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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Isaiah 22.

(2016)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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Isaiah 22.

Topics.

- All are shouting from the roof tops, “tumultuous city, exultant town.”
- Let me weep; do not comfort me concerning the destruction of my people.
- God called for weeping and behold joy and gladness and drinking wine.
- Judah looked to the weapons of the house of the forest.
- The breaches of the city of David were many.
- You counted the houses of Jerusalem and broke houses to fortify the wall.
- You made a reservoir, but did not look to him who planned it long ago.
- The LORD called for mourning and behold, drinking wine.
- The LORD will violently whirl Shebna around like a ball into a wide land.
- The LORD will place on Eliakim the key of the house of David.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: “Map Locations and People of the Bible,” and the title: “Bible Dictionary” on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah’s visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God’s people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were “deaf and blind” (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah’s that their sin would bring God’s judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God’s purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God’s Kingdom on earth.

Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah’s visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah’s generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw

the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22). The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

An Oracle (Burden in KJV) Concerning the Valley of Vision

All are shouting from the Roof Tops, "Tumultuous City, Exultant Town."

Isaiah 22:1-3 ----- ¹What do you mean (what aileth you in KJV) that you have gone up, all of you, to the housetops, ²you who are full of shoutings, tumultuous city, exultant town (joyous city in KJV)? Your slain are not slain with the sword or dead in battle. ³All your leaders have fled together; without the bow they were captured. All of you who were found were captured, though they had fled far away.

Tumultuous: comes from the Hebrew word (*hamah*) which carries the following ideas: -

- To be loudly clamorous, riotous, disorderly and unruly.
- To be in great commotion, trouble, tumult, chaos and mayhem.
- To be in a state of noisy, violent confused and disturbing activity.
- To greatly rage, agitate, disturb, provoke and stir up to destroy and make war.
- To be in a state of festive and jubilant commotion and excitement as a house is during a holiday season or during a wild, drunken, riotous and festive celebration.

Burden: the word aileth carries the idea of grief and sorrow, however it is not in the original Hebrew text, but it is in harmony with the title of the vision which is: "A vision of burden." The word burden comes from the Hebrew word (*massa'*) which literally means a burden (i.e., affliction, suffering, trouble and misery), this means that the primary focus of this vision and chapter is one of grief, sadness and sorrow for the inhabitants of Jerusalem (v4, 9, 10).

Isaiah in this vision sees the inhabitants of Jerusalem going up to their roof tops with great grief and sadness, and then asks the question, "What ailes (saddens) you that you go up to the housetops?" After which he answers his own question by saying, "The city that was once prosperous and full of people given to the business of hurrying from place to place about their trade and commerce and amusing themselves with pastime of joy and jollity; which had been the case with Jerusalem

is now no longer filled with multitudes of people walking about in it, but a hush and quiet, shops are shut up and the streets clear of people. Their rulers and commanders of their armies that would normally defend their city had fled and the city and been captured.

Some feel that this vision refers to the many Assyrian campaigns against the land of Judah; the destruction of all their fortified cities and the Assyrian armies taking the people of Judah captive, but in this particular part of Isaiah's lengthy vision the men are not slain with the sword, nor are they seen dying in battle and history clearly shows us that Sennacherib king of Assyria and his armies never entered into the city of Jerusalem, nor did he put any of its inhabitants to the sword; nor was there any battle fought between them; nor was he even able to shoot an arrow into the city as the following verse shows: -

- Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. (Isaiah 37:33).

However later in this chapter Isaiah does see in this lengthy vision Sennacherib king of Assyria and his armies laying siege against the city of Jerusalem which means the focus of this vision does involve both Assyria and Babylon. The vision is best understood by seeing the armies of Assyria being the first wave of affliction that brings sorrow and grief to Jerusalem with Babylon being the second and final wave that brings utter destruction to the city. Sennacherib the king of Assyria laid siege against the city of Jerusalem (but never entered it) at which time those trapped in the city may have died of disease, sickness and famine, because of Sennacherib's armies surrounding the city.

There is no doubt that this would be a fearful time of great morning amongst those trapped within the city walls, but the following verses make it clear that the ultimate fulfilment of this vision refers to Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon. His armies invaded Jerusalem; broke down the gates; entered the city; burned the houses; pillaged the temple and led the people away in chains captive to Babylon. Some survivors fled and some remained. Those that fled most likely died in the hills of hunger and disease and those that remained were slaughtered in the second Babylonian invasion.

Let Me Weep; do not Comfort Me Concerning the Destruction of My People.

Isaiah 22:4-5 ----- ⁴Therefore I said: "Look away from me; let me weep bitter tears; do not labor to comfort me concerning the destruction of the daughter of my people." ⁵For 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.

The daughter of my people: (v4) the word daughter is a term often applied to a beautiful city or town. In Scripture Jerusalem is pictured as the mother city and the lesser towns on Mount Zion (the hill Jerusalem sits on) are referred to as her daughters. At other times Jerusalem is often personified as a mother with children who are all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, prophets, husbands, wives and their children, when they are spoken of as, "Virgin Daughters" it carries the idea of them having only one husband (God) in contrast to heathen nations having many husbands (i.e., many gods).

