

SHEBNA'S FATE

This study will touch on several concepts. It is your responsibility to study and see if they are so, because some of them are not generally understood in Adventism. They're either not addressed or not understood correctly. We're going to study the 'valley of vision', which is found in Isaiah 22, but the story that underlies the 'valley of vision' as recorded in Isaiah 22 is found in Isaiah 36, 37 and 2 Kings 18,19.

Sennacherib's army was about to come and destroy Jerusalem and during this great crisis, three men of Judah went out to meet the general who was about to besiege the city. One of these people was Shebna, and Joah and Eliakim the son of Hilkiah. These three representatives went out to meet Rabshakeh, the general, and we're going to learn about these three. Everything that needs to be known for us today is recorded within the prophecies of the Bible: "The events of the future will be discerned by prophecy and will be understood." (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 04-04-93)

Unfortunately, I don't believe Seventh-day Adventists really believe this today. I think it's a part of the truth that is overlooked. Notice this quote: "The prophets spoke less for their own time than for the ages which have followed and for our own day." (The Signs of the Times, 04-02-96)

We're going to look at some prophecy today, and one of the principles of prophecy is that the **first time something is mentioned in the Bible is essentially the most important time**. The second most important is the last time it is mentioned. There are some things that are only mentioned twice but there are others that are mentioned several times.

The Gospel is mentioned first in Genesis 3. You can see the complete story there in miniature and go into depths that most people don't realize in explaining the gospel that unfolds throughout the Bible. The whole context, the whole direction of that story is found there in Genesis 3.

If you were going to study Babylon, the heart of Babylon is found right in Genesis, at the story of the Tower of Babel. Everything that follows after is just added on to that. That's the way the Word of God works. I point that out because what we are studying today in the 'Valley of Vision' is the Laodecian message the first time that it is related in the Word of God. Therefore it is the most important understanding of the Laodecian message.

In Chapter 3 of Revelation we find one of the things not generally accepted in Adventism, is that Philadelphians and Laodecians are contemporaries—they live at the same time. In fact Sardis is also associated with them.

The most important parable for Seventh-day Adventists—the parable that tells our story—is the parable of the ten virgins. "I am often referred to the parable of the ten virgins five of whom were wise and five foolish. This parable **has been and will be fulfilled to the very letter...**" (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald - 08-19-90)

In the early movement of this church this parable was fulfilled to the very letter and in our day it's about to be fulfilled again. The parable of the ten virgins has three groups represented in it. The first group is all the sleeping virgins; and out of the first group comes two groups; some wise virgins and some foolish virgins.

"The state of the church represented by the foolish virgins is also spoken of as the Laodecian state." (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, 08-19-90) The foolish virgins are the Laodecians. The wise virgins are the Philadelphians, and the sleeping virgins are Sardis. In the historical understanding of the seven churches you recall that it was Sardis that was the wake-up church. This church represented the time when the reformation began. Sardis is the wake-up church, the counsel to Sardis was to watch, and that's what the ten virgins had been counseled to do—Watch! So the three entities of Sardis,

Philadelphia and Laodecia are represented in the three entities of the sleeping virgins, the foolish, and the wise.

In the study of Isaiah 36, 37 and 2 Kings 18,19 which is essentially the same testimony, we find there were three people that went out to meet Sennacherib's general. There were two spoken of in Isaiah 22 and then the third is no longer mentioned. I suggest that the third represents all the sleeping virgins and that these two individuals discussed here in Isaiah 22, represent the wise and the foolish virgins—Philadelphia and Laodecia.

In Great Controversy and Christ's Object Lessons, the Marriage feast is associated with the investigative judgment. Those that don't meet the preparation necessary for the investigative judgment will be 'cast out'. All that have professed Christ and later are found unworthy are cast out. This is a prophetic waymark, and when we see this principle in prophecy, it's identifying something you can place in the prophetic sequence. The spewing out of Laodecia is the casting out.

Isaiah 22:1 The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?

