

**ISAIAH<sup>a</sup> 19**  
In God We Trust?<sup>b</sup>  
(Isaiah 22)

Isaiah 22 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

## A Warning of Destruction of Jerusalem

**22** The oracle concerning the valley of vision<sup>c</sup>.

What do you mean that you have gone up,  
all of you, to the housetops,<sup>d</sup>

<sup>2</sup> you who are full of shoutings,  
tumultuous city, exultant town?

Your slain are not slain with the sword  
or dead in battle.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>3</sup> All your rulers have fled together,  
without the bow they were captured.

All of you who were found were captured,  
though they had fled far away.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Therefore I said:

“Look away from me,

let me weep bitter tears;  
do not labor to comfort me

for the destruction of the daughter of my people<sup>g, h</sup>.”

<sup>5</sup> For the Lord God of hosts has a day  
of tumult and trampling and confusion  
in the valley of vision,

a battering down of walls  
and a shouting to the mountains.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>6</sup> And Elam<sup>j</sup> bore the quiver  
with chariots and horsemen,  
and Kir<sup>k</sup> uncovered the shield.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Your choicest valleys were full of chariots,  
and the horsemen took their stand at the gates.<sup>m</sup>

<sup>8</sup> He has taken away the covering of Judah.

In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest,<sup>n 9</sup> and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many, and you collected the waters of the lower pool,<sup>o 10</sup> and you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall.<sup>p 11</sup> You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to him who did it, or have regard for him who planned it long ago.<sup>q</sup>

<sup>12</sup> In that day the Lord God of hosts  
called to weeping and mourning,  
to baldness and girding with sackcloth;<sup>r</sup>

<sup>13</sup> and behold, joy and gladness,  
slaying oxen and killing sheep,

eating flesh and drinking wine.  
“Let us eat and drink,  
for tomorrow we die.”<sup>s</sup>  
<sup>14</sup> The Lord of hosts has revealed himself in my ears:  
“Surely<sup>t</sup> this iniquity will not be forgiven you  
till you die,”  
says the Lord God of hosts.<sup>u</sup>

## Denunciation of Self-Seeking Officials

<sup>15</sup> Thus says the Lord God of hosts, “Come, go to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the household, and say to him:<sup>v</sup> <sup>16</sup> What have you to do here and whom have you here, that you have hewn here a tomb for yourself, you who hew a tomb on the height, and carve a habitation for yourself in the rock?<sup>w</sup> <sup>17</sup> Behold, the Lord will hurl you away violently, O you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you,<sup>x</sup> <sup>18</sup> and whirl you round and round, and throw you like a ball into a wide land; there you shall die, and there shall be your splendid chariots, you shame of your master’s house.<sup>y</sup> <sup>19</sup> I will thrust you from your office, and you will be cast down from your station.<sup>z</sup> <sup>20</sup> In that day I will call my servant Eli’akim the son of Hilki’ah,<sup>aa</sup> <sup>21</sup> and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your girdle on him, and will commit your authority to his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.<sup>bb</sup> <sup>22</sup> And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.<sup>cc</sup> <sup>23</sup> And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father’s house.<sup>dd</sup> <sup>24</sup> And they will hang on him the whole weight of his father’s house, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons.<sup>ee</sup> <sup>25</sup> In that day, says the Lord of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a sure place will give way; and it will be cut down and fall, and the burden that was upon it will be cut off, for the Lord has spoken.”<sup>ff</sup>

### Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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<sup>a</sup> The Titles of the lessons in this study are borrowed from those given by **Jhan Moskowitz** of Jews for Jesus to the chapter titles in his recorded study of Isaiah upon which much of this study is based. I owe a great debt to Jhan, my late friend and brother in the Lord, who was called Home before his time, not only for much of the work in this study, but also for giving me a whole new perspective on the Scriptures and the Jewish Messiah. Jhan’s original recordings may be downloaded from the Jews for Jesus web site. <http://jewsforjesus.org/jhan-moskowitz>

