

ISAIAH

Chapter 22

An Oracle Concerning Jerusalem

22 The oracle concerning the valley of vision. What do you mean that you have gone up, all of you, to the housetops, **2** you who are full of shoutings, tumultuous city, exultant town? Your slain are not slain with the sword or dead in battle. **3** All your leaders have fled together; without the bow they were captured. All of you who were found were captured, though they had fled far away. **4** Therefore I said: “Look away from me; let me weep bitter tears; do not labor to comfort me concerning the destruction of the daughter of my people.” **5** For the Lord GOD of hosts has a day of tumult and trampling and confusion in the valley of vision, a battering down of walls and a shouting to the mountains. **6** And Elam bore the quiver with chariots and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield. **7** Your choicest valleys were full of chariots, and the horsemen took their stand at the gates. **8** He has taken away the covering of Judah. In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest, **9** and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many. You collected the waters of the lower pool, **10** and you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall. **11** You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to him who did it, or see him who planned it long ago. **12** In that day the Lord GOD of hosts called for weeping and mourning, for baldness and wearing sackcloth; **13** and behold, joy and gladness, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” **14** The LORD of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: “Surely this iniquity will not be atoned for you until you die,” says the Lord GOD of hosts. **15** Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, “Come, go to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the household, and say to him: **16** What have you to do here, and whom have you here, that you have cut out here a tomb for yourself, you who cut out a tomb on the height and carve a dwelling for yourself in the rock? **17** Behold, the LORD will hurl you away violently, O you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you **18** and whirl you around and around, and throw you like a ball into a wide land. There you shall die, and there shall be your glorious chariots, you shame of your master's house. **19** I will thrust you from your office, and you will be pulled down from your station. **20** In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, **21** and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. **22** And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. **23** And I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house. **24** And they will hang on him the whole honor of his father's house, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons. **25** In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a secure place will give way, and it will be cut down and fall, and the load that was on it will be cut off, for the LORD has spoken.”

22:1–13 The notes on this prophecy assume that it refers primarily to the final Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 588–586 B.C. But it is also possible that the primary reference is to the siege by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in 701. (CSB)

22:1 *Valley of Vision.* A valley where God revealed himself in visions, probably one of the valleys near Jerusalem (see note on v. 7). See also v. 5. (CSB)

Intent unclear. A prophecy about Jerusalem (vv 8–10). By including Jerusalem in the oracles about the nations (chs 13–23), Isaiah indicates that the city of David has acted no differently than the nations. (TLSB)

Literally, “of the Valley of Visions,” that is, Jerusalem, where God vouchsafed revelations and visions in larger number than elsewhere, for which reason Jerome called the city the nursery of prophets. (Kretzmann)

In comparison to the higher surrounding hills, Jerusalem appears to be in a valley. One can look down on Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives today. (PBC)

you. Jerusalem’s residents. (TLSB)

housetops. From which they could look out and see the army coming. They were falsely confident of their success. (TLSB)

THIS is a prophecy of calamity against Jerusalem and above all against its chief and governor, who is here called Shebaniah. And it has to do with the first Babylonian captivity, for Jerusalem was captured twice. In a remarkable way the prophet here speaks figuratively. Up until now he has been foretelling the calamities of the neighboring nations, calamities they enjoyed hearing about, just as we are wont to flatter ourselves and consider all others fit to be afflicted and think that we can lawfully sin under cover of God’s name. This Isaiah is repudiating. “I will not spare you,” he says. “Because you are afflicted with similar vices, you will also be struck with similar punishment.” But as in the last chapter he called Babylon the wilderness of the sea, so he also calls Jerusalem by a new name, “the valley of vision.” There is an antiphrasis in the word “valley,” because Jerusalem is elsewhere called a mountain. It hangs on a kind of slope, which has Mount Zion on the south, the temple in the middle on an elevation, and on the downgrade the valley of Kidron, by which name he named the whole city. It is as if he were saying: “Until now you were the most famous mountain on earth, that is, when godliness and holy men flourished in you, but now you will be brought low, and yet you will not be a level plain but a valley. Your glory and fame will be reduced to nothing.” But by a Hebraic figure of speech the prophet calls it “valley of vision,” because it has had many seers, that is, prophets, as if it were called “valley of prophets.” And at the same time he reproves the ingratitude of the people of Jerusalem, because they have not believed so many prophecies. (Luther)