A valley in the Bible, symbolically represents a place where something important is going to happen, something decisive. The valley of Armageddon, the valley of Megiddo, something important is going to happen there. The valley of dry bones, Mrs. White tells us, represents our church waiting for the Spirit to come into it. That valley of dry bones is a place where something is to happen in prophecy. The 'valley of vision' is the valley of Seventh-day Adventism.

Prov. 29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people perish: But he that keepeth the law, happy is he." The vision for our day and age, that is going to either lead to our salvation or to us perishing, is the vision that was brought to us by the Spirit of Prophecy. I can do a study that clearly shows that Ellen White was not simply the prophet for our time—she was the prophet for the Laodecian church. To reject her, is to reject the message to the Laodecian church. Therefore, **'The burden of the valley of vision'** is about the reception or rejection of the vision, which was brought to this people in earth's final hour.

Isa 28:7 "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment."

Sister White quotes this verse in Isaiah where she's talking about God's people erring through wine because they are drunken and it's the leadership that's drunken, therefore they have no vision and they are asleep. It is specifically identifying the leadership and it says they are drunk but not drunk with wine, and their eyes have been sealed.

Which book has been sealed to God's people, at this time in earth's history?

"This revelation was given for the guidance and comfort of the church throughout the Christian dispensation. **Yet religious teachers have declared that it is a sealed book and its secrets cannot be explained.** Therefore many have turned from the prophetic record, refusing to devote time and study to its mysteries. But God does not wish His people to regard the book thus. It is "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." A. A. 583, 584

Isaiah talking about the leaders of the people being drunk and being unable to see, applies to this period of earth's history because, **the ancient prophets spoke more for our day, than the day in which they lived.** The drunkenness that they are experiencing is brought on by **false doctrine.** It closes their eyes to the prophetic word, and therefore, today, when prophecy is fulfilling before our eyes, our church is essentially silent.

Is the whole world wondering after the beast today? Can we see it? Are we recognizing that the Protestants and the Catholics in the United States are coming together in a political block? Are we recognizing that the world is forming multi-national

agreements—consolidating—as Sister White said they would at the end of the world? We’re seeing these very events that prophecy tells us would be coming, and yet our church is essentially silent. Their eyes have been closed to the prophetic record. They are drunk with wine and strong drink, according to Isaiah.

Isaiah 29:9-16 “Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. 10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. 11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: 12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. 13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: 14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. 15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? 16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?”

“Every word of this will be fulfilled. There are those who do not humble their hearts before God, and who will not walk uprightly. They hide their true purposes, and keep in fellowship with the fallen angel, who loveth and maketh a lie. The enemy puts his spirit upon the men whom he can use to deceive those who are partially in the dark. Some are becoming imbued with the darkness that prevails, and are setting the truth aside for error. **The day pointed out by prophecy is come.** Jesus Christ is not understood. Jesus Christ is to them a fable. At this stage of the earth’s history, many act like drunken men. “Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry; they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes. The prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.” **A spiritual drunkenness is upon many who suppose they are the people who shall be exalted.** Their religious faith is just as is represented in this Scripture. Under its influence, they cannot walk straight. They make crooked paths in their course of action. One and then another, they reel to and fro. They are looked upon by the Lord with great pity. The way of truth they have not known. They are scientific schemers, and those who could and should have helped, because of a clear spiritual eyesight, are themselves deceived, and are sustaining an evil work.--Letter 311, 1905, pp. 4, 5. (To Brethren Daniells, Prescott and Associates, October 30, 1905.)”

Now what we are drunken to, what our eyes have been closed to, in this hour of earth’s history, and which our leaders are the primary candidates in pushing is the prophetic record that tells us that the Papacy is on the verge of taking the world captive. This is where we are in the valley of vision. This is wake-up time. This is the time for Sardis to wake up. This is the time for the ten virgins to wake up. This is the time to decide—we’re in that valley of decision.

