

Series: Isaiah

Title: The Burden and Hope of the Valley

Text: Isaiah 22: 1-25

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Isaiah 22: 1: The burden of the valley of vision.

Jerusalem is the valley of vision. A valley because surrounded by mountains. Of vision because it was the city to which God gave his prophets, his seers.

Babylon was called the "desert of the sea" for though it was as wide and full as a sea, yet they had no vision from God and were as dry as the sea.

I. THE BURDEN OF THE VALLEY

Isaiah 22: 1: What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops? 2: Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city:

The city that was once full of people, full of daily business and trade, full of joy and mirth, had become silent. Everyone had gone up to the tops of their houses. The LORD's question is saying, "Why NOW? Why only NOW, have you become serious and quiet?" So what had happened?

Isaiah 22: 2:...thy slain *men are not* slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.

When the enemy Assyrian army approached, it was not the sword that slew the men, but fear.

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.

The weakest of the enemy forces were its archers. They were sent to the forefront first. Yet, at the sight of the archers, the men of Judah fled from the outlying cities into Jerusalem, leaving their cities to be easily taken by the Assyrian. This is when they became serious.

Isaiah 22: 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. 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.

Isaiah had warned the people, day and night, as a faithful watchman of the LORD. Yet, his gospel had gone unheeded. Isaiah weeps bitterly as his prophecy comes to pass. Now be sure we catch who did this. The Assyrian was the instrument used but verse 5 says: 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.

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

We saw before, Elam, the Elamites, are the Persians. Kir is Media or the Medes. Both were at this time, under the rule of the Assyrians, fighting for the Assyrian against Jerusalem.

Isaiah 22: 8: And he discovered the covering of Judah,...

The "covering of Judah" refers, literally, to the outlying cities that served as a defense, a shield, a covering to protect Jerusalem.

2 Kings 18:13: Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sen-nach-e-rib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

But "the covering of Judah" also refers to her hypocrisy. The inhabitants claimed to trust God. But by what they did in the face of danger, their hearts were uncovered by God.

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

First, they looked to their weapons. The "armour of the house of the forest" was a building which served as an armory. It was made from the cedars of Lebanon, so called the "house of the forest." When the Assyrian began to take the outlying cities then Jerusalem looked to their armory, to their weapons and shields and so on.

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. 10: And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. 11: Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool:...

Secondly, they looked to their walls for defense. They began rebuilding the walls and towers of defense around Jerusalem. Between the outer wall and the inner wall, during the time of peace, families built houses. Now they broke down those houses and used the stones and timber to fortify the walls.

Thirdly, they looked to water. The water of the lower pool flowed out of Jerusalem. They stopped this flow so as not to provide water for the approaching Assyrian army. The old pool, which was outside the city, they drained into the ditch between the outer and inner wall, where the houses which they broke down had stood. This prevented Assyrians from this water, supplied the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and also served as a sort of mote of defense between the two walls.

So we see that they wisely took great measure to save themselves. The LORD does not fault them for doing this but for what comes next.

Isaiah 22: 11:...but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

The LORD made the water. The LORD made the earth from which they got their stones and timber to make their walls, and materials to make their weapons. The LORD brought forth the enemy who terrified them so. They looked to all those things, but they did not look to the LORD who made it and who is able to save or to destroy. This is the very best wisdom natural man can muster.

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:

The LORD God of hosts sent the Assyrian empire up against Jerusalem and he sent his prophet for one purpose: for Judah to confess and mourn over their sin and unbelief, to give Judah reason to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and to turn from their vain wisdom and self-confidence to the LORD.

Now we are about to see what all men will do unless God personally, irresistibly turn us in power.

Isaiah 22: 13: And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine:

Illustration: Eldorado--boom town.

As the people from the outlying cities flooded into the city it was like a boom town. They built up their fortifications. The city flourished with commerce. Seeing all the people, all the defenses, how good it was for business, they swelled with pride that they had saved themselves and were in great security. As we have seen throughout the book, they went about their religious charade as if they truly worshipped God, as if it was God

who had blessed them. Rather than fasting--mourning their sin and seeking God's mercy--they feasted and lived in ease. Also, what he says next was most offensive to God:

Isaiah 22: 13: ...let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.

They did not say this because they thought "tomorrow we shall die" but they said it, mocking Isaiah and his gospel, which is mocking the LORD of hosts of himself. It is not that they necessarily said this verbally, but this was the heart of the people toward God, toward his prophet, and toward his Word. God had uncovered the false covering of Judah.

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.

The sin of all God's elect was purged by the Lord Jesus Christ. God delights to show mercy. He visits his children in the time of love giving the life, faith, repentance, complete entrance into the realization of his grace. He visits his children with the rod of correction and turns them to him by his grace. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

But our LORD shows us here that the sin of unbelief, of scoffing at the gospel of Christ, at his witnesses, with that stiff neck that goes on in rebellion in the face of God is unpardonable sin.

Matthew 12:32: And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

The LORD turned them over in just judgment.

You might say, "Well, if this is what sinner's will do unless God intervenes in sovereign grace, why then does God blame us? Haven't men simply done what he made men to do?"

Romans 9: 19: Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20: Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? 21: Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22: *What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23: And that, he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

God is just to turn over rebellious sinners. And he is just to save some from among rebellious sinners if he so chooses.

Instead of cursing God for doing what is just and right, behold in this people in our text, that you must fall at his feet and beg him to have mercy on you! As we have seen throughout the book of Isaiah, that which is woe for the wicked, is well for those he has made righteous by putting us in Christ. If you are a vessel of his mercy, he will make known to you the riches of his glory and you will come to him a "mercy beggar!" That is exactly what we see in the next half of the chapter.