Most current translations of Isaiah into English are based on the Masoretic (Hebrew) text which was primarily copied, edited and distributed by Jews known as the Masoretes, mostly from the ben Asher family. These Jews lived in the Middle East, especially Jerusalem, Tiberias and Mesopotamia, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., a high point of Jewish civilization in the that region. The earliest Masoretic extant texts are from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The Masoretic text is similar to Hebrew texts from Qumran (mostly from the first three Centuries before the Messiah) and others from the 2nd Century. However, there are other Hebrew textual traditions in circulation prior to the standardization of the Masoretic text. The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa) is a virtually complete copy of Isaiah from Qumran which has been carbon dated between 325 B.C. and 100 B.C. This history indicates that the accepted Hebrew text of Isaiah was substantially settled well before the coming of the Messiah. The Masoretic text of Isaiah has numerous differences of both greater and lesser significance when compared to the manuscripts of the Septuagint, a Koine Greek version of the Scriptures in common use in the Middle East, where this version of Greek was the *lingua franca* at the time of the Messiah. Indeed, where the Gospels and Paul’s letters quote Scripture, it is mostly quoted from

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the Septuagint. The Septuagint was created among diaspora Jews in Egypt beginning during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (283-246 B.C.) and was completed by 132 B.C., likely from Hebrew texts which, in some cases, differed from the tradition that would later give rise to the Masoretic text. There are extant manuscripts of portions of the Septuagint from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. and citations to the Septuagint from other sources from the early part of that Century. The Septuagint was the basis of the Old Latin and Vulgate (the authoritative Roman Catholic Latin text) translations of the Bible and for all Catholic translations until the middle of the last Century. It remains the authoritative version for Greek Orthodox Christians. In the endnotes for these outlines I frequently quote an English translation of the Septuagint version of Isaiah where it differs significantly from the translation of the Masoretic text. For this purpose I have usually quoted from the Complete Apostles Bible (2005) which is more accessible than the classic Septuagint translation by Brenton published in (1844). There is also a New English Translation from 2007. All of these versions are available on-line. The Septuagint is particularly useful for Biblical scholars seeking to interpret the Greek of the Messianic Writings (New Testament) because it is likely that the meanings attributable to words used by the Apostolic writers, who were all most familiar with the Septuagint, would be the same as the meaning of those words as used in the Septuagint. I have also, where available, cited cross-references to the Apocrypha, the books contained in the Septuagint but not in the Masoretic as those books were likely known to, and in some cases quoted by, the Apostolic writers.

We must approach our study of Isaiah from the standpoint of humility, and recognize that we study from faith and not knowing all the answers. While there are parts that seem fairly clear, there are other parts that are debated. This study will attempt to identify where the scholarship is essentially in agreement, and where there are debated passages and meanings.

There are a number of recurring images or “motifs” in Isaiah, including (1) the Holiness of God, (2) David’s City, Jerusalem, Zion or God’s Holy Mountain, (3) a restoration to the conditions of the Garden that will reverse the curse of Original Sin (Gn 3), (4) the “seed” or descendant of Abraham and David, and judgment upon the nations, and (5) faith in God. Isaiah’s overall theme appears to be that God will judge sin, but at the end of the day, He will use His Messiah to bring reconciliation and healing and establish the Messianic Kingdom.

While there is some debate among scholars regarding the date and authorship of the Book, this study will assume that Isaiah is the primary author, and that it is relatively contemporaneous with the times in which he lived. Even if others had a hand in authoring some parts of the Book, or in editing, arranging and copying the Book, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit need not be limited to those men who actually wrote the text of Scripture, or whose name appears in its title. It can extend also to those who may have edited or copied the original text, those who compiled it, and those who decided which texts were to be included within the Scriptural Canon. There is good reason to believe that Isaiah, as we now have it, may be a sort of “greatest hits”, with various writings of Isaiah throughout his ministry arranged in the final form to make a point about Judah, Jerusalem, the coming Jewish Messiah and the plan of salvation. It is also likely that much of Isaiah was first spoken, or recited, in the form of sermons or prophetic statements, and then written down and collected into the form we have today.

