

Shebna And The Sin Of Pride

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We're going to begin today a little differently than we normally do because the introduction is going to take up about half the sermon because we're going to build and get to a point here, but we're going to begin with a mystery that leads to the subject that we're going to be talking about.

When you study the Bible, sometimes we study an area of scripture and the Bible gives so many details about some apparently unimportant events. You scratch your head and think, "Well, why is God putting this in the Bible? What's the point? What does He want us to learn about this?" And today we're going to see such an example.

I'll just ask the question: How many of you recognize the name Shebna? And before I started studying this subject, I knew the name Shebna. I had read the name Shebna. And I knew it was in the Old Testament and I knew he had to do with the kings of Ancient Israel, but beyond that the brain gets a little fuzzy and you can't remember. So my guess is most of you are in the same boat there.

So, with that in mind, let's turn to Isaiah 13. If you have a New King James, the New King James has subtitles above the chapters and if there is a break in the chapter, it has a subtitle over that where the subject shifts a little bit. But let's turn to Isaiah 13 and the subtitle in the New King James about this chapter is "Proclamation Against Babylon." And in verse 6 of Isaiah 13, it says:

Isaiah 13:6. Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! ... (NKJV)

Verse 9:

9) Behold, the day of the Lord comes, ... (NKJV)

Now what comes in the next several chapters of Isaiah is prophetic in many, many ways and it's about the Day of the Lord. Look at chapter 15. It's a proclamation against Moab. Chapter 16 is a prophecy of Moab's destruction. Chapter 17 is a proclamation against Syria and Israel. If you remember, Syria and Israel came together in an alliance against Assyria and they paid the price for that. Chapter 18 is a prophecy against Ethiopia. Chapters 19 and 20 are prophecies against Egypt and chapter 21 the fall of Babylon is prophesied. And now we come to chapter 22 and if you have a ribbon or a marker, you probably want to put it in chapter 22. It says "A Proclamation Against Jerusalem."

So all of the chapters that I just read and covered are filled with the phrase "Day of the Lord", "in that day" and so they're all prophetic. Therefore, these prophecies are about

the events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. That's important to remember. When those terms are used, it's talking about time as we approach Christ's return.

But then all of a sudden, God throws a curveball at us in Isaiah 22 and verse 15. The New King James subheading is "The Judgment on Shebna." Now, this is after nine chapters talking about prophecies that lead up to the return of Christ. And all of a sudden in the middle of Isaiah, God throws this new subject at us. It's a head-scratcher. The question becomes then: Why after nine chapters of prophecies against various nations and all seem to speak of the Day of the Lord, why does the focus suddenly change and revert to a Jewish man named Shebna who lived in Isaiah's time? And knowing God is perfect, we have to make the statement—He must have had a reason. But then the question is: What is He trying to get across to us? So, to answer that question, why is it there and what does God want us to learn from it, we need some context about what was happening at that time when Isaiah wrote this.

And I'm going to rely a lot on our son Brit's research. One of his passions is Biblical archeology and he's got a case at home with many shelves full of artifacts going back thousands of years. He has a piece of pottery with Hezekiah's seal on it and he's got a piece of pottery that's probably 3500 years old and the thumbprint of the potter is in the clay. You look at that and you just marvel and say, "This man, who's dust now, that was his thumbprint." But he's got many, many artifacts and he does a lot of research. So, I'm going to rely on a lot of the research he's done.

So the year that this occurred was likely around 710 B.C. And the Assyrians were the super-power of the day. And if you recall, about ten years prior, they conquered Israel and they deported everyone, all the Israelites to Assyria. And now, the context here is that Judah is in imminent danger of attack by the Assyrians.

And we have to understand that Assyria isn't just another enemy nation. They were unlike any people on the earth and probably unlike any people since. And that's because they were among the most violent people or nation to ever exist. Ten years later, after this was written, the Assyrian king Sennacherib would attack Judah.

And after that attack, he created a massive carved picture (They're called "reliefs" in archeological terms.) of what he did to the Jews in that attack. It's like a wall that stands up. It is literally like a wall and then they carve images into this wall. He created this relief to picture what was done to the Jews. It is called the Lachish Relief and it's currently in the British Museum. And it is very graphic. It shows Jews being impaled on stakes. It shows Jews being beheaded and it shows Jews being literally skinned alive. These people were very violent.

Now Sennacherib said this about a battle that he won versus the Elamites. Now these are the exact words of a king who lived 2700 years ago who was the King of Assyria. Quote—this is what he's saying he did to the Elamites.