22:2–3 The people celebrate now, but their future is one of humiliating death and capture, in which the army does not fight and the leaders flee (cf 2Ki 25:4). (TLSB)

22:2 *tumultuous city and exultant town.* See v. 13; 5:11–12; 32:13. Jerusalem is behaving just like Babylon (see 21:5; cf. 23:7). (CSB)

“Full”—the situation of a former time, just like “tumultuous” and “exultant.” Shouting, that is, outcry, jubilation, rejoicing, because of the large population. This is dramatization and visualization of the calamity, as if to say: “I have predicted devastation for others; why do you, too, Jerusalem, head for the rooftops? Rich and poor, you run for refuge and hide yourselves on the rooftops, or you want to protect yourselves from the roofs. There is the rumor of war terrifying you, so that you wander hither and yon, you go up to the housetops to watch for the approaching enemies and to seek counsel.” (Luther)

not slain with the sword. Perhaps a reference to death from disease and famine when the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (CSB)

By the famine and pestilence caused by the siege of the city which the prophet sees before the eyes of his mind. The reference is probably to the time of Sennacherib, when the Assyrians overran the country and a secret understanding with Egypt was being prepared. (Kretzmann)

22:3 *leaders have fled.* King Zedekiah and his army fled Jerusalem but were captured near Jericho (see 2Ki 25:4–6). (CSB)

without the bow they were captured – Taken captive with ease, because they are without weapons, they do not even draw a bow to defend themselves. (Kretzmann)

The enemy will catch them in retreat. (TLSB)

23:4 *therefore I said* – The prophet assumes the role and the attitude of the people lamenting that calamity, as if to say, “Then you will mourn without consolation.” (Luther)

weep bitter tears – Literally, “that I may be bitter in my weeping.” (Kretzmann)

destruction of the daughter – The city indeed was not laid waste or destroyed, but the leaders and the people were led away. (Luther)

Jerusalem (Ps 48:11; Jer 8:19). Used only here in Is. (TLSB)

22:5 *has a day.* When the people will be killed and crushed and will be destitute of counsel, then there will be nothing but weeping and wailing in Jerusalem. And this will happen according to God’s plan to recall their sins and offenses to their memory. The king of Babylon would not have had so much power if God had not promised it and had not withdrawn His hand from the Jews. (Luther)

tumult. A fulfillment of the curse of Dt 28:20. (CSB)

From the noise of the enemies will come the killing and the crushing. At that time there was one kingdom of the Chaldeans and Persians. These are Elam. Kir was an outstanding city of Assyria. The men of Kir, he says; brandish their shields so that the sun glitters and gleams in them. (Luther)

22:6 *Elam.* Elamites probably fought in the Babylonian army. (CSB)

Kir. Perhaps another name for Media (see 21:2). (CSB)

Region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Not the Kir of Moab in 15:1. (TLSB)

uncovered the shield – By taking off its leather covering in preparation for the battle. Thus the coming of Israel’s enemies is described. (Kretzmann)

22:7 *choicest valleys.* The Kidron Valley lay east of Jerusalem (see Jn 18:1), the Hinnom Valley to the south and west (see Jos 15:8). (CSB)

Fruitful fields, orchards, superbly cultivated vineyards, they will have them all, and there will be chariots instead of crops. No one will be permitted to go in or out, because the horsemen have surrounded everything. (Luther)

horsemen took their stand – Ready to storm the city. Meanwhile the people of the city are aroused to the danger which is threatening them. (Kretzmann)

