

## ISAIAH 22: JUDGMENT ON SELF-RELIANT JUDAH

<b>Shebna</b>	<b>Eliakim</b>
Self-regarding (his tomb, his chariots) (16, 18)	Servant of the Lord (20) Father to the people (21)
Like a ball (unstable) (18)	Like a peg (stable, dependable) (23)
Disgrace (18)	Honour (23)
Deposed by the Lord (19)	Fixed in a firm place by the Lord (23) (Webb 1996: 102)

“Eliakim is the very antithesis of Shebna, an ideal leader called and established by the Lord. Verses 24 and 25, therefore, come as something of a surprise. Eliakim’s family are apparently not made of the same stuff as he is. They take advantage of his high position to better themselves and in so doing bring about his ruin. The peg gives way under the strain. Eliakim is destroyed from below” (Webb 1996: 102).

### Summary

“In Judah, the people foolishly did not understand the stupidity of rejoicing before their war with Assyria was over (22:1-2, 13), the arrogant leaders did not yet conclude that they should trust God rather than trust in military preparations (vv. 8a-11), and the self-centered Shebna did not realize that he should be more concerned with the responsibilities of his office instead of building a monumental tomb for himself (vv. 15-19)” (Smith 2007: 381).

### Application

“Even important spiritual and political leaders (like Shebna) can become infatuated with their own importance and fail to serve God or his people. This is a clear warning to business, church, educational, and political leaders. God knows whom you are really serving. Do not follow the path of Shebna” (Smith 2007: 393).

### SOURCES CITED

- J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 1993.  
Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, New American Commentary, 2007.  
Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, The Bible Speaks Today, 1996.

### OUTLINE

- I. Judgment on Judah (22:1-14)
  - A. Jerusalem’s destruction is coming (22:1-8a)
  - B. Jerusalem should have believed rather than built (22:8b-11)
  - C. Jerusalem should have repented rather than rejoiced (22:12-14)
- II. Judgment on the Chief of Staff (22:15-25)
  - A. For his self-concern, Shebna will be demoted and exiled (22:15-19)
  - B. Instead of Shebna, Eliakim will serve the royal house faithfully, but will ultimately collapse (22:20-25)

### NOTES

#### I. Judgment on Judah (22:1-14)

Valley of Vision: “Jerusalem. The irony is twofold: Mount Zion has become a valley, and the spiritual vision to be expected there has become a blind and reckless drive for present pleasure without regard for God” (ESV Study Bible).

#### A. Jerusalem’s destruction is coming (22:1-8a)

Better to understand this as a revelation rather than a historic description; as future rather than past

## B. Jerusalem should have believed rather than built (22:8b-11)

“The response of some, including the king, was more measured and purposeful: they looked to the city’s armaments, walls and water supply in anticipation of an attack. But what no-one did was to look to the Lord in repentance and faith” (Webb 1996: 101).

“These verses reveal the irony of attentive energies given to military readiness with thoughtless inattention to the sovereign God who controls the situation” (ESV Study Bible).

“Why bother with faith when you have walls, water and weapons? Why look to God when you can look to your own resources?” (Motyer 1993: 185).

## C. Jerusalem should have repented rather than rejoiced (22:12-14)

“Let us eat and drink. The speech of God’s people, who are heedless of him. Paul finds in this the perfect expression of an attitude that has no regard for deep and lasting realities (see 1 Cor. 15:32)” (ESV Study Bible).

“In the crisis which was upon them their sole determination was to have all that this world could offer them before it was snatched away from them” (Motyer 1993: 185).

## II. Judgment on the Chief of Staff (22:15-25)

“What is presented in general terms in verses 1-14 is particularized in verses 15-25, but the message is the same. The failure of the people of Jerusalem to rely upon the Lord will bring both them and their leaders to ruin” (Webb 1996: 102).

### A. For his self-concern, Shebna will be demoted and exiled (22:15-19)

“Shebna found his identity as a person in the ‘this-worldly’ benefits of his office, and he set about securing his ‘place in history’ by his own efforts. . . . He went in for ostentatious display (*splendid chariots*; 18) and he intended to perpetuate his memory in a grandiose tomb (16). He was, therefore, individually what the nation was collectively: wedded to present satisfactions and self-confident in the face of the future. Thus, Isaiah holds up a mirror to his contemporaries” (Motyer 1993: 186).

### B. Instead of Shebna, Eliakim will serve the royal house faithfully, but will ultimately collapse (22:20-25)

The key: “The authority of the steward to make binding decisions in the interests of the king (cf. Matt. 16:19; Rev. 3:7-8)” (ESV Study Bible).

A peg: “Set firmly in a wall and capable of bearing weight; and yet in that day (of God’s judgment on Judah) even he (or his family line) will give way” (ESV Study Bible).