We cannot know whether we have, in the compiled book, the complete original sermons or poems. Nor do we know the context in which they were originally preached or recited, though in some cases we can make a good guess about that context. It is possible, even likely, that at least some of them were created in a specific context of time and place, endowing them with a specific contemporary meaning, but that when recombined into the final product we have today, the individual pieces take on a new meaning in this new context. Thus we may find multiple meanings for the same passage, including, e.g. a meaning in the original context in which it was spoken (if that can be determined), a meaning in the context of the short term history of the Judah, Assyria and Babylon, and a Messianic or eschatological meaning.

Much of the Book is in the form of Hebrew poetry. While the translation into English causes a loss of many of the poetic elements, some of those that remain will be identified as we go along. One thing that is apparent is that poetry, in Hebrew and English, allows the use of images which can paint a powerful picture of what is going on without being a literal description. Isaiah will make liberal use of these images. When God speaks in verse, it helps to elevate the dignity of what He says. Poetry also casts a much larger shadow than prose. If an historical event is described in prose, it would normally be just a description of that event. But by putting it in verse that single historical event can have a much bigger meaning in a larger context. In addition, verse, even unaccompanied by music, is easier to remember, and recite, than is prose. These two aspects of poetry may help explain why many of the Prophets, including Isaiah, wrote in verse. It is not clear that Isaiah’s verse was ever set to music, though music was an aspect of at least some of the Prophets (1Sm 10:5; 2Ki 3:15). If any of Isaiah’s verse were set to music, none of the actual music has survived.

Isaiah himself does not appear in the Book until Chapter 6 when the beginning of his ministry is described. In verse 1:1 he tells us that his ministry began in the year King Uzziah (783-742 B.C.; 2Ki 15:1-7, 2Ch 26:1-23) died and continued through the time of Kings Jotham (742-735 B.C.; 2Ki 15:32-38, 2Ch 27:1-9), Ahaz (735-715 B.C.; 2Ki 16:1-17:41, 2Ch 28:1-27) and Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.; 2Ki 18:1-20:21, 2Ch 29:1-32:33). In 721 B.C., the Assyrian army captured the Israelite capital at Samaria and carried away the citizens of the northern kingdom into captivity. The virtual destruction of Israel left the southern kingdom, Judah, to fend for itself among warring Near Eastern kingdoms. At the time of Samaria’s fall, there existed two kings in Judah — Ahaz and his son Hezekiah — who ruled as co-regents. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom, the kings of Judah tried to extend their influence and protection to those inhabitants who had not been exiled. They also sought to extend their authority northward into areas previously controlled by the Kingdom of Israel. The latter part of the reign of Ahaz, and most of that of Hezekiah were periods of stability during which Judah was able to consolidate both politically and economically. Although Judah was a vassal of Assyria during this time and paid an annual tribute to the powerful empire, it was the most important state between Assyria and Egypt. In 715 B.C., following the death of Ahaz, Hezekiah became the sole regent of Judah and initiated

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widespread religious reforms, including the breaking of religious idols. During 2016 archaeological evidence of these reforms was discovered in Israel, <http://www.foxnews.com/science/2016/09/28/archaeologists- unearth-ancient-gate-shrine-in-israel.html>. Hezekiah built Hezekiah's tunnel, still in existence today, to insure that water was available during a siege, <http://www.biblicalarchaeologytruth.com/hezekiahs-tunnel.html>. He re-captured Philistine-occupied lands in the Negev desert, formed alliances with Ashkelon and Egypt, and made a stand against Assyria by refusing to pay tribute. In response, Sennacherib attacked Judah, laying siege to Jerusalem in 701 B.C. God destroyed Sennacherib's army outside Jerusalem and the siege was broken. The records of royal Assyria state that while Sennacherib captured many cities in Judah, Jerusalem was only "besieged," not captured, thus agreeing with the Biblical account. Archaeologists have recently uncovered the ruins of Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh under the ruins of Jonah's Tomb, <http://www.foxnews.com/science/2017/03/06/biblical-kings-palace-uncovered-beneath-shrine-destroyed-by-isis.html>. Archaeologists have also discovered a royal seal of Hezekiah picturing a winged sun which may refer to the events of Is 38:8 in which the sun appeared to move backward in the sky, <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/jerusalem/king-hezekiah-in-the-bible-royal-seal-of-hezekiah-comes-to-light/>. After being saved from the Assyrians, Judah survived until c. 600 B.C. when the Babylonians destroyed the City and carried the leaders into exile. The Exiles were first allowed to return to Jerusalem in 539 B.C. after Babylon fell to the Persians.