As a line of last defense for the city. (TLSB)

22:8 *covering of Judah*. During the Exodus, God supplied Israel with a cloud covering for its protection. (TLSB)

During the exodus, God supplied Israel with a cloud covering for its protection. (TLSB)

In that day you looked. So certain is the prophecy that Isaiah puts it in the past tense. (TLSB)

House of the Forest. Built by King Solomon out of cedars from Lebanon (see 1Ki 7:2–6; 10:17, 21). (CSB)

Built from cedars of Lebanon by Solomon to store weapons and wealth (1Ki 7:2–12). (TLSB)

No doubt this storehouse filled the Jews with pride and confidence. They felt secure because they still had this ancient symbols of past glory and power. (PBC)

22:9 *Lower Pool*. Probably the same as the “Old Pool” of v. 11. Hezekiah made a pool and a tunnel as a precaution against Sennacherib’s invasion (see 2Ki 20:20). The “Upper Pool” is mentioned in 7:3; 36:2. (CSB)

New system of supplying the city with water for the siege. (TLSB)

All this is said of the pillaging of Jerusalem, where there were two pools to alleviate the water shortage, the upper one farther away from the city, the lower one closer by. It is as if he were saying: “The enemies will take possession of the upper pool; therefore you must draw water from the lower one.” (Luther)

22:10 *you counted* – That is, you will take stock. Because the king of Babylon will carry everything away, you will collect money from house to house, you will construct a pool and a ditch and lead the water into the city. (Luther)

fortify the wall. Cf. Hezekiah’s preparations in 2Ch 32:5. (CSB)

They used reclaimed building materials to repair Jerusalem’s walls. Evidence of such activity was found in Jerusalem fortifications, likely representing Hezekiah’s preparations to oppose Sennacherib. (TLSB)

Repairing the breaches of the walls with the stones from the houses razed with that object in mind. (Kretzmann)

22:11 *reservoir*. To store enough water to endure a siege. (TLSB)

old pool. Jerusalem's older but still useful source of water. (TLSB)

did not look him. In 31:1 those who look to horses and chariots rather than to God are similarly condemned. (CSB)

They did not turn to God for help, though He supplied the water. (TLSB)

O hardened hearts, that do not acknowledge their guilt and in time of punishment do not return to Him who is afflicting them, but meanwhile soothe themselves by saying: "The temple of the Lord is with us, we are the seed of Abraham, the people of the just and holy God." What they suffer they will more quickly ascribe to the devil than to God, and to the sins of others more readily than to their own. They want to be martyrs without God, and they strut along in their own presumption. (Luther)

Their calculations and plans they disregarded the Lord altogether, although it was He at whose command the defenses were originally made and who caused the fountains to flow; it was He also who was preparing a severe punishment upon Jerusalem. (Kretzmann)

22:12 *in that day* – That is, a sad time will be proclaimed, not one in which you will repent of sins, but in which you will grieve over the present disaster. So it happens today also, but that prediction is despised and ridiculed just as it was then. No matter how much unhappy events were foretold by which these people ought to have been summoned to weeping, they were happy, indulged themselves, etc., in contempt of the prophets, against whom they said ironically. (Luther)

baldness. The hair was either torn out or shaved off (cf. Jer 16:6; Eze 27:31). (CSB)

called ... sackcloth. Marks of repentance. (TLSB)

22:13 *joy and gladness.* The same Hebrew phrase is translated "gladness and joy" in 35:10; 51:11, passages depicting great hope in connection with restoration. But this was a time to mourn (Ecc 3:4). See note on v. 2. (CSB)

eating flesh and drinking wine – In 1 Cor. 15:32 Paul cited these words against the Corinthians, who in like manner were mocking at the resurrection of the dead. (Luther)

Exactly the opposite of what God expects. They celebrate instead of repent. (TLSB)

