Exhortation 28th July 2024

The burden of the valley of vision – Isaiah 22

The burden of the valley of vision. A prophecy concerning Jerusalem, so called, because it lay in a valley, encompassed about with mountains, and which was the habitation of the prophets or seers, and the seat of vision and prophecy; the subject of prophecy, and the centre of the vision of peace for the whole world.

The prophecy was delivered in the time of Sargon as 20:1 Sargon followed Shalmenezer in BC 723, who ruled until741, when Tiglath-Pilezer succeeded him.

The city is described as one which is *full of stirs …* or as the NET as it, a city full of raucous sounds, filled with revelry, a city given over to pleasure, burying their heads in the sand, deliberately ignorant of the coming danger, and punishment that was about to engulf them. It is reminiscent of

Exodus 32:17 -19: *And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, …*

It is also a description of the days in which we live, of a country of exceeding wealth, where even the poorest it seems can afford their entertainment subscriptions, designer trainers, and cigarettes and drugs, but a nation which is deliberately blind to the base corruption in its society, and of a day of reckoning which is getting ever closer.

Politicians of today recognise the global realignment of Russian and China, and that Britain has fallen far behind in terms of military ability, trade, and commerce. The nation turned its back on

Christianity, and took up atheism, and now into the vacuum comes Islam, creating a breakdown in social cohesion, a clash of cultures – this is a situation replicated across the West, as imported eastern ideology confronts the hedonism and the worship of not the golden calf but the beast.

As an onlooker Isaiah describes what happened to Jerusalem, and we also an onlookers at the way in which all nations will be brought to Jerusalen to battle can see the way that the two feet, and ten toes of Europe are creaking and cracking, we can learn from Isaiah and be encouraged, as he and many others were preserved in the coming battles and onslaught which followed. A new beginning is promised.

Isaiah describes great anxiety on every side, because of the far of the coming trouble. 10-11: *And you have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have you broken down to fortify the wall. You made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but you have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.*

This is exactly what happened as we can read in 2 Chronicles 32:5, as Hezekiah took pre-emptive measures: *3 He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him.*

4 So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?

5 Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance.

30:*This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David.*

But Isaiah 31:1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!

Instead of trusting in the security man can offer, or our own abilities and resources, why not trust in God. Everything else fails, this is the lesson from then for now. We are never as strong as we think we are, and man's solutions, are always ultimately inadequate, as this new government for example, are quickly finding out.

A particular person in this chapter is mentioned by name. Shebna. Described as being over the house. In other parallel records he is described as Shebna the scribe. He was the treasurer, the Royal Steward in the Palace, he was the principle minister of the King. He was the most important man in the court. He is mentioned in 2 Kings 18, and 19, and in Isaiah 36 and 37, in matters relating to the invasion of the Assyrians, and is always in the company of Eliakim, who was the palace supervisor of the royal household. In fact Eliakim is always mentioned first, when they are mentioned together some seven times. It seems Eliakim was promoted above him, and Eliakim took his job.

It didn't used to be this way, and Shebna used to be number one. He certainly over emphasised himself and promoted himself. He was ostentatious and a bit of a show off thinking his position was secure, and he ordered a sepulchre to be raised in his memory, as we read in verse 16 of this chapter 22. What is interesting is that in the British Museum there is a lintel which has been taken from a rock cut tomb which was found in Silwan just outside Jerusalem in 1870, it has been

determined by Hebrew experts to be a Royal Steward inscription, and although it is only partially legible, experts say it is the name Shebna.

This action of Shebna trying to create a lasting legacy for himself seemed to be a parable of the nation. His name – Shebna means *tender youth* – ironic he was thinking about his old age, and beyond, but despite his exalted responsible position he was behaving in a childish way, only concerned about his own name, and fame. God condemned his actions, and verse 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*. As if being flung out like a sling. So the Proverbs 26: 8 *As he that binds a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool.* And God said of the nation in Jeremiah 10:18: *For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them, that they may find it so.*

Shebna who should have been an example of faith in God like Hezekiah, was undermining his God, and his King by seeking only his own personal security. But he was a bellwether, a symbol of the nation who were doing exactly the same. So God said in verse 19 *And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down*. *20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:*

Eliakim means – who God will raise up. Hilkiah means portion of Yah.

He seemed far more reliable, and loyal. As we have already suggested the loss of office of Shebna, and the promotion of Eliakim the son of Hilkiah is a parable, and one that should not be lost on us. For Shebna represented the ruling class of the nation, who were immature in their behaviour, concerned only with their name, fame and reputation, and not the spirituality and security of the people. Eliakim represented what his name means: Whom God will raise up, the son of a portion of Yahweh. He would replace the rulers of Israel.

21 *And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, 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.