The entire Book of Isaiah is identified in 1:1 as a "vision" meaning, in a broad sense, divine revelation, 2Ch 32:32, Ob 1, Nah 1:1, Am 1:1, Mi 1:1, Hab 1:1. The visions in Isaiah are not arranged chronologically. In order to understand Isaiah, we always need to ask how the text relates to the rest of the text of the section in which it appears, how the sections of the Book are connected, and why they are arranged the way they are. The central theme of Chapters 1-39 is the "King." Chapters 40-55 have to do with the "Suffering Servant." And Chapters 56-66 have to do with a restored Jerusalem, with the key theme in those chapters being the "Conqueror."

The initial section on the "King" may also be divided into separate sections. Chapters 1-5 describe the overall background of a sinful time in Judah of greed, hypocrisy, and judgment. Even in these chapters, there were hints of a restoration. Isaiah 6 is Isaiah's call. Chapters 7-12 (the Book of Emmanuel) are all about the birth of a son, explicitly in 7-9 and 11 and implicitly in 6 and 10, who will be Emmanuel. Chapter 12 is a hymn of thanksgiving for what God has done, and has promised to do. The other sub-sections are Chapters 13-23 and 24-37.

The **first 5 chapters** could have taken place during any, or all, of the time of Isaiah's ministry and are perhaps best understood as setting the scene, or painting a picture, of the spiritual condition of Judah during Isaiah's ministry. In **Chapter 6**, Isaiah is given his ministry by God, a ministry to preach to a people who will not hear, and who will continue to be estranged from God and His law, that is, an unsuccessful ministry. Indeed, in some way, the failure to respond to Isaiah's preaching will be used to help convict the people of Judah, Rm 10:14-21. Yet even here, there is a hope of redemption for the remnant. The context for **Chapters 7 and 8** are a rebellion by Syria and Israel against their overlord Assyria. Syria and Israel wish to attack Judah, remove Ahaz of the line of David, and replace him with a King who will join them in an alliance against Assyria. Isaiah warns Ahaz against doing so, but Ahaz chooses to protect himself against Syria and Israel by making an alliance with Assyria thus becoming a vassal of Assyria. Thereafter except for brief periods, Judah will have lost its existence as an independent state. In Chapter 7, Emmanuel is referred to, but remains a mystery. We learn a little more about in in **Chapter 8**, and in **Chapters 9** and 11 we get a much fuller picture. **Chapter 11** ends with images from the Exodus which is the touchstone of the salvation history in the Hebrew Scriptures. By using that image, Isaiah calls up the story of God as redeemer of Israel, and all of its implication for salvation history.

**Chapter 12** is a Psalm of thanksgiving for God's help and rescue and the conclusion of, or coda for, the Book of Emmanuel, which was introduced in Chapter 6. In some way, not clearly defined because this is poetry, the song expresses that the wrath of God is turned away and the relationship with God restored in joy and thanksgiving. This Psalm should be compared to Chapter 6, in which Isaiah himself confesses his sin to God (a man of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips), and God brings forgiveness for Isaiah through the touch of a hot coal to his lips. Now, in Chapter 12, for the remnant, something of the same sort has happened, the sin of the remnant has been forgiven so that the relationship with God can be restored. Similar to the Passover itself, where God saw the blood on the doorposts and stayed His hand, God will recognize His people and leave a remnant. Although the details are not clear, we know from the intervening chapters that this child, Emmanuel, will be instrumental in this restoration.

