

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 • Read Isaiah 22

Questions from the Scripture text: Against whom/what is this burden pronounced (v1a)? What question does v1b ask? What has occurred (v2)? What is curious about what has not caused it? In addition to the slain, what fate have others met (v3)? What is Isaiah's response (v4)? Whom does he identify as the victim here? What sort of day is this (v5)? From Whom has it come? What cities are attacking Jerusalem in the vision (v6)? How many of them are there (v7)? What has God done (v8a)? In what had they hoped (v8-11b)? But in Whom did they not hope (v11c-d)? What had YHWH called them unto, for their forgetfulness of Him (v12)? But how had they responded instead (v13)? What will be the result for this generation (v14)? What member of Hezekiah's court is specifically addressed (v15)? How is he planning to honor himself (v16)? How has he puffed himself up already (v18c)? But what will YHWH do to all these plans (v17-19)? To whom, instead, will the Lord give his office (v20-21)? How effective will Hilkiah be (v22-23)? But, even with this "secure peg" what will happen (v24-25)?

What do individuals learn from God's judgment on proud nations and churches? Isaiah 22 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **even in the midst of judgment for national/church pride, a believer is called to serve humbly and faithfully.**

Hill of Victory? No. Valley of Vision. Before Jerusalem was the city of David, its advantages height produced such a natural fortification that the Jebusites gloated that the blind and the lame could defend it against David (cf. 2Sam 5:6). As we've seen throughout the book of Isaiah, it is precisely such a spirit of self-sufficiency that the Lord is condemning not only in His people, but in all of the nations. We may remember how, particularly with Egypt in ch 19, the Lord attacked the precise things of which they were proud, and which they found their safety. Now the very title that Isaiah gives to the city ("Valley of Vision," v1, 5) sets us up for what He will drive home in v11c-d. Whatever we are proud of will become for us not a hill, but a valley, if we are forgetful of the Lord. In Isaiah 22, Jerusalem serves as a "valley" from which we see that man's strength is weakness apart from the Lord.

A disaster that distresses the prophet, v2-7. The city of joyous shouting (v2a-b) turns into a cemetery (v2c-d). The proud warriors and rulers don't even get a chance to fight. The slaughter is completed when the disgraced and fleeing rulers are taken down by archers (v3a-b), and anyone that survives is enslaved (v3c-d). Isaiah foresees the Babylonian (Elam, Kir in v6, and an innumerable army in v7) invasion that will eventually come, and the annihilation of the holy city (v5) brings the prophet to bitter tears (v4). When we see the church under chastening, we must not despise her in our flesh, but weep over her in the Spirit.

The pride that provoked the Lord, v11-14. Let men always remember: God opposes the proud (cf. Pr 3:34, Ja 4:6, 1Pe 5:5). What does a Jerusalem under judgment do? They look into their armory (v8b); they secured a water supply (v9, 11a-b); they cannibalized their houses to bolster the wall (v10). But the one thing that they didn't do was humble themselves before the Lord in looking to Him (v11c-d). When God brings distress upon a people, He gives them an opportunity to recognize and mourn over their sin before Him (v12). If you are too busy trusting in your preparations and "living for the moment" (v13), you risk sealing the fate of your situation. Nothing can turn back the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem now (v14).

Personal application of national/corporate providence. Shebna and Eliakim (cf. 2Ki 18:37) become examples for us of how to make personal application of the lesson that the Lord is teaching Jerusalem in this valley. Shebna, apparently even knowing that destruction was coming, was still interested in making sure that he would be buried in style (v15-16). But the Lord dashes those plans/hopes (v17-18). His personal destruction makes way (v19) for Eliakim to take his place (v20-21). For his part, Eliakim serves faithfully and reliably (v21-23), even though God's personal providence to him does not override the coming destruction of the nation as a whole (v24-25). He was a sure peg, but the Lord would still tear the nation down.

Sometimes, men are called to live faithfully in days of judgment and calamity. Let them keep their hearts humble before the Lord and be faithful in their service—leaving unto God what will ultimately come of it.

What resources has the Lord given to you? How do you ensure that you only use them in humility and dependence upon the Lord? When have you been afflicted? How did you take that as an opportunity for self-examination and repentance? To what service have you been called in your nation? In the church? How must you perform it, even if the corporate entity is about to be devastated in judgment?

Sample prayer: Lord, too often we have been like Shebna and others like Him in Jerusalem, who hoped in their earthly resources and just sought to enjoy themselves while they could. Forgive us for such pride before You. We have missed opportunities for self-examination and repentance and have provoked You all the more. So grant that, whatever the circumstances, we would be as Eliakim, by the righteousness and life of Jesus Christ Himself, through whom we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP11 "My Trust Is in the LORD" or TPH244 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah 22. These are God's words. The burden against the valley of vision. What else you now that you have gone all gone up to the housetops? You are full of noise, a tumultuous city, a joyous city. You're slain men are not slaying with the sword nor dead in battle.