Since the armies of Assyria failed in their attempt to invade Jerusalem these verses clearly show that this prophetic vision refers to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon whose armies in contrast to Assyria not only trampled down the walls of Jerusalem, but also burnt the city and pillaged the temple of God of all its sacred vessels.

Do not labour to comfort me: (v4) God's people had become so corrupt that God was forced to bring His hand of judgment upon them. Following is a list of sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem throughout their generations. Unrestrained these sins eventually became like a contagious virus running rampant throughout the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. They defiled God's Holy name and their own land by their lifestyle, deeds and actions. They committed gross idolatry and Baal altars were set up throughout their land.

They worshipped the goddess of love and fertility (her worship was sexually indecent). Worse than this they worshipped Moloch and sacrificed their sons to him in the Hinnom valley. They worshipped a golden calf at a religious centre at Dan and at a religious centre at Bethel. Altars were set up in the temple court for planetary worship and the worship of the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon and stars) and worship of idols and altars had been built under shady trees on their hills throughout their land.

Added to this innocent people were killed and cheated out of justice, leaders oppressed others for their own selfish gain and drunkenness, violence, robbery and gross sensuality was rampant. The rich cheated the innocent out of justice, and showed no sense of responsibility towards the poor and instead of relieving their economic distress they devised new means of depriving them of their property. Is it any wonder the LORD compares Israel's ways to the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity? (Ezek. 36:17) and poured out His wrath upon Judah, Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The lesson for today: by wicked behaviour Israel defiled the name of God which resulted in the surrounding nations mocking and despising God. This shines a light on the following truth: the behaviour of everyone who confesses the name of God and Christ His Son will determine to some extent whether outsiders are drawn to God or to despise Him. We are not witnesses to the Lord only when we are sharing our faith with another person our entire life is a witness to our faith and of God it can be a good witness or a bad witness.

Let me weep bitter tears: (v4) these words shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that the LORD takes no pleasure in the destruction of His people, here He is pictured as telling Isaiah not to try to comfort Him over the coming destruction of His people, but to let Him weep tears of bitterness, they are tears of bitterness because the LORD is in great grief.

The valley of vision: the inhabitants of Jerusalem had a life and death decision to make. They had been warned by the prophets to leave Jerusalem and go into captivity to Babylon and God would keep them, but if they stayed they would be slaughtered. For the history of this period of time see the title: "The Babylonian Captivity," at the end of this chapter.

Elam and Kir

God called for Weeping and Behold Joy and Gladness and Drinking Wine.

Isaiah 22:6-14 ----- ⁶And Elam bore the quiver with chariots and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield. ⁷Your choicest valleys were full of chariots, and the horsemen took their stand at the gates. ⁸He has taken away the covering of Judah. In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest, ⁹and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many. You collected the waters of the lower pool, ¹⁰and you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall. ¹¹You made a reservoir (a ditch in KJV) between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to him who did it, or see him who planned it long ago. ¹²In that day the Lord GOD of hosts called for weeping and mourning, for baldness and wearing sackcloth; ¹³and behold, joy and gladness, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ¹⁴The LORD of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: "Surely this iniquity will not be atoned for you until you die," says the Lord GOD of hosts.

Elam: stretches east from the Lower Tigris in the southern part of Persia. It was later a province of Persia

- Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as follows: ⁹Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges, the governors, the officials, the Persians, the men of Erech, the Babylonians, the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites. (Ezra 4:8-9).

They were united with Assyria in the invasion of the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria.

- The king of Assyria (Shal-maneser) carried the Israelites away to Assyria and put them in Halah and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, in the cities of the Medes (2 Kgs. 18:11)

They were one of the nations forced to drink the cup of God's wrath and doomed to judgment.

- The LORD, said to Isaiah: "Take the cup of wrath, to all the nations who I send you to so he took the cup from the LORD'S hand, and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent him drink it --- NOW GO TO VERSE TWENTY-FIVE --- ²⁵all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media (Jer. 25:15-25)
- Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might. ³⁶And I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven. And I will scatter them to all those winds, and there shall be no nation to which those driven out of Elam shall not come. ³⁷I will terrify Elam before their enemies and before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, my fierce anger, declares the LORD. I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them, ³⁸and I will set my throne in Elam and destroy their king and officials, declares the LORD. ³⁹"But in the latter days I will restore the fortunes of Elam, declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 49:35-39)

Kir: was an eminent city in the region of Media where the river Kyros (or Cyrus) flows. This river unites with the Araxes and falls into the Caspian Sea. Kir was united with the Assyrian armies in their invasion of the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria.

- The king of Assyria (Tiglath-pileser) listened to him (Ahaz king of Judah). The king of Assyria marched up against Damascus and took it, carrying its people captive to Kir, and he killed Rezin (king of Syria). (2 Kings 16:9).
- In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria (Shalmaneser) captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (2 Kings 17:6).
- I will break the gate-bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter from Beth-eden; and the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kir," says the LORD. (Amos 1:5)
- Are you not like the Cushites to me, O people of Israel?" declares the LORD. "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir? (Amos 9:7).