**Chapter 13** begins a new subsection of the "King" section of the Book which will run through Chapter 24. The theme of this section is the goyim, or the Nations, including Judah, and contains prophecies of destruction for the various nations surrounding Judah. Isaiah uses these stories of judgment against these nations as illustrations of what God will do in the Eschaton. In this subsection judgment upon individual nations are linked with scenes of universal and cosmic Doom and assurances of better times for God's people. The link with 8<sup>th</sup> Century Judah is not broken altogether, but the historical horizon is extended far into the future. The first nation, in **Chapters 13 and 14**, is Babylon. Isaiah in Chapter 13 prophesies the conquest and eventual destruction and abandonment of Babylon, an event, over a century in the future, in 539 BC, with several specific details about that event including that the destruction will be at the hands of the Medes. During Isaiah's time, the Medes were allied with Babylon against Assyria. The Chapter consists of two poems, vs. 2-16, which do not mention Babylon, and vs. 17-22 which makes specific reference to conquest by the Medes. There is debate about whether the first poem is about Babylon specifically, or has a more general application. Both poems share, however, the fact that they describe the coming Day of the Lord. The end of Chapter 14 (vs. 24-32) and **Chapters 15 and 16** are, on their face, prophecies against Assyria, Philistia and

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Moab, ancient neighbors and adversaries of Israel. In **Chapter 16**, the exiles of Moab will seek shelter in Judah but be denied because of their arrogance, in this case the refusal to reject Moab's own gods and submit to the God of Abraham. As a result of that refusal, they are destroyed. **Chapters 17 & 18** contain oracles ostensibly about Damascus (Syria) and Cush (Ethiopia), respectively. The first three verses of **Chapter 17** are about Damascus, but verses 4-11 are a poem about the fall of Israel due to the failure of Israel's alliance with Syria. Verses 12-14 are about the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem that failed suddenly. Taken together they are yet another lesson about trusting God rather than trusting in the devices of men.

In **Chapter 18-20**, Cush/Egypt is ostensibly the target. The historical setting is Cush/Egypt seeking an alliance with Judah which is rejected in part because of Isaiah's advice. Unlike Damascus, however, Cush will be preserved and even serve as an ambassador for God to the gentiles. Egypt serve here as an archetype of the gentiles generally who will suffer and be chastened by the Lord, but to whom God will send a savior. At least some of them will come to the Lord and worship with the Jewish people. These passages contain much Messianic and eschatological language.

**Chapter 21** contains three prophecies, a longer one about Babylon, and two shorter poems about Edom and Arabia. The interpretation of the first oracle, about Babylon, is particularly difficult. In the standard interpretation it is about the Fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians which will result in freedom for the exiled Jews and the ultimate return to Jerusalem. In the alternate interpretation, the lesson of this oracle is similar to that of Chapters 18-20, "don't trust in foreign alliances for salvation, trust only in the Lord."

Jhan reminds us that the meaning of most stories is found in its end. We know the end of the story is Jesus, which allows us to interpret Isaiah in light of that ending. The central theme of Isaiah, and indeed all of Scripture, is that, after the Fall, God still desired to live with mankind, but could not do so because of Sin. Scripture discloses that Jesus the Messiah is that plan by which God will bring us back from corruption and sin, and His anger will turn to comfort.

<sup>b</sup> Just like all the nations surrounding it, Jerusalem is the subject of a dark oracle, or *marshal*, (לִשְׁמַל) in **Chapter 22**. Isaiah tells the people of Judah and Jerusalem not to trust in strong walls or good leaders, but to trust in the Lord alone for their salvation.

<sup>c</sup> **Valley of Vision**, here and in verse 5, is not the name of any place known from history. Some translations have amended this to the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) though no support is offered for this change. Others think it may refer to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, JI 3:2-12. The Septuagint refers to the Valley of Zion. From the context it is most likely that it refers to Jerusalem which, though set on a hill, is surrounded by higher elevations, and is the place in which Isaiah had the majority of his visions.

<sup>d</sup> (1) Is 13:1; Ps 125:2; Jr 21:13; JI 3:12-14; Is 15:3; Jr 48:38. By including **Judah** and **Jerusalem** in these prophecies, Isaiah implies that its residents are subject to God's discipline just like all the other nations, and cannot rely upon descent from Abraham. Mt 3:7-10; Rm 11:16-24. In one interpretation, the residents of Jerusalem will climb to the rooftops to see the approaching enemy army, apparently expecting easy victory, yet not knowing the full extent of their plight. These very houses would soon be demolished to strengthen the city's defenses, Is 22:10, and they would be left leaderless and with a demoralized army, 2Ki 25:4. The Hebrew implies in Isaiah's question something like the English, "Who do you think you are partying like this?" The implication is that there is no reason they should be celebrating. Another interpretation is that these people are celebrating the completion of Hezekiah's Tunnel in 701 B.C. which they think will keep them safe (see note on v. 11 below).

