of another life after this is at the bottom of the carnal security and brutish sensuality, which are the sin, the shame, and ruin of so great a part of mankind.

God was displeased at this.

It is a sin against the remedy, and it is not likely they should ever repent of it.

Whether this unbelief works by presumption or despair, it produces the same contempt of God, and is a token that a man will perish willfully.

Isaiah says (in Isa 22:8-13), his countrymen will look to their own strength to defend themselves, while others of them will drown their sorrows as to their country in feasting, but none will look to Jehovah.

Isaiah 22:8 "And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armor of the house of the forest."

"House of the forest":

constructed by Solomon out of cedars (1 Kings 7:2-6), the structure housed weaponry (1 Kings 10:17), and other valuables (2 Chron. 9:20; Isaiah 39:2).

"The covering of Judah" is possibly speaking of the covering of weaknesses.

It could be saying, the armor is not very satisfactory, since it is made of wood.

Isaiah 22:9 "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."

“The breaches of the city of David”:

Not Jerusalem in general, but the fortifications of which, in times of peace, had gone to decay.

And which they had seen before, but took no notice of, being in safety; but now besieged, and in great danger.

They looked upon them in good earnest, in order to repair them, and secure themselves from the irruption of the enemy; for this is not to be understood of breaches now made by the Assyrian army, but of old ones, which had lain neglected (see 2 Chronicles 32:5).

The city of David, of course, is speaking of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is known for its water supply gathering.

Some of the conduits are directed into holding tanks, or pools.

The pool of Siloam furnished the city’s water supply.

Hezekiah’s lengthy underground conduit fed the pool for the Gihon Spring.

Isaiah 22:10 "And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall."

It seems that the houses which were not necessary for living purposes were torn down, and the material used to fortify the crumbling wall.

Hezekiah rebuilt the damaged wall (2 Chron. 32:5), but did so while trusting God.

His faith contrasts with that of the people Isaiah currently addresses (verse 11b).

Isaiah 22:11 "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."

This refers to the Gihon Spring, which the prophet sometimes referred to as the “upper pool” (7:3; 36:2; 2 Kings 18:17).

“Had respect unto him that fashioned it”:

Preparations for the city’s defense were purely external.

The people gave no thought to the Creator of the city, the pool, or the present crisis (32:1), against whom their physical defenses were useless.

This is a reprimand, because these dwellers in Jerusalem had not followed God who made the water supply in the first place.

It appears they were looking for the physical use of the water, and not at the One who provided the water in the first place.

This problem has come upon Jerusalem and the fallen away church of our day as well, because they have forgotten God.

I can also see in this that they were looking to the Old Testament (water), and not to the New Testament.

The Word of God is associated with the water.

Verses 12-13

“Sackcloth ... joy and gladness”:

In the face of a crisis that required genuine repentance, the people responded with hilarity and self-indulgence.

Contrast this spirit with the legitimate joy and gladness of God’s people (in 35:10; 51:11).

Isaiah 22:12 "And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:"

This is a time of mourning brought on because of their falling away from God.

Baldness and wearing of sackcloth tell us so much about what is going on here.

They tell us this is a spiritual problem.

These people, of whom much was required, were weeping and mourning because God was allowing this to happen to cause them to repent.

God was saying to them, "Repent and I will turn to you again".

2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Isaiah 22:13 "And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die."

Paul cites the same philosophy (1 Cor. 15:32): if there is no resurrection, enjoyment in this life is all that matters.

It utterly disregards God's eternal values.

This is the attitude of those who do not have a close relationship with God.

It seems to be very prevalent in our society today.

This describes a very fleshly attitude toward life.

I would call it having every thought and deed centered on self.

Eat all they want, stay drunk, and have a big time until they die.

Isaiah 22:14 "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."

Isaiah is saying, "Surely they will die in their sins".

They are not willing to repent and turn from their wicked ways.

Their sins will not be forgiven, because they have not repented and turned to God.

The Lord's prediction about the outcome of Isaiah's ministry (6:9-10), found fulfillment.

Verses 15-25

Shebna is referred to as the treasurer and apparently was the leader of the pro-Egyptian faction in Jerusalem.

Thinking his position was secure, he had already ordered a large sepulcher (tomb), to be raised in his memory.

Instead, Isaiah predicts that he will soon be demoted and will eventually die a pauper in a foreign country.

Shebna was replaced by Eliakim during the reign of Hezekiah, as indicated (in 2 Kings 18:18).

The key of the house of David refers to the responsibility of protecting the Davidic line.

Isaiah 22:15 "Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, [even] unto Shebna, which [is] over the house, [and say],"

Where do you have your treasure hidden?

Are you of God, or the world?

Possibly of Egyptian extraction, this man was second in authority only to the king.

Other Old Testament references to Shebna refer to him as a “scribe” (36:22; 37:2; 2 Kings 18:37; 19:2), his position after his demotion from steward as prophesied by Isaiah (see verse 19).

Isaiah 22:16 "What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulcher here, [as] he that heweth him out a sepulcher on high, [and] that graveth a habitation for himself in a rock?"

Shebna arranged construction of a tomb fit for a king as a memorial for himself, when he should have been attending to the spiritual affairs of Judah.

The prophet condemns his arrogance.

This "sepulcher" is speaking of a grave.

I believe this is asking the question, where is your final resting place?