The warriors of Kir and Elam were aligned together and both were enemies of Israel and both were aligned with Assyria and the Medes when they went against Israel in the land of Samaria.

Elam bare the quiver: a quiver is a case in which arrows are carried it is usually hung on the shoulder by the soldier when he entered into battle. The idea here is that Elam was particularly distinguished for being expert bow-men with the skill of shooting arrows and hitting their target as implied in the following verse: -

- Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might. (Jer. 49:35).

Chariots of men and horsemen: means they were military men that fought and used the bow in chariots, on horseback and on foot.

Uncovered the shield: in times of peace shields were wrapped and covered with a leather covering or a piece of cloth while not being used to protect the embossed figures on it from tarnishing and rusting and to keep it free from dust and dirt so it remained bright and polished. To uncover a shield, therefore carries the idea of preparing for battle and war.

Horsemen shall set themselves at the gate of the city of Jerusalem: (v7) for the following reasons: -

- To defend the footmen whilst they broke the gates down and protect those who scaled the walls.
- To take captive or slaughter those who endeavoured to escape.
- To charge into the city when they had broken the gates down.

Your choicest valleys shall be full of chariots (v7) meaning the most fertile and most valued lands around the city of Jerusalem. They are the valleys of Gibeon, Rephaim, Hinnom, and Jehoshaphat that encircled Jerusalem. Valleys being flat were the perfect place to use chariots for weapons of war. These rich and fertile vales near Jerusalem that are normally covered with the choicest corn and vines, grass and flocks of sheep are pictured in this prophetic vision of Isaiah is seen being filled with chariots and armies surrounding the city of Jerusalem.

This vision can apply to two major events: firstly, to Sennacherib the king of Assyria and his armies being the first wave of affliction to come upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and secondly, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his armies being the final wave to bring utter destruction to the city.

1. Sennacherib the king of Assyria: trapped the inhabitants of Jerusalem within the city walls by having his armies surround the city and laying siege to it ready to make and attack on the very gate of the city of Jerusalem, called by Sennacherib, "the great gate" however before his armies could break down the gate and invade the city : -
 - The angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. (2 Kings 19:35).

The stunning wonder of biblical prophecy: what occurs concerning this particular part of this lengthy prophetic vision involving the armies of Sennacherib coming up against Jerusalem is recorded historically in (Isaiah chapter 36) (2 Chronicles chapter 32). The detail is so exact that it leaves no room to doubt that the beginning of God's judgment upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem began with this invasion of Assyria under Sennacherib.

2. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: sometime after Sennacherib's failed attempt to take Jerusalem the armies of Babylon under king Nebuchadnezzar not only surrounded and besieged Jerusalem they also attacked it; broke down the gates; burned the city; pillaged the sacred items of the temple and led the inhabitants in chains away to seventy years captivity in Babylon. For the history of this period of time see the title: "The Babylonian Captivity," at the end of this document.

Judah looked to the Weapons of the House of the Forest.

Isaiah 22:8 -----⁸He has taken away the covering of Judah. In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest.

Here Isaiah is speaking in a kind of prophetic present tense, painting the future as if it was actually passing before his gaze. The "He" in this verse can refer to God or to Sennacherib king of Assyria for the following reasons: -

To God: who by sending Isaiah to declare the looming doom to come upon them uncovered the hidden and approaching danger from the eyes of the inhabitants of the city and by taking away His power, presence and protection from Jerusalem He uncovered their hypocrisy and laid bare their weakness to defend themselves against the invading Assyrian armies.

To Sennacherib: the great enemy of Jerusalem who had taken all the fortified cities of Judah which were a covering (i.e., or safeguard and protection) to the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

The invading armies of Assyria not only exposed Jerusalem to its weakness to defend itself and stripped the city of every fortified city of Judah surrounding its walls, but also exposed them to reproach and shame by laying bare the land of Judah and stripping it of its armies leaving their beloved city unprotected.

- In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. (2 Kings 18:13) (Isaiah 36:1).

Sennacherib took all the fortified cities which were a covering to Jerusalem in the sense that they were the cities safeguard and it was defended by them and their armies. It should be mentioned that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the temple never fell into the hands of King Sennacherib and his mighty and fierce armies nor did they enter into the city. This is because an angel of the LORD struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. (2 Kings 19:35).

In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest: (v8) since Isaiah is predicting an invasion which is still yet future and the behaviour of the inhabitants of Jerusalem on that occasion this is better read "In that day you will look." He is saying that in the day the covering of Judah is taken away they will look to the weapons of the House of the Forest which based upon the following verses appears to have been a building in which they stored their weapons of war.

- Solomon built the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Its length was a hundred cubits and its breadth fifty cubits and its height thirty cubits, and it was built on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars. (1 Kings 7:2).
- Solomon made 300 shields of beaten gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. (1 Kings 10:17).