<sup>e</sup> (2) Is 23:7, 32:13; Jr 14:18; Lam 2:20, 4:9. Although written in the past tense, Isaiah in vs. 2-3 is predicting that Jerusalem's leaders will flee but ultimately be captured without firing a shot. There was a sense of self-sufficiency in v. 1, but Isaiah is saying that it was misplaced.

<sup>f</sup> (3) Is 1:10, 21:15. The Septuagint reads, "All your princes have fled, and *your* captives are tightly bound, and the mighty *men* in you have fled far away."

<sup>g</sup> The **Daughter of My People** is Jerusalem. Ps 48:11; Jr 8:19. This term is used only once in Isaiah.

<sup>h</sup> (4) Is 15:3; Jr 9:1, 31:15; Mi 1:8; Lk 19:41. Isaiah is preaching gloom and disaster for Jerusalem, but turns away the sympathy of others because the weeping should be over Jerusalem and not Isaiah.

<sup>i</sup> (5) Is 2:12-17; Lam 1:5, 2:2; Is 37:3; Is 10:6, 18:2, 63:3; Mi 7:4. In the Hebrew there is a thrice repeated sound which emphasizes the nature of the disaster that is coming. The tumult of the celebration on the rooftops is converted to the tumult of battle. It will be the day the walls will come down and the city destroyed. The Septuagint reads, "For *it is* a day of trouble, and of destruction, and of treading down, and *there is* perplexity *sent* from the Lord of hosts; they wander in the valley of Zion; they wander from the least to the greatest on the mountains."

<sup>j</sup> **Elam** is the region of Persia just to the East of Babylon.

<sup>k</sup> **Kir** is likely the region of the Tigris and Euphrates, not the Kir of Moab in Is 15:1.

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<sup>l</sup> (6) Is 11:11, 21:2; Jr 49:35; 2Ki 16:9; Am 1:5, 9:7. The Septuagint reads, “And the Elamites took *their* quivers, and *there were* men mounted on horses, and *there was* a gathering for battle.”

<sup>m</sup> (7) The Septuagint reads, “And it shall be *that* your choice valleys shall be filled with chariots, and horsemen shall block up your gates.”

<sup>n</sup> (8) Is 30:1; 1Ki 7:2-12, 10:17. The **House of the Forest** was built by Solomon with wood from the forests of Lebanon and used to store weapons and wealth. The Septuagint reads, “And they shall uncover the gates of Judah, and they shall look in that day on the choice houses of the city.”

<sup>o</sup> (9) 2Ki 20:20; 2Ch 32:5; 2Sm 5:7-9; Ne 3:16. The Septuagint for verses 9-10 reads, “And they shall uncover the secret places of the houses of the citadel of David; and they saw that they were many, and that one *had* turned the water of the old pool into the city; and that they *had* pulled down the houses of Jerusalem, to fortify the wall of the city.” In the Septuagint, rather than Hezekiah taking steps to fortify the city, it is the conquering enemy who spies out those actions.

<sup>p</sup> (10) Jr 33:4; Jsh 2:15. Since the time and resources to quarry new stone to repair breaches in Jerusalem’s wall was not available, stone buildings in the city, including houses, were demolished to provide the necessary material. There is archeological evidence of such activity in Jerusalem.

<sup>q</sup> (11) 2Ki 25:4; Is 7:3; Jr 39:4; 2Ki 20:20; 2Ch 32:3-4; Is 5:12; Sir 48:17. Hezekiah built water works and a tunnel, **Hezekiah’s Tunnel**, which is still present today, to ensure that even when Jerusalem was under siege it would have a secure source of water. These events occurred in c. 701 B.C., before the Assyrian king besieged Jerusalem. To deny water to enemies, and ensure water to the city itself, the Gihon Spring, which was outside the city, was diverted through a tunnel into Jerusalem. The waters of the Gihon were diverted into the Gai wadi by means of a tunnel 533 meters (581 yards) long, which was dug from both ends simultaneously, probably along the course of a natural cleft in the rock. An inscription in the rock at the end of the tunnel describes the completion of the project. It has been suggested that verses 1-14 describe the celebration surrounding the dedication of this water project because, they thought, it would protect Jerusalem from siege along with rebuilding the walls and gathering the weapons of war. Isaiah’s message is those things will fail because the people of Jerusalem forgot the Creator, their God. This poem is what Isaiah might have said had he been asked to say a few words at the dedication of the tunnel.