We want to be able to portray Isaiah 22 in connection with the book Zephaniah. I ran Zephaniah on the CD-ROM and it comes up 14 times. In those 14 times, Mrs. White refers in connection with the book Zephaniah, to every prophetic book in the Bible; Major and Minor prophets. She quotes a passage found in Zephaniah, then she would continue on quoting something out of Amos or Hosea and she would always, invariably, put in her own comments. Notice this first quote here that begins with Habakkuk in Prophets and Kings -PG- 389. “Habakkuk was not the only one through whom was given a message of bright hope and of future triumph as well as of present judgment. During the reign of Josiah the word of the Lord came to Zephaniah, specifying plainly the results of continued

apostasy, and calling the attention of the true church to the glorious prospect beyond. His prophecies of impending judgment upon Judah apply with equal force to the judgments that are to fall upon an impenitent world at the time of the second advent of Christ:

“The great day of the Lord is near, It is near, and hasteth greatly, Even the voice of the day of the Lord: The mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

“That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of wasteness and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess,

“A day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm Against the fenced cities, And against the high towers.” Zephaniah 1:14-16.

Over and over again Sister White went to the major and minor prophets and would take passages out of them and say, “This is for our day. This is for us today.” That’s what we’re not seeing as a people—the whole prophetic record applies with equal force today.

I want to emphasize Zephaniah, because as we walk through the vision of the valley of vision found in Isaiah 22, I want to refer to Zephaniah and I want you to have confidence that we’re talking about our day—today.

Back to Isaiah 22:1

“What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?”

It’s talking about this people that are represented in the valley of visions—what does it mean to go up to the housetops? Zephaniah 1:5 says, “And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops. And them that worship and swear by the Lord and by Malcolm”. At this time God’s people are worshipping the idols of paganism. They’re no longer worshipping the Lord; they’re going up on their housetops to worship the idols, the sun, moon and stars. Now if that seems shocking to you, read Ezekiel 7 & 8. Same thing; end of the world, 5 Testimonies says that Ezekiel 7 & 8 is going to be fulfilled to the very letter. And God’s people are worshipping idols at this point in earth’s history.

Next part of Isaiah 22:2

“Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city:”

The word, ‘stirs’, means destruction, devastation and loud crashing. If you go back into Zephaniah for further light on this verse it says, “It will come to pass in that day sayeth the Lord, that there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate and a howling from the second and a great crashing from the hills. Zeph. 1:10.

This is a time of catastrophe and crisis that is being set forth here in Isaiah 22.

Thy slain [men are] not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle. All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound ...

The rulers of this people in the ‘valley of vision’, the Seventh-day Adventist church, are bound together. They’re dead, they’re spiritually dead. But they’re bound together and I’m sure you are familiar with the passages in the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible that talk about the wheat being bound together and the tares being bound together at this time period of earth’s history. That’s what’s going on. The leaders of this people today are being bound for the fire.

It continues on:

. . by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, [which] have fled from far. Verse 3

Now, a literal archer was somebody that shot an arrow, and it was speaking of enemies of Israel in this passage; but in our day and age an arrow is to be understood symbolically. Symbolically an arrow represents a word. The leaders of this people have been bound into the worship of idols they are on the housetops because they have accepted the word of Babylon.

Therefore said I,

This is Isaiah speaking, and in prophecy, when a prophet is giving a dream or a vision, and he puts himself into the dream or vision, he is portraying God's people. The prophets symbolize God's people. So here's what he is portraying:

Look away from me: I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people. For [it is] a day of trouble, and of treading down, verse 4, 5.

You go to camp meeting and the Rock & Roll is destroying our children, it's a time for weeping; but they're not weeping—they're partying! That's what's going on today.

To confirm that here is a quote from Zephaniah 1:14,15: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and hasteth greatly even the voice of the day of the Lord."