The expression, "the house of the forest of Lebanon," does not mean it was built in Lebanon, for it was in Jerusalem; but because of the great quantity of cedar from Lebanon that it was built from. This vast storehouse of weapons was now the principal reliance of the inhabitants of Jerusalem against the invading armies of Sennacherib. Although Hezekiah was commended for his trust in God, yet the generality of the people looked to their own strength rather than put their trust in God they put their trust in human forces and weapons of war and in fortifying their city and checking what weapons of war they had in the storeroom and what condition they were in rather than looking to God who was their King and protector.

The Breaches of the City of David were Many.

Isaiah 22:9 -----⁹and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many. You collected the waters of the lower pool (ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool in KJV).

Zion was usually called the city of David (the fortress of Zion), but the name was given also to the entire city, because it was the royal residence of David. To fortify the breaches (i.e., the weak, vulnerable and defenceless areas) of the city Hezekiah built up the wall that was broken, and raised it the towers, and cut off the water supply to the outside of the city.

- Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them for himself. ²And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, ³he planned with his officers and his mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city; and they helped him. ⁴A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?" ⁵He set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall, and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David. He also made weapons and shields in abundance. (2 Chron. 32:1-5).

Isaiah is foreseeing into the future and predicting that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would see and consider the breaches of the city meaning the ruin and weakness of its fortifications, not of weakness made by the Assyrian army, but of old ones, which had gone to decay because of the peoples neglect in times of peace. Isaiah

is saying when the inhabitants of Jerusalem see the destruction of all of the fortified cities of Judah and the armies of Assyria approaching they will immediately take notice of the weakness of their defence and the need to repair and fortify the many weak, vulnerable and defenceless areas of the city that have been neglected in times of peace and let go to ruin.

You gathered together the waters of the lower pool: the overflow or surplus waters of the lower pool usually flowed into the valley of Hinnom to water the fertile fields and from there into the valley of Jehoshaphat, mingling with the waters of the brook Kedron. At present, the lower pool was without walls, but Hezekiah extended a wall around it so as to enclose it for the following two reasons: -

1. To retain all the water within the city to supply the inhabitants during the siege (2 Chron. 32:4).
2. To cut the water supply off from the enemies surrounding them.

In the book of chronicles it is written: -

- Hezekiah planned with his officers and his mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city; and they helped him. ⁴A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?" (2 Chron. 32:3-4).

Its object was to stop the overflow of the waters flowing outside of the city and instead gathering it into a reservoir, partly of course, for the supply of the inhabitants during the siege, but still more so that the surrounding armies would have little or no supply of water in the immediate neighbourhood of the city.

NOTE.

The sin of the inhabitants of Jerusalem was not that they did all they could to prepare themselves for defence and battle. To prepare oneself ready for any event (good or bad) is wisdom not sin and foolishness. Their sin was trusting in their own strength. They looked to their fortifications that they made with their own hands all the while disregarding God in all their preparations.

Instead of giving thought to His glory in what they did and looking to Him for a blessing on their endeavours and repenting of their rebellion and gross wickedness there was only contempt concerning His wrath and justice in contending with them. God's design was to humble them and bring them to repentance, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of the prophets and instead walked contrary to what God had called them to.

You Counted the Houses of Jerusalem and Broke Houses to Fortify the Wall.

Isaiah 22:10 ----- ¹⁰and you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall.

You counted the houses of Jerusalem: since this is a prophecy of future things to come to pass it is better read, "you shall count the houses of Jerusalem," for the following five reasons: -

1. To see how many can be spared to be pulled down that with the stones and timber from them they could repair the breaches in the cities walls and build up its towers.
 - Hezekiah set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall, and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David. He also made weapons and shields in abundance. (2 Chron. 32:5).
2. To see how many people were in each house that would be suitable for working on the repair of the walls, making weapons and diverting the waters.
3. To number the men in each house at the age for war (20 years old) and how many would be suitable for commanders, soldiers and watchmen.

4. To number how many persons were in each house so they could ration the food supplies accordingly during the siege.
5. To know what money they would be able to raise to buy extra food, supplies and materials they would need for the making of weapons.

You broke down the houses to fortify the wall: since this is a prophetic vision yet to come to pass it is better read, "You will break down the houses to fortify the wall." Naturally without strong walls the city had no defence and its enemies had a great advantage. The houses in Jerusalem were built of stone and solid timber and therefore provided the needed materials for repairing the walls. In Chronicles we are told that on the approach of Sennacherib king of Assyria Hezekiah not only repaired the broken walls of the city, but also raised up the towers and another wall without the city and repaired Millo in the city of David (2 Chron. 32:5).

You made a Reservoir, but did Not Look to Him who planned it Long Ago.

Isaiah 22:11 ----- 11 You made a reservoir (a ditch in KJV) between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to him who did it, or see him who planned it long ago.

Hezekiah's tunnel: (also known as the Siloam tunnel) is the most impressive of the water systems built in the City of David. It takes about 20 minutes to walk through this amazing water tunnel finely carved out (chisel marks are still visible) into the rock beneath the City of David. It is a 533m long "S" shaped tunnel though in a straight line the distance from the Gihon Spring to the Siloam Pool is only 325m. The average width of the tunnel is about 60cm. It is about 2m high along most of its course, but reaches 3-4m in some sections at the beginning and the end. The project is mentioned in (2 Kings 20:20) (2 Chron. 32:30).