<sup>r</sup> (12) Is 32:11; Jl 1:3, 2:17; Is 3:24; Mi 1:16; 2Sm 3:3.

<sup>s</sup> (13) Is 5:11, 5:22, 28:7-8; Wis 2:6-9; Lk 17:26-29; Is 56:12; 1Co 15:32; Jr 32:13-14. Rather than repent and turn to God, the inhabitants of Jerusalem celebrate. It is described as bitter, fatalistic and misplaced celebration, perhaps c. 586 B.C. or, as suggested above, upon the completion of Jerusalem’s defenses in 701 B.C. They are perhaps celebrating what they think is their self-reliance and safety and saying to themselves that if these things that they have done cannot save them, nothing can.

<sup>t</sup> **Surely** is the language of an oath. Is 14:24; Dt 1:34; Jr 22:5.

<sup>u</sup> (14) Is 5:9, 13:11, 26:21, 27:9, 30:13, 65:7; 1Sm 3:14; Ezk 24:13; Is 65:20; Lv 16 (Day of Atonement). Each year on Yom Kippur the High Priest would make sacrifices for the people to atone for all their sins in the preceding year. But apparently this sin will not be forgiven. The Septuagint reads, “And these things are revealed in the ears of the Lord of hosts; for this sin shall not be forgiven you, until you die.” When the day of calamity comes, you should not trust in your own self-sufficiency, but turn to the Lord in repentance.

<sup>v</sup> (15) 1Ki 4:6, 16:9, 18:3; 2Ki 18:18-37, 19:2; Is 36:3-22, 37:2. **Shebna** (שֶׁבְנָא, Modern Shevna, "tender youth") was in some translations (KJV), "treasurer over the house" (meaning comptroller or governor of the palace) in the reign of king Hezekiah of Judah. Other translations have his title as Steward (ESV) or, as above, omitted altogether (RSV). Elsewhere, in 2Ki 18:18, he is given the title of Secretary (RSV) or Scribe (ASV) indicating a probable demotion. He was, in all events, a high official and a leader of those who sought an alliance with Egypt, Is 30-31. He ordered a stone tomb built for himself, Is 22:16 not knowing that he would ultimately die far from Jerusalem and that he would not use that tomb, Is 22:17-18. There is no confirmation elsewhere that Shebna’s demotion was followed by exile or establishing the place of his death. Many elaborate tombs from this period have been discovered near Silwan near Jerusalem. The Hebrew for God’s instructions to Isaiah to go that “this” steward imply an insult to or disapproval of Shebna. The Septuagint for verses 15-16 reads, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, Go into the chamber, to Shebna the treasurer, and say to him, Why are you here? And what have you to do here, that you have hewn yourself a tomb, and made yourself a tomb on high, and have graven for yourself a dwelling in the rock?”

<sup>w</sup> (16) 2Sm 18:18; 2Ch 16:14; Gn 11:4; Mt 27:60. The Hebrew here for Isaiah’s first question is identical to that of verse 1 except that it is singular rather than plural. This second poem, about two individuals, is related to the first poem by this parallel language. Isaiah may also have placed the poem here because it is about contemporaries of the historical events described

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(Hezekiah's Tunnel). Or perhaps it was also placed here because the people of the time would see the prophecy about Shebna coming true thus demonstrating Isaiah's credibility. But in all events the parallel story of these two men demonstrates that Isaiah's warning about self-sufficiency applies to individuals as well as to the nation. Shebna is building a great tomb to demonstrate his wealth, power and importance and to preserve his name for the future, but God tells him he will be driven into exile and never use the tomb, just as Judah itself will be taken into exile after being conquered by Babylon in the time of Jeremiah.

