

ISAIAH: GOD'S DIRECTIVES TO THOSE TROUBLED AT GOVERNMENTAL APOSTASY

Part XIII: God's Salvation From Man-Exalting To God-Exalting Leaders

(Isaiah 21:1-22:25)

I. Introduction

- A. God wants us to have no other gods before Him, that we trust and follow Him alone as God, Exodus 20:3.
- B. Thus, when a leader of **God's people** begins to exalt either himself or other men to God's people in place of **GOD** and His **all-sufficiency**, God views this as an evil, and will **replace** his office or influence with another who will exalt the Lord before His people in all humility. Isaiah 21:1-22:25 illustrates this fact:

II. God's Salvation From Man-Exalting To God-Exalting Leaders.

- A. God announced He would judge evil Gentile nations around Judah so that His people would cease to sin by trusting in them for security from Assyrian invasion rather than trusting in the Lord, Isaiah 21:1-22:14:
 - 1. Scripture dictated the people of Israel were to trust in God versus making military alliances with the Gentile nations around them for national security, cf. Exodus 23:31-33; Deuteronomy 7:1-2.
 - 2. However, when the cruel, dominant nation of Assyria arose to threaten Israel and neighboring Gentile nations around her, instead of turning to the Lord, Israel was tempted to rely upon these other Gentile nations. Accordingly, God predicted the fall of these other nations to Assyria in an effort to get the people of Judah to trust in Him for protection:
 - a. God announced He would destroy an uprising by a Babylonian leader, Marduk-apal-iddina against the Assyrians much to the dismay of the people of Israel who had hoped this uprising would check the Assyrian advance, Isaiah 21:1-10; cf. Bible Knowledge Commentary, O. T., p. 1067-1068.
 - b. Then, to the further threat of Judah, Isaiah predicted the Edomites would fall to Assyria, 21:11-12.
 - c. Isaiah further predicted the Arabian tribes would also experience defeat at the hands of the Assyrian advance, a fact that would threaten the people of Judah, Isaiah 21:13-17.
 - d. Finally, Isaiah predicted the Assyrians would come up against Jerusalem and threaten it regardless of its efforts to provide water in the city during a long siege, and this likely occurred when Assyria's Sennacherib came against Judah's king Hezekiah in 701 B. C., cf. Isaiah 22:1-14. God's purpose in allowing this threat to occur was to motivate Judah to turn from trusting in man and the power of the Gentile armies around them to trust in Him alone for security, *Ibid.*, p. 1069.
- B. However, one of Judah's top officials, Shebna **countered** God's interests of getting Judah to trust in Him by hinting they should look to himself or man's prowess as a kind of idolatrous security, Isaiah 22:15-16:
 - 1. Possibly since he looked to Egyptian alliance for protection against Assyria, the official, Shebna built himself a rock-hewn tomb that nobles used to impress others of themselves, 22:15-16; *Ibid.*, p. 1070.
 - 2. Thus, Shebna sinned in falsely promoting before God's people either a false trust in an Egyptian alliance or a false trust in himself instead of a right, humble trust in the Lord for protection.
- C. Due to the idolatrous impact this tomb construction produced, the Lord judged Shebna to die and be buried in a foreign land in captivity after being replaced by Eliakim who would serve God, Isa. 22:17-24:
 - 1. God predicted Shebna would be helplessly taken captive and die in a foreign land instead of being buried in his own pompous rock tomb that promoted a false trust in man's prowess, Isa. 22:17-18. 19.
 - 2. Also, God would replace Shebna with Eliakim, a **servant** of God, and **graciously** give the more humble, God-trusting Eliakim the honor and influence Shebna failed to keep before man, Isa. 22:20-24.
- D. However, eventually Judah and all its leaders would fail to trust the Lord, so God would destroy even Eliakim's office for unbelief in the Lord, Isaiah 22:25; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., O.T.

Lesson: As Shebna COUNTERED God's will to get His people to SHIFT their trust in man's prowess to trust in God's sufficiency, and since Shebna had done so by building a rock-hewn tomb to impress others with man's sufficiency, God REPLACED him with Eliakim who would do GOD'S will as God's LOWLY SLAVE, and rewarded Eliakim with power and fame before His people in PLACE of Shebna!

Application: (1) We need to know that God is not against a leader having fame and power before his subordinates; yet, if a leader influences subordinates to replace their trust in GOD with a trust in himself or other people, that is IDOLATRY, and God will not tolerate it. (2) May we who lead others then exalt GOD ABOVE ourselves and all human might to be blessed in our roles, cf. 1 Peter 5:1-5, 6!