If you look everywhere 'The Day of the Lord' is used in the Bible, it entails many things. It means all those things. "The mighty men shall cry there bitterly, that it is the day of wrath, the day of trouble and distress, A day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." This is where we're at and we don't know it. Laodecia doesn't know it—but it is here--it's upon us. The enemy is coming towards the city; Sennacherib is about ready to besiege Jerusalem.

Continuing Is. 22:5-7

...and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains. And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men [and] horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield. And it shall come to pass, [that] thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

There's a battle coming, and Elam and Kir are the historical enemies of Israel. We're under the attack from our enemies in our theology, in the way we do things. We're giving our health institutions over to Catholics to run for us. We're under attack today; that's what's being described here. That's what went on in Isaiah's day.

And he discovered the covering of Judah, verse 8

Now the covering of Judah is a wonderful study in prophecy. At the end of the world there are two places to be covered—two ways to be covered—one is under the shadow of the Most High, the other is under the shadow of Egypt. The shadow of Egypt is confusion. Discovering the covering of Judah at that time is showing that they were in darkness. They were Laodecians. They thought everything was all right, but everything was all wrong. They didn't know it.

and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest. Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: verses 8, 9.

Here Isaiah is talking about the 'armour of the forest'—that is the armour that Solomon had built in an act of extravagance and we're doing that today in Adventism. We build up giant hospitals, giant colleges, we talk about our wonderful works. We're doing round the world evangelistic series through television and we talk about that. But our divorce rate is higher than the world and our children leave the church faster than we could possibly bring people in. We talk about 'the Armour of the Forest' and the 'House of the Forest' and in reality we're poor, wretched, blind and naked.

At the same time we have seen the breaches in the 'City of David'; you can go to the leadership, and I'm emphasizing leadership for a specific reason, but you can go to leadership today and most of them won't argue that there's many problems in Adventism today. "We're not doing this as well as we could be, or that as well as we could be, but that's alright; you need to take it in the overall, we're doing alright." These people here in Isaiah's prophecy, they knew that there were things wrong, but it didn't motivate them to

change those things and change their life in accordance with right. They see the breaches, the weaknesses, the cracks in the foundation in Adventism and they don't do anything about it. But it's at this very time that we were called up to be the repairer of the breaches. We were to be the people that came and made everything right. We are to repair the walls and do our work as the restorer of paths to dwell in.

And yet there was a people in Isaiah's day that were to do the same thing and they saw the problems and didn't do anything about it.

and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool. And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago. Verses 9-11.

These people are doing their own works. They're getting their own water—the water that we're to receive is the water of life that comes from Christ. But instead of accepting that water, these people are digging their own ditches they are not looking to the One that made the water; that designed these things. That's what's going on in our day.

And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: verse 12

When did the Lord call for that? What time did he call for that? The Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement is the day that is calling for fasting and mourning and weeping and getting right with God. This is the first real pointed part that identifies this passage in Isaiah 22 as the Laodecian message. It places this prophecy as taking place in the Day of Atonement, which is our day. And then he states:

And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. Verse 13

Is that not what we're confronted with today in Adventism? Zephaniah confirms this same thing: "I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee to whom the reproach of it was a burden." He's going to gather those people, that as Ezekiel says, sigh and cry for the abominations done within the church. Mrs. White says in Testimonies volume 5. These prophets all come together, they tie together. The people that have a problem with this celebration experience during this time of earth's history are those that are portrayed in prophecy as sighing and crying and weeping. They're the ones that will receive the seal of God. Continuing on verse 14:

And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity...

This partying in a time of crisis,

shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Now 'purged' means appeased or make atonement. God is saying to these people, "Your partying will not be forgiven during the time of atonement--you're lost!" This directly locks this passage in to the Day of Atonement. There will be no atonement for those who want to eat and drink for tomorrow they die—and they do die!

Now we're going to talk about these characters in this story.

And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts,

Revealed to Isaiah by the Lord of hosts-

Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Verses 15-19. Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, [even] unto Shebna, which [is] over the house, [and say],

What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, [as] he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, [and] that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?

Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

He will surely violently turn and toss thee [like] a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory [shall be] the shame of thy lord's house.