Pool of Siloam: was fed by the waters of the Gihon Spring diverted through Hezekiah's Tunnel, built in the 8th century BC.

In normal times of peace it seems Jerusalem even without this tunnel would have been supplied with enough water from the Gihon Spring since it was protected by massive stone towers and within the city's defensive wall system. Hezekiah's tunnel was an additional watercourse designed for keeping the surplus (or overflow) of the waters of the Gihon Spring inside the walled area of the city and were therefore directed through this tunnel to flow into the Pool of Siloam. Normally this surplus (or overflow) of the waters of the Gihon Spring not used by the city population would be released into the Kidron Valley to water the fertile fields etc.

The building to this tunnel served the following three purposes: -

1. The Gihon Spring and the pool at the end of the tunnel provided two places for the inhabitants of Jerusalem to collect water.
 2. It supplied more than enough water to provide for the inhabitants of the city during a siege.
- It cut off the water supply to invading armies during a siege. (2 Chron. 32:3-5).

Millo: comes from the Hebrew word (*millow*) it is the name of two citadels and literally means a rampart (as filled in), (i.e. a citadel, fortress or stronghold) a house, place or building used as a fortress, stronghold and place of defence or of earthworks built up for the same purpose. It already existed when David conquered Jerusalem but he extended it to the right and left to complete the defence of the city.

- David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. (2 Sam. 5:9).

It was rebuilt by Solomon.

- This is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon drafted to build the house of the LORD and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer (1 Kings 9:15).

- Pharaoh's daughter went up from the city of David to her own house that Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo. (1 Kings 9:24).
- Solomon built the Millo, and closed up the breach of the city of David his father. (1 Kings 11:27).

It was repaired by Hezekiah.

- Hezekiah set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall, and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David. (2 Chron. 32:5).

Many speculations have been made concerning what the Millo may have been especially regarding its exact position. It appears to refer to some type of solid tower or an earth embankment where Zion had the least height and therefore was strengthened with some type of fortification perhaps consisting of fortified walls filled in with earth and stones, which protected Jerusalem from invading armies (maybe something similar to very high retaining walls).

Long before Sennacherib king of Assyria turned against Judah the Assyrian armies had destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel in the land of Samaria. King Hezekiah of Judah upon hearing that Sennacherib was marching toward Jerusalem fortified the Millo as part of his defence of the city. It turned out to be unnecessary, because an angel of the LORD annihilated the Assyrian army of 185,000 troops when Sennacherib was about to attack Jerusalem, because he mocked and blasphemed God. (2 Kings 19:35).

You did not look to him who did it, or see him who planned it long ago: the King James Bible says, "Ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago." Isaiah is not rebuking the people for building fortifications and preparing themselves for attack, but for not giving God a thought during all their planning and not trusting Him to bless them and be their protector, but trusting in their own works.

All their material defences will avail them little if they forget Him who is not only the true builder and maker of the city and who alone can secure its safety, but is also the one who gave them the ability and skill to make such fortifications. It should be mentioned this describes the character of the people as a collective whole and not Hezekiah as an individual since he was a faithful man who no doubt did depend on the aid of God.

The expression, "him who planned it long ago," most likely refers to the invasion of Sennacherib and the nations aligned to him coming up against Jerusalem especially since God used Assyria to bring judgment upon the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and though Sennacherib never entered the gates of Jerusalem we are told that God later used Nebuchadnezzar as His servant to bring judgment upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

- Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you (Judah) have not obeyed my words, ⁹behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land (of Judah) and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. (Jer. 25:8-9).

The inhabitants of Jerusalem did not look to the Maker thereof can carry the following four ideas: -

1. They did not look to God who gives the water that fills the pools and the tunnel while building it.
2. They did not look to God who gave David victory over the inhabitants of Jerusalem and inspired him to make it the capital city of Israel.
3. They did not look to God who called Solomon to build the temple in Jerusalem and who placed His name and eyes upon it.

4. They did not look to the distress and calamity which Isaiah is predicting God their Maker will bring upon them and repent of their rebellion and gross sins.

The LORD called for Mourning and Behold Drinking Wine.

Isaiah 22:12-14 ----- ¹²And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth. ¹³and behold, joy and gladness, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ¹⁴The LORD of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: "Surely this iniquity will not be atoned for you until you die," says the Lord GOD of hosts.

Baldness and sackcloth: it was common practise in times of extreme grief, sorrow and calamity for the people to mourn with great weeping, put on sackcloth and shave their head or tear out their hair especially when faced with national annihilation.

But if such sorrow and weeping stemmed only from their fear of the calamity and affliction that they were about to suffer and not from an inward spirit of repentance and sorrow over their rebellion and wickedness before God it mattered not how much they plucked out their hair or how loud their wailing was it all counted for nothing.

The following verses show that plucking off the hair or shaving the head was common emblems of grief among the ancients.

