

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part XXXVI: God's Prediction Of Judgment For Individual Self-Centeredness (Isaiah 22:15-25)

I. Introduction

- A. Isaiah, the name of the man who wrote the prophetic book by that name, means "Jahweh Is Salvation," and the theme of the book is salvation from sin and its destructive effects that God judges.
- B. A primary sin is that of selfishness, especially in an overseer, and Isaiah 22:15-25 deals with God's judgment of selfishness in individuals who were in oversight in Isaiah's era, with key insight for us today (as follows):

II. God's Prediction Of Judgment For Individual Self-Centeredness, Isaiah 22:15-22.

- A. After predicting in Isaiah 22:1-14 God's judgment on Jerusalem's people for their proudly refusing to heed His warning to repent of sin and trust in Him, Isaiah in Isaiah 22:15-22 addressed the sin of self-ish pride in influential individuals, and Shebna, the palace administrator, was one of them (as follows), Isaiah 22:15-19:
 - 1. God told Isaiah to go to Shebna, the steward over the king's house, Isaiah 22:15 NIV. We do not know his specific duties, but he "was second to the king," Edward J. Young, The Book Of Isaiah, 1974, v. II, p. 107.
 - 2. Instead of the usual Hebrew preposition '*el*', "unto," Isaiah uses '*al*', in this case "against," meaning Isaiah was going to give a negative word about judgment **against** the official Shebna, *Ibid.*, p. 105; Isaiah 22:15.
 - 3. God through Isaiah then asked Shebna why he had built himself a wealthy grave to perpetuate his fame after this life when Jerusalem stood to be judged for its sin of pride and Shebna should have been giving attention toward promoting righteousness in the kingdom of Judah, Isaiah 22:16; *Ibid.*, p. 107-109.
 - 4. Thus, instead of letting Shebna be buried in his lofty tomb, God would thrust him out in dishonor. The Hebrew reads: "Behold! Jahweh is about to throw you out a throwing, O mighty man" (*geber*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 638; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 149-150, 376), grasping you grasping," as if God would pick him up, grasp him and hurl him like a ball into a far country, *Ibid.*, p. 109-110; Isaiah 22:17.
 - 5. In that far, wide land with no obstacles to stop his rolling like a ball, Shebna would die, Isaiah 22:18; *Ibid.*
 - 6. This official would then be thrust out of his office and pulled down from his lofty station in contrast to his effort to exalt himself in false pride at his death by building himself a lofty tomb, Isaiah 22:19 ESV.
- B. In Shebna's place, God would set up His servant Eliakim, and greatly bless him in that role, Isaiah 22:20-24:
 - 1. God would raise up His godly servant Eliakim to take Shebna's place (Isaiah 22:20) and clothe him with Shebna's official garments and empower him to become a father figure to Jerusalem and Judah, Isa. 22:21.
 - 2. Also, God would give Eliakim more than the authority Shebna had known, providing him the "key of the house of David," meaning that "the responsibility of the Davidic government" would rest as a burden on his shoulder, Isaiah 22:22. Eliakim would thus greatly influence even the king himself; *Ibid.*, p. 114.
 - 3. Eliakim would be like a peg that is firmly fastened in a sure place, a peg on which other things were hung like a hook for vessels (Isa. 22:23a), making him a throne of honor in his father's house, Isaiah 22:23b.
 - 4. Others would use Eliakim to elevate their own honor, including his father's house, so that other people and officials, be they like vessels of small quantity or bowls of larger quantity or even pitchers might hang themselves upon his peg of influence in the kingdom of Judah, Isaiah 22:24; *Ibid.*, p. 116-117.
- C. However, even Eliakim's rule would eventually come to an end due to some unspecified sin, possibly that of a growing pride in himself, for God would judge him like He had judged Shebna (as follows), Isaiah 22:25:
 - 1. It is possible that Eliakim in time proudly yielded to the lure of nepotism, of unjustly letting relatives get into positions of leadership instead of appointing truly able, just men to such roles, *Ibid.*, p. 117.
 - 2. Regardless whether this particular sin was the cause, and we are not told what that sin was, even Eliakim, the fixed peg upon whom so many others would have influence, would be cut down by God and fall in divine judgment, taking everyone else who was depending upon him down with him, Isaiah 22:25.

Lesson: For selfish, proud oversight versus giving himself to further God's righteous kingdom, Shebna would be judged to lose his position in Judah and be infamously taken prisoner to die in a far away land. In his place, God would raise up His servant Eliakim to great power so that many others would rely on him for their power. Yet, even Eliakim would eventually yield to sin, so God would judge him to fall with those who relied upon him.

Application: (1) May we believe in Christ to be spiritually saved from sin (John 3:16) and then (2) live in God's spiritual power truly righteous lives (Galatians 5:16; Romans 6:10-12) that God might bless us!