And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

In comparing Isaiah 36, 37 and 2 Kings, you see that Shebna went out and spoke with Sennacherib's general and he knew what was going on. He believed he was God's man, and in the Testimony in the Spirit of Prophecy about the foolish virgins—they had a regard for truth. They knew what was going on, but they didn't bring it into their experience.

Shebna here, is symbolizing the Laodecians, the foolish virgins that are going to be spewed out of the Lord's mouth. What was he doing during this time of crisis? He went out and met the general and came back and brought the message to the king. But in the mean time he was making himself a really fancy grave. He was doing something that evidently was important to him—more important than genuine heart-felt repentance. I think maybe what he was doing in the history of that time, was making sure he had some kind of reputation to follow him. After he was dead, people would pass by and say, "Hey, there's Shebna's grave."

I want to digress a little and share one thing that is extremely interesting to me. I came across it years ago. There are a lot Bible characters, Bible geography and Bible history we know about and very rarely do you have any kind of evidence that surfaces about it. But in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible dictionary, both Shebna and his counterpart who represents Philadelphia—Eliakim, both have an archeological discovery.

There's a picture in the Bible dictionary of Shebna's grave. They know it's his grave because he put a stamp into the door. They found that grave and that stamp and you can see a picture of it in the Bible dictionary. They also found Eliakim's royal seal that he used to stamp his letters with—they have a picture of that. The interesting thing about this is Shebna is among those that receive the mark of the beast, and Eliakim is among those who receive the seal of God. Both these things from antiquity are still with us today. This story has archeological evidence of those men's existence and it corresponds to the testimony of the Bible. Minor thing, but I enjoyed it when I came across it.

18. He will surely violently turn and toss thee [like] a ball into a large country:

We find over and over again, passages that show you the prophetic phrase used by God to describe the final destruction of people that have once professed to be His. It is to be 'cast out'; Laodecia is to be 'spewed out'. Satan was cast out of heaven. Ephraim was cast out of His sight. That is what happens to the professed that don't accept the experience. When we see Shebna here, the prophecy is that He will surely toss him into a far country and there he will die. In our terminology today, that is being spewed out of the mouth of the Lord.

Shebna is Laodecia.

19. And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

Not only does Shebna represent the Laodecians, he represents the leaders of this church. It's the leadership that's most fully addressed and if you do a study on the seven

churches you'll find that Mrs. White says that the messages to the 'angels of the churches' were the messages to the leaders of the churches.

20. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim

Which means 'God of Raising'—that's who He's going to call. He was another of the three who went out to meet Sennacherib's general.

the son of Hilkiah: And I will clothe him with thy robe,

He's going to get Shebna's robe. He's going to get Shebna's position of leadership. What we're seeing here described is what Mrs. White says over and over again. Not many of the leaders will be involved in the final work of the Lord. He's going to call the people from the plow. He's going to call the people of no repute to finish His work. That's what's being addressed here in Isaiah 22.

21. And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

This phrase is only found one other place in the word of God; this is the message to Philadelphia. Eliakim is symbolizing the Philadelphians. He's symbolizing those that are going to get the key of the house of David. In the Spirit of Prophecy we see that the 'key' symbolizes trust and authority. Shebna fails; the leadership fails; it wants to party in a time of crisis; it wants to create some grave that furthers its reputation after it's dead, and he's going to be removed from the leadership. He's going to be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord.

And Philadelphia, as symbolized by Eliakim is going to take his position of responsibility; he's going to wear his clothes; and he's going to be entrusted with the authority that belongs to the leadership of God's people. That's what's being described and I want to refer you back to one principle we mentioned earlier, the first time something is mentioned in the word of God is the most important.

The parable of the ten virgins describe this experience and so does Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodemia, but the most important one is this one. One of the things that we need to understand that isn't normally talked about in Adventism today is Philadelphia and Laodemia are contemporaries. I'm not saying that all of us don't have the possibility to be in either camp; I'm just saying they're contemporaries, they're living at the same time.