And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand, this reminds us a little of how Mordecai succeeded Haman, the complete and total replacement, not only of the person, but of the office, the authority and the power, seen in the symbols of the robe and girdle. Another type of the Lord Jesus who will be given the power, glory, and authority from those who do not deserve it, But with Christ Jesus he dos deserve it, as he earned the, as Isaiah foresaw:

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

These are the exact credentials that the Almighty is looking for to rule his chosen, his elect, so

I will commit thy government into his hands… How can we not immediately in our minds think of the prophecy in Isaiah 9:6,7

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, [the Mighty Warrior] *The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*. So when Trinitarians say oooh look the Everlasting Father that proves that Jesus is God, remember this passage in Isaiah 22 which describes how God's chosen ruler, will be a Father to his people

21… and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. This is not an unusual concept in the Bible Take for example Joseph in Genesis the same imagery which Isaiah is describing

The everlasting Father,

Genesis 41:42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

Genesis 45:8: So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Although Eliakim did replace Shebna, as the record in Chronicles and Isaih goes onto show, Eliakim was not the ruler of the people, and even the king Hezekiah was not the Father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the house of Judah, for after a few short years he went the way of all men, and his son, the wicked Manasseh replaced him and ruled for fifty years.

The prophecy can only be referring to the Lod Jesus. Indeed, the Lord our Saviour applies it to himself, as he applies this passage to himself in his book he left with all the faithful, the book of Revelation. Look here at this:

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.*

Key of David, that is access to the Throne, Kingdom and House of David – who has this power?

Revelation 3: 7 *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens;* Th same Lord Jesus explains exactly what access to this Kingdom means, as he also possesses the key to the grave:
Revelation 1: 18 I am he that lives and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. It is

the Lord Saviour, who only has the power of judgement to determine who lives to inherit with him, or who will be cut down.

Of him the prophet continues:

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.*

I will fasten him… future The Hebrew word for nail is Yathed… a tent peg, same word as the pins used in the tabernacle – smallest part, but without which the whole thing would fall down. Equally the nail was used to kill the enemy of Israel – Sisera by Jael: *She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples*.

A powerful and useful object of security – Ezra 9:8 - 8 *And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.*

The first thing the Hebrews did, as they travelled when they came to a place was to put out the tent pegs, the Hebrew word yathed also means to stake. It is where the idea of staking a claim comes from, even used in the wild west when they went and placed the stakes in the ground to denote ownership. The 'nail in a sure place' means the claim of ownership of land, it is the security of a home. Such is the importance of this symbol that the prophet Zechariah also uses it to denote the Son of God, the Son of David – Zechariah 10:4 *Out of Judah came forth the cornerstone, out of him the nail [tent peg], out of him the battle bow, out of him every ruler.*

Eccles 12:11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

This is the Gospel message. It is the hammer of adversity, guided by the master craftsman, the Builder and Maker is God, that positions the nails, the anchor of Truth, upon which the tabernacle, the dwelling place, the Ecclesia of God is maintained.

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.*

In contrast to Shebna and the class of rulers who tied to achieve fame and notoriety through their family name by reputation and wealth, the Eliakim family name in Christ Jesus the offspring and the issue the offshoots, Jew and Gentile alike.

It was the custom of the victors in battle to nail their glory to the walls of their halls, to suspend the shields and swords of their vanquished enemies , their armour and spoil, the drinking vessels and flagons, for all to see the glory taken in war – even Solomon did this with his golden drinking vessel and golden shields… but even as the Shebna class like to pin their boasting on their positions and titles and pride, the Eliakim class pin their hopes on being vessels of honour *sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.* They pin their hopes on Christ Jesus. For all the glory of Israel, the hope of Israel is hung and upon the chosen of God. So, it came to pass quite literally, as the rightful heir, the glory of Israel was lifted up for all to see. The Lord Jesus was secured to the tree with the Roman nails in his hands and his feet. All that represented the flesh, all that was the glory of man was destroyed. *Colossians 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

25 *In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it.*

Shebna who thought he was so secure was cut down, he who represented the boasting, the riotous revelry of worship of the today, and so with him all the pomp and excellence of Judah was reduced and consumed away. The burden of the wicked, their hopes and aspirations their glory will perish and fall to the grave, forever forgotten.

But with the Saviour. He as Eliakim, as we recall his name means *who God will raise up. Unlike Shebna who was cut down for ever, the Nail of Jesus Christ is eternal – Hebrews 6:19 the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast* who will never fail. Our burdens are put upon him. *Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* The love and compassion of our Saviour is forever there as a support, a nail in a sure place, let us then be encouraged *that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage,* and know that soon after the Assyrian of the north has been exhausted, and after the whole world has finished wondering after the Beast, the hopes and faith of the righteous will be finally realised so that the painful day of waiting in suspense – suspended on the Nail in the sure place, will be over, and the Kingdom established and the Government will be in his hands. Let us not be like foolish Shebna who lived for today, but like Eliakim who looked to tomorrow, and hope to be *raised by God and a portion of Yah.*

Brother Terry