All your rulers have fled together. They are captured by the archers, although our found in you our bound together. They have fled from afar. Therefore, I said, look away from me. I will wheat. Bitterly, do not labor to comfort me. Because of the plundering of the daughter of my people.

For it is a day of trouble and treading down and perplexity. By the lord, yahuy of hosts in The valley of vision breaking down the walls. And of crying to the mountain. Elim bore the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen and cure uncovered the shield. Let's all come to pass.

That your choicest valleys shall be full of chariots. And the horsemen shall set themselves in a ray at the gate. He removed the protection of judah, you looked and that day to the armor of the house of the forest. You also saw the damage to the city of david that it was great and you gathered together.

The waters of the lower pool. You numbered the houses of jerusalem. The houses you broke down to fortify the wall. You also made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to its maker. Nor did you have respect for him, the fashioned, it long ago?

And that day, the lord yahweh of hosts called for weeping and mourning for baldness. For getting this. Sackcloth, but instead joy and gladness laying oxen and going cheap. Needing men can eating meat and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink for tomorrow. We die. Then it was revealed in my hearing by Yahweh of hosts, surely for this iniquity, there will be no atonement for you.

Even to your death. Says the lord, y'all way of hosts. That says lord y'all we have hosts go proceed to this steward. To Shebner, who's over the house and say, What have you here and whom have you here that you haveq and a sepulcher here? As he, who he hears himself a suboker on.

Hi. Who carves the tomb for himself in a rock. Indeed, yahweh will throw you away. Violently a mighty man and will surely seize you? And we'll surely turn violently and toss. You like a ball into a large country. There you shall die and there your glorious chariots shall be the same of your master's house.

So I will drive you out of your office from your position. He will pull you down. Then it shall be in that day. I will call my servant alia came son of ikea. I will clothe him with your robe and strengthen him with your belt. I will commit your responsibility into his hand.

He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. The key of the house of david, I will lay on his shoulder. So he shall open and no one shall shut and he shall open and no one shall open how a fascinate. As a pagan, a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.

They all hang on him, all the glory of his father's house the offspring and the posterity. All the vessels a small quantity from the cups to all the pictures. And that day says, you all live host, the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed. And be cut down and fall on the burden that was on it.

Will be cut off. For y'all play has spoken. So far this reading of gods inspired and And there is worked. The name of the burden. The burden against the valley of vision. Is addressed to. Jerusalem, who is the? Subject of isaiah 22. But it takes the name from. Verse 5 and what god calls.

Jerusalem and particularly this period of time. And has humbling jerusalem by the destruction. That comes With the Babylonian destruction of the city. Jerusalem was proud of itself. You can hear and Verse 8 and following, they look to the armor of the house of the forest. Uh, they look to their water sources that they had.

That they had collected. They looked to the fortificate fortification the fortifying of the wall. And you can hear the. Careful numbering of the houses and To take inventory of the material that they would have for fortifying, the wall. Um, In verse 10. So they were proud of themselves and their preparations and their resources and that's what they put their hope in.

And, They did not put their hope in the one who had given them. A city on a hill. The one who had given them the walls, the one who had given them the water sources The one who had given them whatever armory armor they had. Weapons, they had. And so jerusalem viewed itself as a city.

Of strength. On a hill. And the the phrase, then valley of vision. Refers to what they actually were in. That the lord was going to bring them through a low tide. In which they would be able to see things more clearly. The lord does that for us. Especially if we are his children.

Therefore, we will not be without chastening and we get proud. He brings us through a low time, he brings us through a valley in which will be able to see more clearly. Our dependence upon him. I need of him. That's where the phrase valley of vision comes from. That's why.

A book of. Uh, wonderful prayers. Um, That were collected from various spirit and sources. About how high and glorious God is and how lowly we are by comparison. But How sweet than it is to belong to him by faith when he does. Give us humility before him. And that's where that book's name valley of vision came from.

And do you recommend it? But, From Isaiah, 22. I'm not recommending appearance book. I'm recommending. The theology, the view of god, the view of ourself, that this chapter teaches us, And there's a danger then when the lord begins to humble you, Of resorting to the flesh. That when we go through a low time, we Rather than receiving.

The humbling from the lord and finding our hope in him. Allowing him to turn our hearts back to him. We? Just each things that we enjoy to eat drink things that we enjoy drinking. It. Fill our lives with amusement. And hopefully, we wouldn't say the line at the end of verse 13, let us eat and drink for tomorrow.