Shebna and Eliakim were living at the same time during this same crisis.

23. And I will fasten him [as] a nail in a sure place;

Now if you look at the definition there of fasten, he's going to drive, he's going to establish, he's going to seal Eliakim in his position. We're talking about him being established as a representative of God on this earth, and 'a nail in a sure place'—over and over again Mrs. White uses that phrase to mean truth.

Still talking about Eliakim it says:

and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

24. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue,

Mrs. White, many times, especially in Christ's Object Lessons, says, "The last message of mercy to a dying world is a revelation of Christ's character." Eliakim is going to receive all the glory of his Father's house as he perfectly reflects Christ's character to a dying world. Eliakim is Philadelphia, the wise virgins.

The 'offspring and the issue'? Christ is the offspring and the issue. All the fullness that we can receive in this life is going to be given to Eliakim; it's going to be given to Philadelphia through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so the people in the world that want to see, can see. That's our possibility, if we can shake off the Laodecian condition; if we can quit building our own little graves—whatever they might be.

- all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

Now those are the ornaments of the sanctuary that are being discussed there, all these things are going to be hung upon Eliakim. But also those vessels are describing you and me. We all have different talents—different abilities—some are smaller, some are larger and all these vessels have the potential to be symbolized by Eliakim, if we will shake off the Laodecian condition.

25. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that [was] upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken [it].

Now we said the nail in the sure place is truth. And in that day—if that's correct—truth is going to be cut down and fall. And the burden that was upon it shall be cut off. You can see a couple quotes here from Spirit of Prophecy about how truth is going to be cut down, we'll read one: "Judgment is turned away backward and justice standeth afar off for truth is fallen in the streets and equity cannot enter, yea, truth faileth and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. This was fulfilled in the life of Christ on earth; He was loyal to God's commandments setting aside the human traditions and requirements which had been exalted in their place. Because of this He was hated and persecuted. This history is repeated..." COL -PG- 170

One of the ways that the burden of the nail in the sure place is going to be cut off is that during this time period truth is going to be cast in the street and it's happening. Whether it's in the world or in our church, truth and justice are thrown in the street; but there is another burden upon truth. There's two more that I've found.

Another burden upon truth is that truth is a power for good, but truth when it has the burden of people that profess the truth but don't live it, has a great burden upon it, because it doesn't win a soul. The power can't go with the truth, when those that are professing it, don't live it. And the truth in our day and age has that burden on it, but there's going to come a point when that's cut off. That burden will be removed when Laodecia, when Shebna, is spewed out of the mouth of the Lord and the Foolish Virgins are thrown away into a far country. That time is just ahead of us.

There's another burden that will be removed from the truth during this time period; the day in which we live—the message that we have for each other and for those out in the world—the bottom line of that message is 'The Hour of His Judgment is Come'. Our message is one that probation is about to close. And when probation closes, the burden is cut off. There's no longer a burden to proclaim that message, because probation is done and the message is done.

So this last verse has a few burdens that are going to get cut off the truth, cut off of truth at the end.

This is the first time in scripture that the Laodecians are mentioned. Does every one feel all right? Notice:

"What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception." Testimonies Three, pg. 252.

The story of Shebna is a story of a time when Sennacherib was about to overrun Jerusalem. I asked you whether you could see that the whole world is wondering after the beast? All these prophecies are being fulfilled, Sennacherib's army is at the gate, and if we

think everything is alright, we're in the worse kind of deception. It isn't alright. Time is running out. The Lord is about to spew the foolish virgins out of His mouth. And if you and I are not among the wise virgins by experience today—we're on the verge of being lost!

Mrs. White says we need to keep before the people that these final messages are going to come by an overwhelming surprise. What's going to happen here in the very near future is going to catch us off guard. Time is running out. We have to be serious to ourselves and ask the question, are we building ourselves a grave? Are we hewing out a grave for whatever reason? Something that might remind the world who we were when we're gone? Make us look better in people's eyes today? That's the kind of questions that we need to be asking ourselves.