I cut their throats like lambs. I cut off their precious lives as one cuts a string. Like the many waters of a storm, I made the contents of their gullets and entrails run down upon the wide earth. My prancing steeds, harnessed for my riding, plunged into the streams of their blood as into a river. The wheels of my war chariot, which brings low the wicked and the evil, were dis-spattered with blood and filth. With the bodies of their warriors, I filled the plain like grass. Their testicles I cut off and tore out their privates like the seeds of cucumbers.

Now how would you like to face somebody like that?

So the legacy of the Assyrians was that they had no regard for human life and they killed and they tortured in the most painful way possible. That is the reason that God sent Jonah to Nineveh, Nineveh being the Assyrian capital. He did not send Jonah there to try to convert them. What He did, rather, was to tell them, to have Jonah preach to them to tell them to turn from their violent, violent ways.

Let's go to Jonah 3, keeping your finger in Isaiah 22, go to Jonah 3 and let's just read the first two verses. Remember Jonah went to Nineveh the first time ... or God told him to go to Nineveh the first time, and he ran away. And we know the story about the belly of the whale and all of that. Jonah 3:1, now, God is appealing to him to second time.

Jonah 3:1. *And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2) Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid [you]. (NKJV)*

Now what was the message that God wanted imparted to the Assyrians? Verse 8:

Jonah 3:8. *But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: [yes], let them turn every one from his evil way, ... (KJV)*

Notice this last phrase.

8b) *... and from the violence that is in their hands. (KJV)*

God says, "I'm going to strike you horribly unless you turn from the violence." And so Jonah's message was to refrain from that. And for a time it appears that they did.

Now here's the point. Let's turn back to Isaiah 22. Here's the point:

Judah was in imminent danger of being conquered by the most violent and cruel people in existence at that time and some of the most violent and cruel people to ever exist.

Now if you put yourself in the mindset of the leaders of the Jews, what do you think the mindset should be? If these horrible, evil people that have no respect for human life and love to torture and kill and they're surrounding you, what do you think the focus of the leaders' minds should be? You would think that maybe repenting, relying on God,

physically doing whatever they could to protect the people and to fortify Jerusalem, you would think that would be foremost on their minds.

Now let's go to Isaiah 22 and verse 15 and here comes Shebna into the picture.

Isaiah 22:15. *Thus [says] the Lord God of hosts, Go, get [you] unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say, (KJV)*

Now let's stop here. So, Shebna, we see, is over the house and he is the treasurer. Over the house can be translated palace administrator. The Complete Jewish Bible says in place of over the house, it says in charge of all of the king's affairs. The New International says in charge of the palace. So, it is apparent that he was the second in command to the king and he decided who could see the king and who could not see the king, like a Chief of Staff of the President of the United States today.

Okay, so if he was second in command, now let's see what was on his mind. What was his focus? Remember the previous chapters, the proclamations against all these nations and let's see what's on Shebna's mind. Verse 16, I'll read it out of the New King James.

Isaiah 22:16. *'What have you here, and whom have you here, that you [referring to Shebna] have hewn a sepulcher here, as he who hews himself a sepulcher on high, who carves a tomb for himself in a rock? (NKJV)*

Now let's stop there. There's nothing wrong with preparing for our death. In fact, we should do that, but what we read here is much more than just preparing for your death because it says, Shebna hewed a sepulcher on high. Meaning *to be seen and to elevate himself*. Now, that very sepulcher, the top piece which is called the lintel—you have the side posts and top piece and when Israel left Egypt, they put blood over the lintel and the side posts—but that lintel exists to this very day. It is in the British Museum in London and it is called the Shebna Lintel. It's the piece over the two side posts, right at the top of the door. And I've got a photograph of it if you're interested. You can see it later, those that are here, but it's called the Shebna Lintel. And it has writing all across the top.

Shebna, you see, was focused in this horrible time with these horrible people surrounding him, what was Shebna's focus? His focus was on building a monument to his greatness. His focus was that despite the danger from the Assyrians, he was focused on himself and his legacy. And the only conclusion we can draw is it was one of the most outrageous examples of pride that's in the Bible.

Look at verse 17.

Isaiah 22:17. *Behold, the Lord will carry [you] away [Shebna] with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover [you].*

18) He will surely violently turn and toss [you] like a ball into a large country: there [you shall] die, and there the chariots of [your] glory shall be the shame of [your] lord's house. (KJV)

Now, there's no record at all about how Shebna died, but he never was buried in that sepulcher because he was taken captive. And, although we don't have a record, knowing the Assyrians, he met a very, very painful and violent death.