We die. Now carnal and fleshly, that is. But when it became obvious that They were going to be destroyed. Rather than humbling themselves. Rather than the weeping and mourning and baldness, and sackcloth that the yathway. Of hosts had called foreign verse 12. What did they do? Joy gladness laying oxen, killing sheep, eating meat, and drinking wine.

Now, of course, when that stuff ran out, they also Wept and started murdering and eating each other. And all sorts of horrible things that happened in the siege jerusalem. That are part of the reason for, Um, Isaiah, who's seeing the vision in verse 4 weeping bitterly and And refusing to be comforted.

Over the plundering of the people, over the plundering of jerusalem that he was. Foreseeing as god's prophet. But their initial reaction was well, why are we saving all this stuff? Let's have a great big party and enjoy ourselves because the industry store now. And Uh, we don't have to plan for the future anymore.

Live for the moment. And, But we can do that. Can't we in small ways? When we're discouraged or weary or humbled brought low in some way. And we decide to passify ourselves with earthly pleasures.

And so, the lord give us to To heed to, to understand his provenance rightly and respond to him rightly. In his providence and not. To find our comfort or recourse. To the flesh. And he teaches us that. This is something that Um, there's not just a lesson for churches and nations as it was to Judah and jerusalem which was both the nation and a church at this time.

There's also a lesson to individuals. Shabna was. An example. Of. The mindset of jerusalem at the time, he was a Yeah, here's a high official in the government and When it became clear that. Uh, jerusalem was going to go down. Um, He devoted time and resources to making sure he had a really good sepulcher really good tube.

So, he was going to have the Fanciest most impressive tomb. That would be a memorial to his greatness. How foolish was the way that he Responded. And the lord told him, no, you're not even going to occupy that thing that you had built for yourself. I'm gonna, i'm gonna cause your body to be flung out in the field, like a bowl.

But, Alia came son of hilkia. Even in a day like this, even in a day when Ultimately, The, the destruction of the city was determined. Uh, there was not going to be any turning away or postponing Of this event. You see that in verse 14, what did alia came to it?

When? The, when the position of need was open. He filled it and he was reliable. And he worked hard got described him as a secure pag in the wall. That they just because that's the one thing left that has any stability or strength to it. They just keep hanging more and more things on it.

You got this tiny little peg and all of the weight of the crumbling kingdom. Is on that one, man. And yet he's spoken of with honor by the lord. Until the day that the wall comes down and everything falls. Um, because the the fate of the kingdom as a whole, Was sealed at that point.

But it is a great encouragement, especially if you live in days of decline. And the church or in the nation. That god gives to each individual, his own providence. And you can have fellowship with the lord and be used for the good of those around you. And have useful service.

And and place of strength, even Even in sad, low days for the church. And sad low days for a nation. So, this lesson of humility before god and turning to him independence, upon him, That is not just for. Corporate entities like a church or a nation for a season.

But it is to be. Appropriated and applied. Individually. Even as we learn in many other, Situations in the scripture. Um, Some things in the book of Ezekiel, a couple statements and Jesus's letters to the churches and in the book of revelation. About how even in the midst of general judgment and chasing.

An individual man may still have honorable service to the lord and personal hope. And the And send me the lord. Give us to Take these lessons to heart, each of us individually. Um, As we see in verse 15 to the end of the chapter, And then also pray and And see.

That. Our church. Our nation would take these lessons to heart correctly as well. Whatever. Our father, we thank you for your word. We thank you. Um, for the faithfulness of your son, our lord jesus. And that is kingdom will never fall. And that he is as it were. Not just to secure pay but that everything That he bears a secure forever.

And so, we put all our Are hope in him. We throw our lot with him, we hang all our weight upon him. And we ask lord that you would give us humility before you that we would never Trust in our own wisdom, our own resources. Or the peculiarities of our providence.

Of the province you've given us, but That we would trust you and look to you to bless all the things that you have given us. That you would be all our hope. And that when you do bring this through seasons of Of chastening so that we are brought low.

That you would not allow us to find comfort or pleasure in the flesh. And miss the opportunity in the valley of vision. We pray, lord, that you would be sparing with us and And tender and not bring us. Through any more value than we need in our life. And that knowing that you are, So kind and compassionate that you would enable us to make good use.

Of whatever values you do. Bring us through that. There would be values of vision that we would see you clearly. That you would bring us to refresh to humility independence upon you. That are Hope and joy would Come again to be entirely in you. And so, we thank you for this portion of your word and we pray For your spirits application to us.

In jesus name, Amen.