

## Till Your Dying Days, This Sin Cannot be Atoned for!

### Isaiah 22:1-14

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#### I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

##### A. Historical Background

The history of the Israelites is filled with *spiritual corruption stemming from* unfaithfulness and disobedience due to their *recurring affinity to idol worship*. Because of their *unfaithfulness* to God and *disregard or willful negligence* of their obligations to **the Covenant**, their history is *punctuated* by periods of turmoil, conflicts, wars, defeats and destructions! The Bible *highlights* that most of the kings after King David *gravitated* toward idolatry of all kinds thereby *leading* the Israelites astray. Furthermore, Scripture points to the fact that when trouble comes due to their unfaithfulness, the Kings of Judah and Israel *sought the help of idol worshipping Kings instead of repenting and seeking God's forgiveness* thereby adding to their *wickedness!*

##### B. Biblical Context

In Isaiah chapter 22, there is reference to “**The Valley of Vision**” which we need to understand to get at **the revelations** in the 14 verses we are examining today. Obviously, “**The Valley of Vision**” is in connection to **Jerusalem** and we need to understand *why it is eternally significant*. My biblical research led me to examine “**Valley**” and “**Vision**” in the *context of the Prophecy of Isaiah* regarding **Jerusalem**.

1. **Valley**. Jerusalem City was established among two prominent valleys – The **Kidron Valley** and the **Hinnom Valley**. “Jerusalem was built on two triangle-shaped *ridges* which converge to the south. On the east lay the *ravine* known as the ‘**Kidron Valley**.’ On the west lay the *deep gorge* known as the ‘**Hinnom Valley**.’ At southern border of the city, the two valleys converged. Only on the northern border was the city *vulnerable to attack*. The lack of water supply was solved by using a natural spring that flowed from the ‘**Kidron Valley**.”

- a) **Characteristics of Valleys.**

Valleys represents low areas of land surrounded by elevated landforms such as mountains, hills, or plateaus. The different types include **V-shaped** (river), **U-shaped** (glacier), **rift**, and **flat-floored** valleys.

- b) **Characteristics of Ridges.**

A ridge is a long, narrow, elevated geomorphologic landform, structural feature, or a combination of both separated from the surrounding terrain by steep sides. The sides of a ridge slope away from a narrow top, the crest or Ridgecrest, with the terrain dropping down on either side.

2. **Vision.** Vision is given to the Servants (for example, Joseph, David, Daniel, Peter, John) and Prophets of God (Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, etc.). **Visions** given in Prophecies can be “**visions of judgement**” whereby God speaks of the way He is going to judge/punish kings, people, nations, for example. Visions given in Prophecies are also “**visions of Hope, Redemption, Restorations and Victory.**” As we studied the Book of Isaiah, we see how God gave Isaiah the Prophecies against many nations mentioned by name. Within the Prophecies, God gave the “vision” as to *how/when* His **Judgement** will be *manifested*, carried out, thereby *the vision becoming the realities* of the *particular* people or *specific* nations.
3. **Valley of Vision.** When we combine the two words – **Valley** and **Vision** in connection with **Jerusalem**, the Prophecies in Isaiah 22 become clearer. The *spiritual and literal significance* of **Jerusalem** must be understood in the context of **God’s Plan of Salvation** as manifested in Canaan during the time of Joshua (the fulfillment of **God’s Vision** for Israel as promised to Abraham and Sarah) and *reinstated* by King David who *recovered* the lost territories during the Time of Judges. The **Ultimate Spiritual Significance of Jerusalem** for God’s chosen people (Israel) was *fulfilled* through David who *established* the City and *laid the foundation* for the **Jerusalem Temple. God’s Glorious Plan of Salvation** for the world was supposed to *emanate* from **Jerusalem** and *spread out* to all nations! The Israelites were supposed to be “holy and blameless” *examples* to other nations who were idol worshippers! Instead, on many occasions, Jerusalem became *the center of abomination* due to their *unfaithfulness and disobedience* to God by engaging in **idolatry!** Hence, God judged Judah/Jerusalem by sending idol worshipping nations such as the Assyrians and Babylonians to punish them! *Jerusalem became the focus of many Prophecies embedded with Visions.* Hence, the reference to Jerusalem as “**The Valley of Visions.**” Jerusalem is the recipient of *both Prophecies of Judgement* (Condemnation/Destructions/Defeat) and **Prophecies of Hope** (Redemption/Restoration/Victory). Thank God for the faithfulness of Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Joshua and Samuel! Praise God for Judge Deborah, Queen Esther and Ruth! Thank God for the faithfulness and obedience of David! Thank God for blessing *the lineage* of King David! Praise God for blessing David who served Him wholeheartedly, faithfully and obediently! Thank God for God’s Promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:1-29! Thank God for the Prophecies in Isaiah 9:1-7 and 11:1-16!!! Hallelujah! Thank God for Apostle Paul, Barnabas, Priscilla & Aquila! Praise God for Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:1-11! **Jesus is our Redeemer who reigns from Heaven!**