They lived for the present without any thought either about the help of God or His judgment. They had no interest in the words of the prophets. The Lord could no longer reach them through affliction. They were hardened to the discipline of God. There was nothing left but certain judgment. (PBC)

22:14 *has revealed himself* – Revile the revilers through the Lord, as if to say: "You will certainly not indulge in that mockery with impunity, because the Lord sees, hears, and knows you completely. For our nature relies on things present and despises things absent. It cannot do otherwise unless it is threatened by the Word and Spirit of God from heaven. Again, our nature is arrogant in good times and broken up and despairing in bad times. (Luther)

Jesus spoke similar words about the Jerusalem of His day: “How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate” (Matthew 23:37-38). (PBC)

surely this iniquity will not be atoned. The use of “surely” is the language of an oath. (TLSB)

Unrepentant people will suffer the wrath of the Lord. The use of “Surely” is the language of an oath (cf 14:24; Dt 1:34; Jer 22:5). Jerusalem will not receive the gift of atonement; Isaiah did (Is 6:7). God established the Day of Atonement (Lv 16) so all of Israel could be forgiven. (TLSB)

22:15 *this steward* That is, to the treasurer or overseer of the temple or the princely court. The priests were close associates of kings and princes, and some also belonged to their councils. (Luther)

Shebna. Apparently a foreigner, possibly Egyptian; a contemporary of King Hezekiah. (CSB)

This steward, a high official responsible directly to the king, was a glaring example of the self-seeking pride of which Isaiah accused the people in vv 1–14. (TLSB)

over the household. A position second only to the king. (CSB)

Here is an example for all presumptuous men. But since he was in the court of King Hezekiah, it is certain that he was a good man. Else Hezekiah would not have upheld him. Such a man, then, is assailed with threats? Perhaps he was secretly unfaithful, or surely irreverent toward God. Otherwise he was a man both honorable and hypocritical, whom no one could judge except Isaiah. Thus this man, who had the fine reputation, is attacked, so that others who saw this say: “What will happen to us?” Or, through this the prophet intensified the people’s wrath not a little against himself, so that they said: “Not only does he attack us but also that excellent man who dwells in the king’s court with honor, is loved by the king, etc. To the devil with that prophet!” Behold, how the Holy Spirit must judge those whom the world cannot judge. Note, however, what He reproves in him, nothing but that he would carve a tomb for himself. (Luther)

22:16 *what have you to do here* – That is, what possessions and persons do you have? The prophet indeed speaks contemptuously with that magnate who thought he had all things and people in his power there, namely, as master in the king’s house, as chief over the food and finances, as friend of the king, of the princes, and of all the people. But Isaiah is speaking of the future and is visualizing how that man would have nothing, and in very brief words he shatters his presumption and confidence. (Luther)

cut out here a tomb. One’s place of burial was considered very important, and Shebna coveted a tomb worthy of a king (cf. 2Ch 16:14). (CSB)

Shebna carved a tomb for himself that he might be remembered; example of man’s narcissism (cf 14:13–14; Gn 11:4). Fine architectural tombs were found in Siloam, near Jerusalem. (TLSB)

Was that so great a sin? Is it a sin to have possessions? And to take care of them? Certainly there had to be some other vice in him, namely, security and neglect, in which he committed some secret sin or presumed that what Isaiah had foretold would not take place. A slip in faith is easy. So Moses, Aaron, David, Peter, all the apostles, Jerome, Augustine, and others fell. There has

always been some remnant of the flesh in the saints, as we see from 1 Cor. 10:12. Therefore let no one be presumptuous. Shebna, then, sinned in not believing the prophet and in calling others away from faith by his example. He was the instigator in despising the Word of God and of His prophet. Therefore the prophet asks him so confidently, “Who are you?” Altogether: “You will be nothing, you will keep nothing, in vain have you prepared for yourself so regal a tomb either in the house or in the garden, or in the rock or on the mountain. (Luther)