We choose our own eternity.

The sepulcher (final resting place), will be in heaven, or hell.

We choose our destiny.

If we abide in the “Rock”, we will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus.

This is the same meaning as the sepulcher on high.

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

The sepulcher, based on the earthly dwelling, leads nowhere but to the destruction of the body. Dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

Isaiah 22:17 "Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee."

Literally, mighty or valiant man.

Isaiah referred to Shebna’s glorious estimate of himself.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ who separates the sheep (His followers), from the goats (the lost).

Jesus, at harvest time, gathers His own to heaven with Him.

The goats, or the chaff, are gathered and burned.

Isaiah 22:18 "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."

Far from receiving a luxurious burial in Jerusalem, Shebna died a shameful death in a foreign country.

This is speaking of the wrath of God.

It will be such a shame that many, who profess to belonging to the LORD, will be thrown away in that day.

Christians, there is more to belonging to God than just joining the church.

Isaiah 22:19 "And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down."

“Drive thee from thy station”:

Arrogance caused Shebna’s demotion from steward to scribe some time later in Hezekiah’s reign (but before 701 B.C.; 36:1-2).

Notice, it is not Satan who drives the transgressors out.

It is the LORD.

Notice in the next two verses, it appears that God is saying something about law and grace.

Those who were taught the law of God had turned away into selfishness and sin.

Isaiah 22:20 “And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:"

Eliakim, who replaced Shebna as steward or prime minister, was highly honored in being called “My servant”.

Isaiah 22:21 "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."

“Father ... Judah”:

The steward had supreme authority under the king's oversight.

To me, this is speaking of the robe of authority being removed from the law and given to grace, or Jesus Christ our Lord.

Eliakim, in the furthest sense, is speaking of Jesus.

The "robe" speaks of authority, the girdle speaks of God.

It is said of Jesus, "The government shall be upon His shoulders".

The true believer in Christ is on His shoulders and on His heart.

He (Jesus), is our High Priest.

He is even spoken of as Everlasting Father.

There is no other way given unto men to be saved, but through Jesus.

Isaiah 22:22 "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."

This authority to admit or refuse admittance into the king's presence evidenced the king's great confidence is Eliakim.

Jesus applied this terminology to Himself as one who could determine who would enter His future Davidic kingdom (Rev. 3:7).

Jesus opened the door to the Father for all believers in Christ, when the veil in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom at the time of His crucifixion.

The veil symbolized the body of Christ.

Jesus also took the keys to hell away from Satan.

Jesus is the key to life.

He opens, and no man can close; and closes, and no man can open.

He is Life.

He is the only Way.

Isaiah 22:23 "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."

“Throne of glory”:

The “throne” symbolized the honor Eliakim was to bring to his family.

Jesus is eternal.

He is fastened, and no man can unfasten.

Jesus is even now seated at the right hand of the Father.

We will reign with Him.

We will sit with Him at the throne of God, if we are believers.

Isaiah 22:24 "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."

“Hang upon him”:

Returning to the figure of a peg (verse 23), Isaiah noted how Eliakim’s posterity will use him to gain glory for themselves.

The Christians will receive glory with Christ.

There is no other name.

All believers in Christ are sons of God; we have been adopted into the family of God.

We are heirs with Christ.

There are vessels of silver and vessels of gold.

We are not all the same, except that we are saved.

Isaiah 22:25 "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]."

“Nail ... removed”:

After a time of faithful service, Eliakim faltered and fell, and all “hanging” on him fell as well.

This is speaking of the time when Jesus said "It is finished".

His work is done.

He is seated in heavenly places at the right hand of the Father.

We (Christians), will not be a burden to Him any longer.

The reason we know this is absolutely true, is because the LORD spoke it.

If He said it, it will come to pass.

We see the full payment for our salvation has been paid, and we are justified (just as if we had never sinned), in Jesus.

Isaiah Chapter 22 Questions

1. What was a custom highly practiced in Jerusalem pertaining to recreation?
2. What does "burden" mean in verse 1?
3. What were they doing, instead of taking care of important things?
4. What is "stirs" in verse 2?
5. The whole city was given over to _____.
6. What had those in authority done, when the enemy came?
7. What causes the great grief of Isaiah in giving this prophecy?
8. What kind of lifestyle do most people have today?
9. What does "vision", in verse 5 mean?
10. What could this valley be called?
11. What 2 things could be meant by "breaking down of the walls"?
12. What does the quiver, in verse 6, show us?
13. The choicest valleys shall be full of _____.
14. What is the "covering of Judah" speaking of?
15. What is "house of the forest" speaking of?
16. What had been used to fortify the wall?
17. What prophetic meaning of the water, in verse 11, is possible?

18. What is the time of mourning brought on by in verse 12?
19. What is verse 13 describing?
20. This iniquity will not be purged from them, until they _____.
21. Where do you have your treasure hidden?
22. What is the "sepulcher" in verse 16?
23. What are two possibilities for a final resting place?
24. Who separates the believers from the non-believers?
25. What is verse 18 speaking of?
26. Who drives the transgressors out?
27. What is the "robe" speaking of in verse 21?
28. Who is the true High Priest?
29. Who opens, and no man can shut?
30. The steadfastness of Jesus is shown as what in verse 23?
31. Christians have been _____ into the family of God.