Isaiah 22v23-25 **A Nail in a sure place** 12th September 2024

"*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. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, and the offspring and the issue, all vessels of cups even to all vessels of flagons. 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.*"

Brother Terry has recently delivered an exhortation on this passage pointing out that Eliakim the son of Hilkiah was a type of Christ, but that the prior application in Isaiah's day needs to be first understood if we are to subsequently understand how this applies to Jesus himself. He was a new replacement leader who was to replace the unfaithful service of his predecessors.

What is a nail? It is a solid piece of material which is used to link together two or more separate materials by physical attachment and strength. It is often metal but does not need to be. It must be stronger than the material it binds together else it relatively smaller size will easily be overshadowed by the other, and its ability to give cohesion will be compromised. If made from wood, it must be fashioned from a hard unyielding tree like the acacia or shittim tree. Nails are fit for purpose. When you use one it must be suited to the task in hand else its role will disappoint or even fail to begin. Too big and it will break asunder the material it is meant to bind together. Too small and it will be dwarfed by the surrounding material and will only hold together a very small section of the whole material it was supposed to join together.

Jesus is essentially this. He is made of a stronger material than those he binds together, because he is the only begotten Son. He was forged on the anvil of adversity and fashioned by the life experiences His Father chose for him, just as He choses less taxing and demanding life experiences for us also. No one can say that we are as strong as he is because when tested we have all failed – "*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*".

As one of the House of David, all the hopes and promises that were given to that great King, will collapse if the single nail at the peak time failed. Every hope is met in him. The weight of expectancy did not break him, as it would us if lead upon us, but instead it spurred him on to the greatest of accomplishments.

As a nail, Jesus in a sense, "*hath made both one*" Ephesians 2v14, joining together the divergent elements of body and soul, Jew and gentile, "*for to make*

in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" v15. He accomplished this by first allowing himself to be fashioned as such a tool by the hand of God. He was precision made, fit for purpose, truly a nail in a sure place, hammered in by the experiences of life and God's direction.

However, care must be taken when we allocate such measures of Christ, as in context, that nail is removed and "*the burden that was upon it shall be cut off*". If apply these things to the crucified Christ, we must first convince the doubting Jew that there is good reason to do so, and also to the believer we need to consider that if the burden of the sins of the word was placed upon his shoulders, as the nail in a sure place then the cutting off of the nail is not a good thing, but a failure and a spoiling of its purpose. It must not be skewed to mean that the nail being removed is a positive, that goes against the whole scenario. Yes, the foolishness of God is wiser than men, but tit is based upon discernible logic and revelation not the notion of blind faith some mistakenly believe. God does not ask us to suspend all reason and just accept but encourages all to *"come reason together*" with Him! What an offer, what a condescension by the Eternal to permit us to reason out the rationale He has provided to feed our spiritual minds and provide the needed clarity.

Some craftsmen join wood and stone together without nails or mortar by the very precise shaping of the materials which are then selectively placed together in a particular pattern. As the nail in a sure place Jesus transcends the need for us to be cut to precision to fit together but as a nail, he can bring even divergent materials which would otherwise quickly fall apart. This is the great transcending blessing that we are made to fit together with others even despite our misshapen attitudes, bias and prejudices if we only submit to be nailed in place by God the hammerer using Jesus as the nail.

When a powerful character or personality is taken out of the way, what he or she, held together can subsequently fall apart. This is not wrong when this happens, nor should we wrongly insist that all are capable of being this glue, we are not. Some are the glued. Yes, we should all aspire to be the glue that binds our families, our Ecclesias, our friendships together but the efforts and achievements are not equally distributed amongst all. There is a wide variation in tensile strength of us all, none of us are nails of the calibre of Jesus, but perhaps we can be a nail like Eliakim, if we are so minded to allow God to fashion us on the anvil, but we are more likely to shy away and complain of the blows

that rain down upon us, forgetting the skill of the master metal wielder and His stated intent to cause us to suffer so.

Are we to be built upon a sure foundation? Are we gold silver precious stones or wood and hay and stubble? 1 Corinthians 3v12-14.

A Voice from the Altar Russel Noonan