Testimonies for the Church Volume One -PG- 232 "I saw that the greater the light which the people reject, the greater will be the power of deception and darkness which will come upon them. The rejection of truth leaves men captives, the subjects of Satan's deception. After the Conferences at ---- and ----, the subjects of this delusion were left to still greater darkness, to enter deeper into this strong delusion, and bring upon the cause of God a stain which would not soon be wiped away."

The light that we're rejecting today, as Shebna's, is the rejected light that is going to bring us strong delusion, the very strong delusion that is talked about in the New Testament, where we will be totally given over to Satan.

Remember that the church is going to be our worse persecutors. One of the reason they'll be our worse persecutors is because they're going to be totally given over to Satan, and for a time the people in the world won't be; they'll still have a little bit of mercy open to them. We're right on the verge of that. Prophecy says so, and we have to believe the prophetic word.

Here she's talking about the shaking and you'll notice the things that she addresses here out of Isaiah 22, confirm that this is the first testimony about Philadelphia and Laodecia.

T. 5 80-83- "The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to "science falsely so called" will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock."

That's Shebna.

"In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

You can trace this idea of the hidden ones in the prophecies; they're spoken about as the hidden ones.

"They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the day time we look toward heaven but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death.

The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church.”

The dross is Laodecia, the gold is Philadelphia. The dross is Shebna, The dross is the foolish virgins.

“True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat.”

That’s what was described in Isaiah 22; the cups, the small cups, the vessels. We have the privilege of assuming the ornaments of the sanctuary, being among those who have the key of David laid upon our shoulders for the world to see God’s character in the final movements.

“All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ’s righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.”

Now, Shebna assumed the ornaments but he wasn’t clothed with the righteousness of Christ. There’s that distinction again between the two groups.

“When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David--willing to do and dare.”

As David; the key of David.

“The deeper the night for God’s people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors. Then will the church of Christ appear “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

“The seeds of truth that are being sown by missionary efforts will then spring up and blossom and bear fruit. Souls will receive the truth who will endure tribulation and praise God that they may suffer for Jesus. “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” When the overflowing scourge shall pass through the earth, (This is a subject all should study and understand) when the fan is purging Jehovah’s floor, God will be the help of His people. The trophies of Satan may be exalted on high, but the faith of the pure and holy will not be daunted.

“Elijah took Elisha from the plow and threw upon him his mantle of consecration. The call to this great and solemn work was presented to men of learning and position; had these been little in their own eyes and trusted fully in the Lord, He would have honored them with bearing His standard in triumph to the victory. But they separated from God, yielded to the influence of the world, and the Lord rejected them. (Threw them into a far country)

Many have exalted science and lost sight of the God of science. This was not the case with the church in the purest times. God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate. He will raise up...”

The ‘God of Raising’; Eliakim.

“He will raise up and exalt among us those who are taught rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the outward training of scientific institutions. These facilities are not to be despised or condemned; they are ordained of God, but they can furnish only the exterior qualifications. God will manifest that He is not dependent on learned, self-important mortals...”

Every weight, every besetting sin, must be laid aside. God's watchmen will not cry, "Peace, peace," when God has not spoken peace. The voice of the faithful watchmen will be heard: "Go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

I urge you to do further study on these subjects but I don't want to close today without asking again—Are we building some kind of grave? Are we recognizing that Jerusalem is under attack? We have to be among Eliakim or we are lost! It's not time to celebrate—It's time to mourn and fast—to celebrate, is to receive the promise that there will be no atonement for this iniquity.

In my work place there is ample opportunity to be building graves. There's ample opportunity in your home life to be building graves. ANYTHING that comes between us and the Lord is an idol that will keep us out of eternity. Let's determine not to let that happen. There's too short of a period of time in front of us, not to be willing to dedicate that amount of time to the Lord at this hour—this crisis hour.