To construct a tomb for oneself denotes security, to desire to stay in that land and therefore to despise whatever the prophet said. It is not evil to make use of creatures, unless it be done in contempt of the Word of God. There is nothing so good, nothing so trivial that does not become evil and destructive when contempt of the Lord is added, and building a tomb for oneself is more serious in this way than is adultery or murder. (Luther)

22:17 *hurl you away.* Cf. Jer 22:24–26. (CSB)

His plans will come to nothing because the Lord will send him into exile. (TLSB)

It is as if he were saying: “You will not remain in this land but will be snatched away just as if some strong man were with a strong hand throwing something that could not withstand the throw. The hand of the Lord is the king of the Chaldeans. The opposite of what you planned will happen to you. You will not remain but be cast out. You will not be buried here nor with honors but out in the open, and you will be brought to a strange and ignoble land. You will not live at ease as you think, but you will be driven round and round, you will be thrown like a ball in a wide land, from disaster to disaster. (Luther)

Literally, “will whirl thee out with a whirl as a man,” that is, with the force of a strong man. (Kretzmann)

22:18 *around and around...like a ball* – This simile can be used to describe spiritual as well as physical trouble. For thus a terrified conscience is whirled about. It can come to rest nowhere, and nowhere has it peace. It seems that Shebna lived also under King Manasseh and perhaps became a tyrant when Manasseh was led into captivity. (Luther)

There you shall die. Apparently without an honorable burial (see note on 14:19). (CSB)

chariots. A sign of luxury and high office (see 2:7; Ge 41:43). (CSB)

Shebna also loses the trappings of his ostentatious lifestyle. His property will be given to one more worthy. (TLSB)

shame of your master’s house – That is, the shame which the house of his master would suffer through his fault would be the only thing which would accompany him to the grave. (Kretzmann)

Judah’s monarchy. (TLSB)

22:20–21 Transfer of the implements of authority clearly shows the change of authority figures (cf 1Sm 18:1–4). Authority was to serve the people. (TLSB)

22:20 *In that day.* When the Lord acts in judgment (see vv. 17–19). (CSB)

my servant. A title for the prophets and others used by God in a special way. (CSB)

Eliakim. See 36:3, 11, 22; 37:2. (CSB)

He was a supporter of the Word; Shebna opposed him. (Luther)

22:21 *I will cloth him* – A garment denotes the priestly ministry, a girdle the service at court. Here in short words are described the qualities of a good prince, qualities from which prince Shebna deteriorated. The prince should be a father of his country. Thus the servants of Naaman called him father in 2 Kings 5:13. Here the prophet speaks of one who shall be a father “to the house of Judah,” that is, to the whole kingdom. (Luther)

Signs of the office of steward. (TLSB)

commit your authority to his hand. By 701 B.C. (see 36:3) Eliakim had replaced Shebna, who was demoted to “secretary.” (CSB)

he shall be a father – This implies a concern for others and a tenderness and love like a father shows his dear children. (PBC)

He would use his position to care for the people, not to serve himself. (TLSB)

22:22† The mention of “father” (v. 21) and of the responsibility “on his shoulder” recalls the words about the Messiah in 9:6. (CSB)

Burden of responsibility was on him. (TLSB)

key to the house of David.† Power to determine the eternal destiny of mankind was to be vested in great David’s greater Son (see Rev 3:7). Cf. the “keys of the kingdom” given to Peter (Mt 16:19). (CSB)

Power to use the assets and resources of the kingdom on behalf of the king and people. This terminology is also used of Christ and is reminiscent of the power Christ gives to His Church (Mt 16:19). (TLSB)

In the Book of Revelation (Rev. 3:7) these words are cited as applying to Christ. It was customary for this people to carry keys around the neck and on the Shoulder. “I will give him the keys” means he will be the treasurer, the overseer of provisions and money, who will receive and disburse and without whose authority no one will receive or expend anything. This is what it means to close and to open. (Luther)