- As soon as I (Ezra) heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled. (Ezra 9:3).
- Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. (Job 1:20).
- Make yourselves bald and cut off your hair, for the children of your delight; make yourselves as bald as the eagle, for they shall go from you into exile. (Micah 1:16).

Isaiah in this prophetic vision sees the LORD calling the inhabitants to lament and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and confess and mourn over their sins which are the cause of these calamities then by prayer, supplication and with tears implore His help and assistance and grant them deliverance from their mighty and fearful enemies.

In that day: refers to the day the LORD planned this calamity that is about to come upon Jerusalem, it could be stated, "And the Lord God of hosts when planning this fearful and calamitous day was looking for weeping, fasting and praying, but instead found the people given up to worldly pleasure, feasting and revelling, to flippancy and luxury saying, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." This expression carries the idea that they are living to satisfy the flesh without any concern for God's honour and His good name.

To make the best of the present time and be joyful while we have opportunity is not a sin in fact joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, but when such joy involves behaviour that dishonours God's name and actions that are against His will such joy becomes an extreme offense before God.

The LORD has revealed himself in my ears: may literally mean that God audibly spoke into the ear of Isaiah or that he heard the LORD'S voice in his head so clearly that it was as though the LORD spoke in his ear either way it carries the idea that all that Isaiah has spoken will surely come to pass, it is as certain as if the LORD had stood with Isaiah and audibly spoken it to him as one speaks to a friend.

This iniquity will not be atoned for you until you die: does not mean that if the inhabitants of Jerusalem had repented and turned from their wicked ways God would not have forgiven them, but that God in His eternal foreknowledge saw instead of turning from their wickedness they not only hardened their hearts against His word, but their wickedness became even more evil.

The LORD will violently Whirl Shebna around like a Ball into a Wide Land.

Isaiah 22:15-19 ----- ¹⁵Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, "Come, go to this steward (treasurer in KJV), to Shebna, who is over the household, and say to him: ¹⁶What have you to do here, and whom have you here, that you have cut out here a tomb for yourself, you who cut out a tomb on the height and carve a dwelling for yourself in the rock? ¹⁷Behold, the LORD will hurl you (Shebna) away violently, O you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you ¹⁸and whirl you around and around, and throw you like a ball into a wide land. There you shall die, and there shall be your glorious chariots, you shame of your master's house. ¹⁹I will thrust you from your office, and you will be pulled down from your station.

This was one of the instances in which a prophet was directed to go with an unwelcome message to an individual in a high position of authority at the hazard of his own life to denounce on them the divine judgment for their sin.

Steward: (treasurer in KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*cakan*) it literally means to be familiar with and by implication carries the idea of ministering, to provide a service, to minister, to be serviceable or to be a treasurer. In addition to this it was the highest authority in the kings' government and of such importance that it was sometimes held by a king's son. The treasurer was entrusted with the care of the budget and finances of all the ministrations of the kingdom.

To be treasurer was to be the king's friend and principal officer of the court and the king's counsellor concerning the running of his kingdom. The treasurer had the keys of the money stores and as such had great authority in the ordering of all the civil and domestic affairs within the kingdom which was an extremely high position to hold.

Shebna: is the only individual singled out as the subject of prophecy in the book of Isaiah. Since we know very little of him some feel that he was the treasurer over the temple, but since he was not a priest it is better to take him as being one who had the rule over the palace and was the principal minister of the king.

Sepulchre and tombs: it was common practise for the Pharaohs, the kings of great nations, princes, rich people and great ones of the earth to have their own sepulchre or tomb made for them while they were alive. Such sepulchres could be built like miniature palaces or hollowed out in the rock of the side of a hill or some elevated prominent place that was noticeable and eye-catching or hewn out in rock at the top of high mountains.

These sepulchres were often displayed with architectural artwork and adorned with historical sculptural figures that celebrated certain periods of history. The most magnificent of all tombs would of course be the Egyptian pyramids that were built to be tombs for the Pharaoh. Many who have done nothing to deserve celebrity and honour by their noble deeds think they can achieve it by the magnificence of their tomb.

Shebna's sepulchre: since Isaiah rebukes Shebna for building a sepulchre for himself it is very likely he erected his sepulchre among the sepulchres of the holy people of Israel or in some part of the royal burying place in Jerusalem or perhaps in the hills of Jerusalem to be his own everlasting habitation and to make his name immortal by his opulent and magnificent sepulchre. (Rock-hewn sepulchres of this type are found today on the slopes of all the hills in the neighbourhood of the holy city).

When Isaiah rebuked Shebna saying, "What have you to do here, that you have cut out here a tomb for yourself in the rock? (v16) it was very likely that he met Shebna at the sepulchre especially since the LORD told Isaiah to go to Shebna and say these things to him. Isaiah's rebuke implies that Shebna considered himself equal to the holy men who had been laid in such sepulchres, should this be so Isaiah would be saying, "Who among the dead that are entombed here are connected with you that you should consider yourself entitled to lie with them, what makes you think God would allow you to lie with these holy ones?"