<sup>x</sup> (17) Dn 3:21. The Septuagint for verses 17-18 reads, "Behold now, the Lord of hosts casts forth and will utterly destroy *such* a man, and will take away your robe and your glorious crown, and will cast you into a great and unmeasured land, and there you shall die; and He will bring your fair chariot to shame, and the house of your prince to be trodden down."

<sup>y</sup> (18) Is 36:9; Jb 18:18; Is 17:3.

<sup>z</sup> (19) Jb 40:11-12; Ezk 17:24. God will remove Shebna's authority and give it to another. The Septuagint shifts to the passive voice, "And you shall be removed from your stewardship, and from your place."

<sup>aa</sup> (20) 2Ki 18:18-37, 19:2; Is 36:3-22, 37:2.

<sup>bb</sup> (21) Gn 45:8; Jb 29:16; Eph 6:10-17. **Eliakim** was Shebna's replacement. His name means "he who trusts the Lord." The transfer of the symbols of office, the robe and the sash, signifies the transfer of power. 1Sm 18:1-4.

<sup>cc</sup> (22) Is 9:6; Rv 3:7-8; Mt 16:19; Is 7:2-13; Jb 12:14. This verse is quoted in Rv 3:7-8 referring to the Messiah. The Septuagint, seems to add an entire thought about the glory of David and reads, "And I will give him the glory of David; and he shall rule, and there shall be none to speak against him; and I will give him the key of the house of David *upon* his shoulder. And he shall open, and there shall be none to shut; and he shall shut, and there shall be none to open." This passage regarding Eliakim is a description of what the rule of the Messiah will be like, except that unlike Eliakim, the rule of Messiah will not end. Historically, this reading, of a reference to the Messiah, has been common. The Second Helvetic [Swiss] Confession (1561), 5.158, reads, "THE LORD RESERVES TRUE POWER FOR HIMSELF. THIS POWER THE LORD RESERVES TO HIMSELF, AND DOES NOT TRANSFER IT TO ANY OTHER, SO THAT HE MIGHT STAND IDLY BY AS A SPECTATOR WHILE HIS MINISTERS WORK. FOR ISAIAH SAYS, 'I WILL PLACE ON HIS SHOULDER THE KEY OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID' . . . AND AGAIN, 'THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDERS' (IS 9:6). FOR HE DOES NOT LAY THE GOVERNMENT ON OTHER MEN'S SHOULDERS, BUT STILL KEEPS AND USES HIS OWN POWER, GOVERNING ALL THINGS."

<sup>dd</sup> (23) Is 33:20, 54:2; Ec 12:11; Ezr 9:8; Rv 3:21; Zec 10:4; 1Sm 2:8; Jb 36:7. A fastened peg is used to secure a tent against the wind. Here Eliakim will help secure the nation against the enemies who would undo it.

<sup>ee</sup> (24) **Eliakim's children** will also be honored by their father's position, or perhaps the position will become hereditary. Or Eliakim may prefer his own children and other relations for positions of power and wealth. The Septuagint reads, "And everyone that is glorious in the house of his father shall trust in him, from the least to the greatest; and they shall depend upon him in that day."

<sup>ff</sup> (25) Is 40:7-8; Est 9:24-25; Is 46:11; Mi 4:4. While Eliakim may be a good leader for a time, in the end he, as with all earthly leaders, will fail. It is suggested that his fall will be caused by his practice of nepotism, v. 24. The Septuagint reads, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, The man that is fastened in the sure place shall be removed and be taken away, and shall fall; and the glory that is upon him shall be utterly destroyed; for the Lord has spoken it." The image of the tent peg is replaced by the image of a nail driven into a wall with things hung upon it which will be lost when the nail is torn from its place. The meaning of these last two verses is difficult given the Messianic interpretation of vs. 20-23. Some explain them by saying they refer to Shebna rather than Eliakim. Others suggest that Isaiah added them later to change the meaning of the passage. Or perhaps Isaiah is referring to someone who seems to us like an Eliakim, that is, a person we see as the Messiah, and not the real Messiah, who will disappoint us in the end. This would make the message parallel to the rest of the chapter, "Don't put your trust in anything, or anyone, but God."