

A PROPHECY WHICH SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN
Isaiah 22

Intro: In reading through the books of 1 and 2 Kings (and, to a great extent, the same is true in 1 and 2 Chronicles), one of two things is said about the various kings:

- 1) Either that he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,
- 2) or that he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.

In other way, this was the way a king's reign was evaluated.

The important thing was not how much they did, but what they did and why they did it. The Lord was watching. The evaluation was made by Him. If a man pleased the Lord, he was a success; if he displeased the Lord, he was a failure!

Isaiah prophesied during the reign of four kings. This is how they were evaluated.

- 1) Uzziah "did right in the sight of the Lord" (2 K. 15:3).
- 2) Jotham "did what was right in the sight of the Lord; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done" (2 K. 15:34).
- 3) Ahaz "did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God, as his father David had done" (2 K. 16:2).
- 4) Hezekiah "did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done" (2 K. 18:3).

Now these things are written to establish a point with everyone who reads the Word of God. This is the way that God evaluates every human life. It is true of pastors, of missionaries, but it is also true of every child of God. It is of paramount importance that we give our attention to the will of God--to what is pleasing to the Lord. This includes:

- 1) The big issues, and the little ones.
- 2) Our thoughts and words as well as our deeds.

This morning we learned from Dr. Chase's message in 1 Cor. 11 (vv. 28-34) that the Lord can often be very severe with His people when we displease Him. Sometimes the penalty is sickness; sometimes even death.

Just recently in our NT reading we had the story of the man who had been sick for 38 years. After the Lord healed him, He said to him,

"Behold, thou art made well; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14b).

So this ^{is} not just OT truth.

Tonight I want to talk to you about a prophecy which should never

have been written. It has to do with Judah, the southern kingdom.

We can see this, first of all, because of . . .

— I. THE PLACE IT HAS IN THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH.

Last week in talking about chapter 14 I pointed out that chapters 13-23 have to do with the Gentile nations. It is chapters 1-12 that have to do with Judah.

Why is Judah found here among the Gentiles?

There can be only one reason: BECAUSE JUDAH WAS GUILTY OF THE SINS OF THE GENTILES.

There can hardly be a greater tragedy than this--for those who claim to be the people of God to be no different from those who would strongly reject such a claim.

And yet this is the way it so often is--the people of God living like the world. We can be sure that such a thing cannot continue without some judgment from God.

But the tragic situation is increased when we look at . . .

— II. THE NAME THAT GOD GIVES TO HIS PEOPLE HERE. Cf. v. 1: "The burden of the valley of vision."

The first part of this phrase does not go with the last part.

A "burden" is something heavy to carry. It is something added which does not belong--an extra. It is Isaiah's word for a judgment from God, the consequences of displeasing Him. It is something that the people of God (in this instance) are experiencing, or will experience, which they should not have to experience.

In Jer. 21:31 Jerusalem is called, "O inhabitant of the valley." It is true that Jerusalem was built on hills, but it did have high mountains around it in the distance.

So Isaiah calls Jerusalem, "the valley of vision."

"Valley" speaks of:

- 1) Its separation from the other nations.
- 2) The way God had secluded her, protected her, from the other nations.
- 3) And it points to the provisions which God had made for her by way of streams, etc., so that she was not dependent upon other nations.

Because of God provisions, Jerusalem had all she would ever need.

But Jerusalem was not just a valley, but a valley of vision.
What does this mean?

It means that Jerusalem was the place where the Lord, more than any other place, had sent His prophets with His Word. Jerome called Jerusalem, "the nursery of the prophets" (JFB, III, 630).

They had not only had the blessings of the Lord, but they had had His Word.

Is this not true of the child of God today?

This is why the Lord said of His people what He did in Isa. 5:4a, thinking of Judah as a vineyard,
"What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

And then to add to all of the evidence we have . . .

III. A SHAMEFUL QUESTION AND AN AMAZING DESCRIPTION (Isa. 22:1b-14).

A. The question (v. 1b). It is a picture of ~~terror~~ and of fear.

B. The description (vv. 2 ff.).

Four things stand out.

1. The trouble had come from the Lord (v. 5).
2. The Lord had "stripped the covering of Judah" (v. 8). The NASB renders this: "And He removed the defense of Judah."
3. The Lord confounded every attempt Judah made to protect herself (v. 8b): "Thou didst look in that day to the armor of the house of the forest."

"The house of the forest" was the armory built with the cedars of Lebanon.

Cf. v. 11. "Its maker" and "him that fashioned it" are references to the Lord.

4. With empty, sorrowing hearts, they wept but they continued with their revellry (vv. 12-14).

IV. ONE OF THE MAIN SOURCES OF TROUBLE: PROUD, SELF-CENTERED LEADERS (vv. 15-19).

There is the possibility that this may all picture the ultimate of Israel's sorrows in the Great Tribulation. If so, Shebna could portray the Antichrist; Eliakim would be a type of our Lord.

— V. THE ONLY HOPE (Isa. 22:20-25).

The Antichrist will represent the deification of man. The description of Eliakim could only have its complete fulfillment in the Messiah.

The nail in v. 23 is probably different from the one in v. 25.

It was the custom of a great military leader to hang his trophies in his tent. This is the illustration. Eliakim would display trophies of the power of God--as will our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes to the earth to reign.

Shebna (v. 25), and all whom he represents, will go down, and when he goes down, the burden (the same word as in v. 1) "shall be cut off" too.

Concl: What is the lesson of this chapter for us?

Doubtless there are many, but one is especially obvious:

— WHILE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO GET THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT OUR BURDENS, WE SOMETIMES CARRY BURDENS THAT WE SHOULD NOT HAVE. IT IS ONLY AS WE DO THE WILL OF GOD AND SEEK THE GLORY OF GOD (INSTEAD OF OUR OWN) THAT THE BLESSINGS OF LIFE WILL BE RESTORED, AND WE WILL HAVE PEACE!