II. THE HOPE OF THE VALLEY

Isaiah 22: 15: Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts,

This is the LORD's word to Isaiah. I am here preaching God's word to you because God has sent me to you. What he does next, is what God does through his Word.

Isaiah 22: 15: Go, get thee unto this treasurer, *even* unto Shebna, which *is* over the house,

Treasurer--means "master of revenue and profit." Shebna means "vigor and danger". Shebna was the master of revenue and profit over king Hezekiah house. He was a dangerous man, full of vigor, out for his own personal gain. His counsel was vain counsel--"build the walls, look to the water, look to the carnal weapons, eat, drink and take your ease, pay no mind to the word of Isaiah." He was chief among the scoffers at God and his gospel.

Application: What a picture of every one of God's elect in their unregenerate state! Shebna stands here as a picture of Adam who fell and took all mankind with him, of Satan, and of man's own unregenerate sin-nature. We heeded our own council, looked to our wisdom and defenses. We were the product of Adam's sin and the slaves of Satan.

Ephesians 2:2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

And like he did here with Shebna, for a time, God left us to be ruled by the deceitful master of revenue and profit. BUT...all along we were the king's house--the house of King Jesus. So God, in great mercy, sent his prophet to us as he did to Shebna.

Mark 3:27: No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

As I read these next words, I pictured the LORD dealing with Satan, that prince of the power of the air, and with our old defiant man of flesh, when the LORD first came in saving grace.

Isaiah 22:...and say, 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?

What business do you have here, this is the king's house! Whom hast thou here? What fruit have ye brought forth? Who here will save you? Why have you lifted yourself up in this the place as if you will live here forever? The end of your reign over my house has come.

Isaiah 22: 17: Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee. 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. 19: And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

The LORD binds Satan from reigning over his elect. He subdues the old nature within a sinner even as he did Shebna. This flesh is cursed, it is dead, it must be tossed out into the large country, return to the dust. We must be brought to be ashamed of all the chariots we once gloried in so that we can say with Paul,

Romans 6: 21: What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?

Satan and our old man must be driven from his station, from his office, from his reign. **From thy state shall he--the LORD of hosts--pull Shebna down.** Isaiah's word is my word to you.

III. WHEN GOD BINDS THE OLD MASTER OF PROFIT AND REVENUE HE ALWAYS PUTS IN PLACE A NEW MASTER OF PROFIT AND REVEUNE.

Isaiah 22: 20: And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah is also known as Azariah. Eliakim means "my God will raise up." He stands here as a type of Christ.

Christ Jesus is God's servant, whom God chose and whom God called.

Hebrews 5:5: So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

Isaiah 22: 21: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle,

The robe of glory that was Adam's as the first man, has been given to Christ Jesus. Satan vainly took to himself the glory that belongs to God. All of God's elect in their sin-state vainly took to ourselves the glory that belongs to Christ.

This robe signifies that Christ Jesus the Lord is the Chief Officer in the LORD's house. The girdle symbolizes his faithfulness through and through.

Isaiah 11:5: And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Revelation 1:13: And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Isaiah 22: 21:...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.

We thought the government was in our hands, but the LORD committed the government of his church into the hands of his Son, Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus is the Everlasting Father to the true inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the true house of Judah. He faithfully finished the work God gave him to do, faithfully fulfilled the law and the prophets, faithfully manifested the righteousness of God. God robed him with the sin of his people that he might robe us in his righteousness. Christ declares God a just God and a Savior by satisfying justice and purging his people of all their sins. And that is not all.

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.

Christ alone rules in his house. In absolute, uncontrollable, irresistible power Christ opens the treasures of his word and grace to his redeemed. He gives wisdom and increases knowledge. When he opens, none shall shut; when he shuts, none shall open.

John 5:22: For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23: That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

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.

Christ Jesus is the believer's Nail in a sure place.

Hebrew 6:19: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Christ Jesus is the glorious throne--the King--to his Father's house.

Isaiah 32: 1: Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. 2: And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest;...

Some hear the gospel that God has *mercy on whom he will have mercy and hardens whom he will*, and they argue, question, strive, debate, because natural man can not get our wormy minds to calculate that this is the glorious riches of God's grace. I said to you before, instead of raging in your enmity toward God, turn from

your self and beg God for his mercy. But this I know from experience, when Christ Jesus exercises his absolute, sovereign Wisdom and Power in you, you will certainly do what he says next:

IV. THE SURE, EFFECTUAL RESULT OF SOVEREIGN GRACE?

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.

All the glory of God the Father's house, you shall hang upon Christ Jesus the Son of God your Savior. You shall rejoice that the glory of electing grace is that God choose you in Christ. You shall rejoice that the glory of God's sovereign predestination is that he predestinated you to be conformed to the image of his Son. You shall rejoice that the glory of God's irresistible call is that he called you unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. You shall rejoice that the glory of God the Father's preserving grace is that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Will all his people rejoice this way? **The offspring and the issue**--all the children and the children's children, first to last. **All vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons**--no matter the vessel, some Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor, male and female, some hold more, some hold less, but all these holy vessels hang all on Christ Jesus alone.

Isaiah 32: 3: And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. 4: The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammers shall be ready to speak plainly.

But what about our former confidence and refuge?

Isaiah 22: 25: In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that [WAS THOUGHT TO BE] fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that *was* upon it shall be cut off:

Preacher, how can you be so sure of all this? This is how I am sure and this is the only way you will be made to submit in full assurance to what I have spoken here today. Read the last phrase with me:

FOR THE LORD HATH SPOKEN!

AMEN!