## II. THE LESSON: This Sin Cannot be Atoned for!

### 1. vv. 1-4. Jerusalem – City of Tumult, Revelry and Lament!

In **the Vision**, Isaiah *saw* a troubled city “full of **commotion, tumult** and **revelry**.” Understand that Isaiah *saw* what God intended for him to *see* as in the Vision. Have you ever considered what God *sees* of us looking down from heaven? We know God *sees, hears* and *knows* all things! What God *saw* and *heard* in Jerusalem was a city which was filled with “**commotion, tumult** and **revelry**.” Instead of *a city* in which God’s **Glory, Power** and **Grace** were **magnified**, idolatry had taken *root* and *spread*! Instead of God’s **Love, Justice** and **Mercy** being **magnified**, Jerusalem was filled with hatefulness, injustices and merciless deeds! The leaders (kings, royal officials, priests, judges and the elders) were *corrupt* due to their eager devotion, participation and promotion of idol worships of all kinds! Consequently, the whole city became **tumultuous** *erupting* in “commotion or violent agitations of the multitude accompanied with great uproar and confused voices.” Jerusalem became a city where **revelry** characterized by *eating and drinking frenzies* such as when a *violent mob celebrate* after their **killing, raping, looting** and **burning raids** against *defenseless* children, men and women! Isaiah, *horrified* by the *horrible Vision* of Jerusalem burst with a **lament** saying, “Turn away from me; let me weep bitterly. Do not try to console me over the destruction of my people!” **Jerusalem, “Valley of Vision,” a city of such atrocities!**

### 2. vv. 5-8. God Striped Away the Defenses of Judah

God *showed* Isaiah what will happen to Judah/Jerusalem when He *removes His Protection*. The Bible says,

- a) **in verse 5**, “The LORD, the LORD Almighty, has a day of **tumult** and **trampling** and **terror** in the ‘**Valley of Vision**,’ a day of **battering down** walls and of **crying out** to the mountains.” We must pay attention to the emphasis in the way God is addressed in verse 5: “The LORD, the LORD Almighty.” The Titles say it all! “The LORD” denotes God’s **Sovereignty**, the One who **reigns** from heaven! He is LORD over His Creation! “The LORD Almighty” *emphasizes* the *indescribable Power* of God. His **Might** as the LORD of the Universe! The **Might** that Created the Universe! Almighty means “*unlimited* in **Power, Ability** and **Authority**.” As such, God is **Omnipotent**! The two Titles, “The LORD” and “The LORD Almighty” joined together gives us a picture and understanding of the *limitless* Power, Ability and Authority of God which is hard for us to grasp fully in our *very limited capacity to comprehend*! But such expressions give us *a glimpse* of God’s Awesome Power, Ability and Authority over His Creation! Isaiah says, “The LORD, The LORD Almighty” has *appointed* a **Day of Reconning** for the “**Valley of Vision**.” **The Almighty** God has *decreed* a **day of**

- “**tumult** and **trampling** and **terror**” indicating how terrifying that *day* will be to the *inhabitants* of Judah/Jerusalem. On that Day, *terrified*

people *will run over* people in trying to escape the “**terror**” **God Almighty** will *unleash!* On that Day, people will *flee* from the Royal Palace, fenced luxurious homes and buildings of business because they become *death-traps* instead of *secure places!* In the process of fleeing them, terrified people will run into each other **trampling** many to death! It will be a day of **tumult!** Total chaos!