Building such a tomb was evidence of Shebna's pride and vain glory and of an attempt to occupy a place, even in death, to which he had no title, because of his vanity and pride the LORD here says that He will toss him like a ball into a far country where he would die (probably referring to Assyria) and Eliakim would take his robe, his sash and his authority and rule over the house (v20).

Later in the book of Isaiah the Scriptures speak of Eliakim during the reign of Hezekiah being over the household and over Shebna the secretary (scribe in KJV) and not a treasurer (Isaiah 36:3) (Isaiah 36:22) (Isaiah 37:2). Some feel that the Shebna that Isaiah rebuked maybe the same Shebna that Eliakim had been placed over, but this is very unlikely considering that the Shebna Isaiah rebuked was such an offense to God that God said He would hurl him away violently like a ball into a wide land where he would die (Isaiah 22:17-18). It is more likely that the Shebna Eliakim was placed over is another man with the same name which is common in Scripture.

Eliakim

The LORD will Place on Eliakim the Key of the House of David.

Isaiah 22:20-25 ----- ²⁰In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, ²¹and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash 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. ²²And 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. ²³And I will fasten him like a peg (fasten him as a nail in KJV) in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house. ²⁴And they will hang on him the whole honor of his father's house, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons. ²⁵In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a secure place will give way, and it will be cut down and fall, and the load that was on it will be cut off, for the LORD has spoken."

Hilkiyah: comes from the Hebrew word (*Chilqiyah*) it means the portion of Jehovah, he was the father of Eliakim who was the manager of Hezekiah's household (2 Kings 18:18). (It is the name of eight Israelites).

Eliakim: comes from the Hebrew word (*'Elyaqiyim*) it means God of raising which carries the idea of God setting up and establishing (it is the name of four Israelites).

Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: was the successor of Shebna who was the master of the household of Hezekiah the king of Judah. Eliakim was in all things faithful to the trust the king and the LORD had given him.

From (Isaiah 36) we see that he was head of the rulers of the palace; that he was the spokesman for the delegation from Hezekiah which attempted to negotiate with the representatives of Sennacherib the king of Assyria who was besieging Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:17-37) (Isa 36:1-22). Upon the failure of these negotiations, Eliakim headed the delegation sent to implore the help of Isaiah the prophet (2 Kings 19:2) (Isa 37:2).

In that day: (v20) refers to the day the LORD thrusts Shebna from his office (v19) and replaces him with Eliakim.

I will call my servant Eliakim: (Isaiah 22:20) these words of the LORD show that Eliakim's character was such that he was by God considered a good, diligent and faithful man and a constant servant of the LORD and because of his good character the LORD delighted to raise him to a position of great honour and dignity. Eliakim did not seek great things for himself, nor did he thrust himself into the office, but the LORD called him and put him into it.

I will clothe him with Shebna's robe: (v21) this not only refers to the peculiar type of robe and girdle that was worn as the badge of the royal office that was to be taken from Shebna and given to Eliakim, but also carries the idea that all the royal authority Shebna had would be taken from him and given to Eliakim.

He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: (v21) this is one of the most beautiful testimonies a king, ruler or leader can have said of them. The apostle Paul wrote: -

- Though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (1 Cor. 4:15).

To rule, guide or teach as a father carries the idea of not only having the authority of a father, but also ruling, guiding and teaching with fatherly care and affection.

The key of the house of David: (v22) means that he will have all the royal authority of the house of David over God's Kingdom.

He shall open, and none shall shut: (v22) the robe and the girdle mentioned in the preceding verse and the key of the house of David were emblems of power and authority and as such gave those who had them in their possession the power of opening and shutting, of binding and loosing, meaning they have the power to: -

- Exalt into office or remove from office who they wish.
- Establish rules and laws in the Kingdom or abolish them.
- Determine what, is acceptable behaviour in the kingdom and what is not.

Giving someone the keys to a house is not only giving them the total access to every room and thing in that house, but also shows that the one giving the key totally trusts the one they are handing the keys over to will do the right thing.

I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place: (fasten him as a nail in KJV) the word nail comes from the Hebrew word (*yathed*) it literally means to pin through or fast with a peg, a nail, a pin or a stake. It is used both for the peg that fastens a tent to the ground or for a nail driven into the wall. In ancient houses large nails, pegs or spikes were fixed in stone walls or solid timber for the following two purposes: -

1. For coats that protect from harsh and cold weather or decorative ornaments of the family home to be hung on.
2. For suits of armour, shields, swords, etc., used in battle or taken in battle to be hung on around the walls of a room used for the storage of such things or to be hung as a flamboyant display of power on the walls of the royal palace.

The peg is the principal support for objects to be hung upon, signifying that Eliakim would not only be the principal support of all those under his authority, but also the principal support of the whole civil and ecclesiastical state. The peg signifies that Eliakim would be a leader that would not only support those he ruled over, but also one the people could trust and fully rest securely on his leadership. The words, "I will fasten him," show that it was the LORD who established Eliakim's authority and power and not Eliakim himself.

He will become a throne of honour to his father's house (v23) means Eliakim would be exalted to the highest position in the kingdom and bring honour to all his family, kindred and offspring. It means that their reputation could rest securely on him and his deeds and that he would bring glory over all those belonging to his father's house by his wise and righteous government.