22:23 *peg.* Normally the Hebrew for this word refers to a tent peg, but here to a peg driven into wood (see Eze 15:3). (CSB)

Used to secure tents; a theme of trust and responsibility that surrounds the leadership of Eliakim. (TLSB)

After you, Shebna, have been thrown away, I will establish him and make his authority secure. The peg signifies the administration of the house. For thus we, too, call our house “the four pegs.” A fence signifies possession of the field. (Luther)

a secure place – That is, holding strongly, so that nothing can fall off it. A nail thrust into a ruin is easily moved. He says he will be firm and will uphold those whom he will govern, and he will faithfully rule over them. He will not be a reed shaken by the wind (Matt. 11:7), that is, he will not be influenced by either fear or favor. It is not enough to be a wise, useful, and honorable prince, if he is not also firm and serious. For there are many assaults on him who desires to govern well. (Luther)

throne of honor. Cf. 1Sa 2:8. (CSB)

His position will bring honor and respect to his family. (TLSB)

Solomon said: “A wise son makes a glad father” (Prov. 10:1; cf. 13:1; 15:20). He is the crown and glory of his father. A man wise in public administration is a great gift of God, and he is called a safe peg, or rather a rare gem, and through that one good man many good things come to be. The opposite is also true. He is called a *peg* because all cling to him, all business falls on him. (Luther)

That is, he will have a glorious throne. A good man is pleasing to God and useful in the state. Naaman the Syrian, of whom we read in 2 Kings 5:1, is an example. He was the source of more safety than the king of Syria. This man will have a throne, powerful and effective, which will then produce glory and adornment for the family and the tribe. (Luther)

22:24 *will hang on him* – This he says because he has called him a peg and then he shows whom he should govern. (Luther)

His children will also be honored by his position. (TLSB)

small vessels – Offspring, descendants, vessels, mixing bowls, and musical instruments I will hang on him. Solomon said (Prov. 20:12): “The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both.” What should a good man do against rebels? What would an obedient people be without a good magistrate? I will make him, he says, not be idle but govern his children, both those of the flesh and those of honor. He is the father, which is also an honorary name. Both old men and young men. *Vessels*, that is, other officials in various public positions. And he does not haughtily despise those who are less than he, neither the small nor the poor, but, on the contrary, these will come to him for refuge. (Luther)

22:25 *In that day.* † The time when the Lord will come in judgment. (CSB)

peg ... will give way. Eliakim, like Shebna, will eventually fall from power. (CSB)

Eliakim seems the ideal leader, but he is only a man. Collapse will come both from within the man and from the Lord without. Apart from the Lord, no one is sufficient. The result of trusting in a man, even one as capable as Eliakim, is deadly (cf 40:7–8). (TLSB)

Namely, because of the sins of the people, because of which the prophet threatens also the foregoing disaster. (Luther)

will be cut down – That is, it will be split in two. The ruler will perish, he will be led away by the Chaldeans. (Luther)

the Lord has spoken – in an admonition which was intended to warn Eliakim, lest he permit such conditions to creep in and thus bring disaster upon himself as well as his relatives. The Lord at all times resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. (Kretzmann)

When his family took advantage of his position and Eliakim no longer served for the welfare of the kingdom, he would lose his position for importance. (PBC)

Ch 22 Just as the Lord has spoken concerning the destruction of the nations, He speaks here of the destruction of Jerusalem. God's own people would experience His wrath, for they had lived in ways indistinguishable from the nations. When we do not live lives of repentance, we are also indistinguishable from unbelievers. As baptized children of God, we are called to drown our old Adam by daily contrition and repentance. The living Christ, who descended from the house of David, holds the key to heaven, which He graciously opens for all who believe. • Lord Jesus Christ, lead us each day in the glad confidence that You have atoned for our iniquity and opened the kingdom of heaven for us. Amen. (TLSB)