- “**battering** down walls and of **crying out** to the mountains” indicating that invaders will “**batter down**” the city “**walls.**” The Israelites will have no place to escape except running *desperately* to the **mountains!**
- b) **in verses 6 & 7**, the Bible mentions “**Elam**” and “**Kir.**” Elam was the ancestor of the Elamites (Ezra 10:22). In the time of Abraham, Elam was described as “the overlord of three Mesopotamian kings (Genesis 14:1-17). In Isaiah **Elam** is mentioned as a people who “takes up the quiver, with her charioteers and horses,” *fierce warriors* whom God uses to punish the Israelites! “**Kir**” has its origin in Moab. In verses 6 and 7, Isaiah describes them as warriors armed with “shields, chariots and horsemen” whom The LORD Almighty *unleashed terror* on the “**Valley of Vision.**” The Bible is full of revelations as to **God’s Sovereignty** over kings, nations and people. God has used many nations and people such as **Elam** and **Kir** as *His instruments* to punish the Israelites throughout their history! Notice also that **Elam** and **Kir** were not the largest nations or armies (as compared to when God sent the Assyrians or the Babylonians). Yet, the Israelites were *totally defenseless* and in *disarray* against such smaller forces!
- c) **in verse 8**, God removes His protection. Notice that **Elam** and **Kir** were able to *invade* and bring *horrific chaos* upon Jerusalem only because “the defense of Judah were *stripped away*” by God. On that Day, **God removed His Protection over Judah!**

### 3. **vv. 9-11. They Looked for Things Instead of God for their Defense**

In these verses, the Bible indicates what the Israelites tried to do to defend themselves from Elam and Kir. The Israelites:

- “**looked** for **weapons** in the Palace of the Forest;
- “**saw** the City of David had many breaches in its defense;
- “**stored** up **water** in the Lower Pool;
- “**counted** the **buildings** in Jerusalem;
- “**tore down houses** to strengthen the wall;
- “**built** a **reservoir** between the two walls for the water of the Old Pool.”

All of the above neither could protect them nor save them from God’s Judgment! **The indictment** is found in verse 11 where it is written “but you did not **look** to the One who made it or **have regard** for the One who

planned it long ago.” They *looked* for **Things** were **utterly useless** and *did Things* which were *utterly futile activities* since they did not include God! The Israelites *valued Things* rather than the Almighty God who created everything! The Israelites *put their faith* in **Things** and their *own efforts* rather than **The LORD, The LORD Almighty!**

#### 4. **vv. 12-14. This Sin Cannot be Atoned for!**

##### a) **Verse 12.** God called Judah to Repentance but got Revelry Instead!

In the Old Testament, when the people wanted to demonstrate *repentance and remorse*, the tradition was “to take off their regular, official, royal, and priestly clothes and wear sackcloth. Or, they tore their cloth, put on sack-cloth and covered themselves with dust.” Such **humility**, show of **remorse** and expression of **genuine repentance** in the face of Prophetic Judgement is often accompanied by a period of fasting and prayer! In verse 12, Isaiah says, “**The LORD, the LORD Almighty**, *called you* on that day to weep and to wail, to tear out your hair and put on sackcloth.” But, Judah’s reaction was the exact opposite!

##### b) **Verse 13. Israel’s Response “Let us Eat, Drink and be Merry!”**

What Isaiah saw in the “Valley of Vision” was the Israelites throwing big parties in *total disregard* to God’s Call for Repentance! God was giving them the opportunity to repent even at the last minute! Under the Banner of “Let Us Eat, Drink and be Merry,” They were engaged in **revelry** as in “being festive in a **riotous manner**; a merrymaking, carousing, noisy celebration!” There was a lot of eating, drinking and carefree ruckus going on!

##### c) **Verse 14. God’s Final Judgement: This Sin Cannot be Atoned for!**

Isaiah heard “**The LORD Almighty**” say to him “**This Sin Cannot be Atoned for!**” The Loving, Gracious and Merciful God had enough of their unforgivable *insolence*, total *disregard* for His Sovereignty and **willful disobedience!** It is one thing when people who do not know God behave as they did in verse 13. It is absolutely a different matter when God’s chosen people treat **The LORD, The LORD Almighty** as the people of Judah did!

### III. CONCLUSION/APPLICATION.

Read Hebrews 10:19-33. In verse 31, the Bible says, “**It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God!**”