They will hang on him the whole honour (all the glory in KJV) of his father's house: (v24) his father's house in this context most likely refer to the house of David, which is perhaps called his father's house for one of the following three reasons: -

- Kings are called the fathers of all their subjects, both in Scripture, and by other authors.
- Eliakim may have been a descendant of the royal blood line.

- It would be right and proper for all faithful Jews (and Christians) to say they were of the house of David their father.

From the cups to all the flagons: (v24) refers to cups, goblets, bowls or basins as used by the priests for the blood of the victims in sacrificing (Exod. 24:6) or cups commonly used for drinking wine. Flagons or earthen pitchers and pots used for carrying water and as decorative containers for plants etc. In the same household are all sorts of vessels, great and small, some made of gold and silver others of clay and stone. Symbolically the idea is that all these vessels no matter what they were made of and regardless of their value would signify that all in the family of Eliakim would be valued regardless of whether they were priests or lay people or of noble rank or lowly, whether they were rich or poor fathers or little ones none would be forgotten or neglected by him.

The peg that was fastened will be cut down and cut off: (v25) this is not said of Eliakim since the LORD said that He would fasten him like a peg in a secure place and that he would become a throne of honour to his father's house (v23), but of Shebna the peg that Eliakim replaced.

Verses twenty to twenty-five could be paraphrased in the following way: -

- In that day I will call my servant Eliakim and commit Shebna's authority to him. I will fasten Eliakim like a peg in a secure place and they will hang on Eliakim the whole honour of his father's house in that day, declares the LORD of hosts, the peg (being Shebna) that was fastened in a secure place will give way (to the LORD'S servant Eliakim) and Shebna will be cut off." (v20-25).

The godly man Eliakim was to be fastened meaning confirmed in his office not to be removed, but Shebna was to be removed. Shebna was regarded as having a permanent hold on the office and in this sense could be spoken of as a sure peg, but all the honour of his family his noble position, his benefits his hope of future fame and of an honoured burial would all be cut off when he was removed from his office and replaced by the godly man Eliakim. When a peg is suddenly cut down all that hangs on it falls with it.

It is certain that Shebna being put into such a noble position by the king and having such great authority and being courted by his friends and flatterers thought himself to be as a peg in a sure place and no doubt seemed to be a peg that was fastened in a sure place in the eyes of many others. But in the eyes of the LORD it was not the prideful Shebna, but the godly man Eliakim who was the peg to be fastened in a sure place.

The load that was fastened on the peg will be cut off (v25) (the burden that was upon it shall be cut off in KJV). The load or burden refers to all those wicked officers that were advanced and supported by Shebna's power, his flatterers and friends who he had raised by his influence and authority to considerable places, and whom he supported these would all fall with him. In the same way as when a peg is removed from a wall all that hangs on it is removed with it.

All the following statements concerning Eliakim show that he can be seen as a type of Christ: -

- The LORD says, "I will call him my servant" (v20).
- He will be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to Judah (v21).
- The LORD will place on him the key of the house of David (v22).
- He shall open and none shall shut; and shall shut and none shall open (v22).
- He will become a throne of honour to his father's house (v23).
- Those who follow him will give him all the honour of his father's house (v24).
- Added to these the name Eliakim means God of raising which carries the idea of God setting up and establishing.

Clearly these statements are all true of Christ. Eliakim was compared to a peg in a sure place in who all his family are said to depend upon this is also certainly true of the Lord Jesus Christ, all who have faith in him fully depend upon him for grace and righteousness and utterly trust upon him for their salvation and eternal life. Christ is in every way the honour and brightness of his Father's glory and will bring all His Father's family to sit with him on his throne.

Our Lord Jesus is as a peg in a sure place by his grace he will set before those who trust in him an open door, which no man can shut, and bring them to everlasting happiness and eternal glory. In contrast to this those who neglect so great salvation will as Shebna was be cut off from ever seeing light after the grave and find that when the Lord shuts none can open. The load hung upon Christ the sure peg is the sins of those who trust in him. He carried the sin of the people on his shoulders to the cross of Calvary where he was fastened as a sure peg and was given the key of David: -

- To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: "The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. (Rev. 3:7).

The key of David is the key to salvation and God's eternal Kingdom there is salvation in no other, only Christ can save only he opens the door to the eternal Kingdom of God and eternal life. (Rev. 3:7).

The Babylonian Captivity.

God sent prophet after prophet to warn Judah and Israel of impending doom if they did not change their wicked ways, but they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets (Zech. 7:12). The LORD through the faithful prophets told them to surrender themselves to the King of Babylon and God would nurture them while in Babylonian captivity and deliver them. But they continued to rebel against the word of the LORD and turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. The curses of the covenant are found in (Deut. 28:15-68) and the blessing of the covenant in (Deut. 28:1-14)

The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.). Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to the Empire of Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. They were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years.

Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

Now here is the good news: while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again)

Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a golden time of prosperity and peace followed.

Sadly Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory: -

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

End