

Notes

Judgment against Jerusalem (22:1–25)

- Isaiah 22 marks a dramatic turning point in Isaiah's series of prophecies against the nations. Isaiah now turns his attention to Jerusalem itself. Jerusalem was God's chosen city, the place where He had set His name and where His temple stood (Ps 132:13-14). Yet God shows that His own people are not exempt from judgment when they refuse to trust and obey Him.
- The people of Judah had developed a false sense of security. Instead of trusting in the LORD, they relied on military preparations, political alliances, and human wisdom. Spiritual privilege is never a substitute for trusting God. The more truth and blessing God gives, the greater our responsibility to walk by faith (Amos 3:2).

1. Jerusalem's False Security (22:1–8a)

- Isaiah begins with "*the burden of the valley of vision*," a title referring to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built on a rocky ridge within the Judaeian mountains and is surrounded by valleys (cf. Ps 125:2). The city was called the "valley of vision" because it was the place where God revealed Himself through His temple, His prophets, and His Word. Yet despite enjoying great spiritual privileges, Jerusalem had become spiritually blind.
- Isaiah pictures the people rushing to their rooftops in fear as danger approached. Instead of seeking God in prayer, they reacted with anxiety and panic. Their actions revealed that their confidence was not in the LORD but in their own ability to manage the crisis. At the same time, Jerusalem is described as a "joyous city." Rather than mourning over sin and seeking God's mercy, the people carried on with careless celebration. Their attitude reflected spiritual blindness and a refusal to face reality (cf v13).
- Isaiah describes the devastation that would come upon the city. The people would not fall in combat but through the horrors of siege - famine, disease, calamity, and captivity that befell the city. Even the leaders whom they trusted would fail them. Human strength, political power, and military resources would prove unable to save.
- The prophet himself responds with deep sorrow. Seeing the coming judgment, Isaiah weeps bitterly for his people. His example reminds us that God's truth must always be proclaimed with compassion. Like Isaiah, and later like the Lord Jesus who wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), God's servants should grieve over sin while faithfully proclaiming God's Word.

- The real cause of Jerusalem's downfall was not the strength of the enemy but the removal of God's protection (v8). The LORD had preserved Jerusalem for generations, but now He withdrew His covering because of the people's persistent unbelief. Their greatest problem was not outside the city walls but within their own hearts. Historically, these prophecies were first fulfilled in the Assyrian crisis during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18–19; Isa 36–37) and later in the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Religious privilege do not automatically produce faithfulness. God calls His people not merely to possess the truth but to trust and obey Him.

2. Jerusalem's Misplaced Confidence (22:8b–14)

- Faced with a growing military threat, the people focused on human solutions rather than seeking God.
 - First, they trusted in weapons instead of the LORD (v8b). Isaiah notes that they looked to the armoury for protection (cf 1 Kgs 7:2; 10:16–17). Their confidence rested in military resources rather than in the God who had repeatedly delivered His people throughout history.
 - Second, they trusted in walls instead of worship (vv9–10). The people repaired damaged sections of the city's defenses and strengthened its fortifications. They worked hard to protect the city while neglecting their relationship with God.
 - Third, they trusted in human ingenuity instead of God's provision (v11). They secured the city's water supply through Hezekiah's famous tunnel system (2 Kgs 20:20; 2 Chron 32:30). This was an impressive engineering achievement and a wise strategic move, but the people focused on the resource while forgetting the One who had provided it. The LORD had long provided for Jerusalem despite its natural vulnerabilities. Yet they trusted their own wisdom while failing to acknowledge their dependence upon God.
- Outwardly, their preparations looked prudent; inwardly, they revealed unbelief. Isaiah is not condemning wise planning or responsible stewardship. The problem arises when preparation replaces dependence upon God. Jerusalem's tragedy was not that they prepared, but that they prepared without prayer, repentance, and faith (Ps 127:1).
- While the people strengthened their defenses, God called them to repentance. He desired weeping, mourning, humility, and brokenness over sin. Yet instead of repenting, the people responded with feasting and

pleasure: "*Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die*" (v13b). Rather than turning to God, they chose self-indulgence and resignation. Because they refused to repent, God declared that their sin would not be removed.

3. Jerusalem's Failed and Faithful Leaders (22:15–25)

(i) The Rebuke of Shebna, 22:15–19

- Shebna was a powerful official who served as steward over the royal household (2 Kgs 18:8; Isa 36:3). Instead of using his position to serve God's people, he used it to promote himself. His pride is seen in the elaborate tomb he prepared for himself, seeking honour and recognition.
- The LORD confronted Shebna's arrogance and announced his downfall. The man who sought to establish a lasting legacy would be removed from office, humiliated, and ultimately die in a foreign land (cf Luke 12:16–21). His downfall illustrates the truth that "*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall*" (Prov 16:18). Shebna's failure reminds us that leadership is not a platform for self-promotion. God opposes pride and calls His servants to humility and faithful stewardship.

(ii) The Promotion of Eliakim, 22:20–25

- In contrast, God raised up Eliakim and described him as "*my servant*." Unlike Shebna, Eliakim faithfully served God and His people. God entrusted him with authority and responsibility, describing him as "*a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem*." A faithful leader seeks the good of others rather than personal glory.
- The LORD also entrusted Eliakim with "*the key of the house of David*," symbolizing authority over the royal household. Yet this imagery points beyond Eliakim to Jesus Christ. In Revelation 3:7, Christ identifies Himself as the One who possesses the true Key of David. Eliakim therefore serves as a foreshadowing of the greater Steward who would come. Although Eliakim was faithful, his authority was still temporary. Therefore, our ultimate confidence must rest in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Jerusalem's tragedy was not the absence of religion but the absence of genuine trust in God. God humbles the proud and honours those who faithfully serve Him. Ultimately, the chapter points beyond Jerusalem, Shebna, and Eliakim to the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Holder of the Key of David. His authority is perfect; His kingdom is everlasting & His people will never be disappointed when they trust in Him.