Verse 19, now, here is something that's very important.

19) And I [Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament] will drive [you] from [your] station, ... (KJV)

This is a prophecy. The New King James says, "I will drive you out of office."

19b) ... and from [your] state shall he pull [you] down. (KJV)

So we see here that here is a prophecy about Shebna being demoted. Before he dies, he's going to be demoted from being palace administrator and he is demoted because of his pride. Verse 20:

20) And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: (KJV)

Okay, so the focus shifts now to Eliakim and we see here that Shebna's going to be pulled down from his office. So, hold your finger here and let's fast-forward five years to 2 Kings chapter 18. Hezekiah is now the king. Sennacherib is attacking Judah. Sennacherib has already destroyed 46 cities in Judah and now he is about to attack Jerusalem.

2 Kings 18:17. *And the king of Assyria sent Tartan [the supreme commander] and Rab-saris [who was the chief officer] and Rab-shakeh [who was his field commander] from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field. (KJV)*

And what they did is they called out up to the wall to intimidate the Jews. Verse 18:

18) And when they had called to the king, ... (KJV)

The king didn't come out, but:

18b) ... there came out to them ... (KJV)

Guess who?

18 continued) ... Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, which was over the household, and Shebna ... (KJV)

Notice what his position is.

18 continued) ... Shebna the scribe, ... (KJV)

He's the secretary. He just writes stuff down.

18 continued) ... and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. (KJV)

So, we see now Shebna has been demoted from being the palace administrator, from being the second in command. Eliakim has taken his place and so he's clearly demoted because of his pride. That prophecy is indeed fulfilled.

Now go to Proverbs 16 and verse 18. The Proverbs sometimes you can read them and think that this sounds nice and, yes, it's a good proverb but here's a proverb that relates directly to what we're talking about. It relates directly to Shebna. Proverbs 16:18 says:

Proverbs 16:18. Pride [goes] before destruction, ... (KJV)

Shebna was not only demoted, but he was destroyed.

18b) ... and a haughty spirit before a fall. (KJV)

A haughty enough spirit to be concerned about his legacy and having his sepulcher built in his honor that would keep his legacy alive long after he died.

Now, let's go back to Isaiah 22 and verse 20 which we just read.

Isaiah 22:20. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: (KJV)

Now what we're going to see here from this point forward is the prophecy becomes dual—talking about Eliakim, yes; becoming over the household, yes; but ultimately we're going to see this prophecy shifts to Jesus Christ. And we're going to see a contrast between Shebna and the fact that his tomb, his sepulcher was an example, an ultimate example of his pride; and we're going to see a contrast between Shebna's pride and Christ's humility where God gives up His life. ultimately giving up His divinity, then, humbling himself to be made flesh to live a perfect life; and then, gives up His life to die for our sins. Those two are going to be contrasted, Shebna and Christ, in the next few verses. Look at Isaiah 22 verse 21, the beginning of verse 21.

21) And I will clothe him [referring to Eliakim] with [your] robe [referring to Shebna's robe], and strengthen him with [your] girdle, ... (KJV)

The girdle was the belt. And we know that the robe is a sign of office. And remember Elisha picked up the robe of Elijah in 2 Kings 2; therefore, taking his role as prophet, Elisha, then, becoming the prophet. And we know that the belt, in addition to the robe is a sign of office and power. Remember Jonathan gave David not only his robe but his belt (We find that in 1 Samuel 18.) when Jonathan realized it was God's will to have David as the next king and not Jonathan himself.

And, we see here, as we've seen here in 2 Kings, Eliakim indeed was promoted to supercede Shebna that we're talking about today, but you see the ultimate fulfillment is in Jesus Christ, taking the role of King of kings and Lord of lords and symbolized by this a mantle and a belt.

Now look at the latter part of verse 21.

21b) ... and I will commit [your] government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. (KJV)

Now, here this prophecy shifts completely to Jesus Christ because Eliakim was never a "father" to Jerusalem under Hezekiah. That just didn't happen. And also—this is something that I've wondered about for years and finally think I have the answer: "Father" is one of Christ's titles.

Now keep your finger here and go to Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6. This is a very familiar scripture to the average guy on the street because Handel's Messiah quotes this passage. Isaiah 9:6, it says:

Isaiah 9:6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: ... (KJV)

Got to be referring to Jesus Christ! None other!

6b) ... and his name shall be called Wonderful, [Counselor], The mighty God, [Notice this.] The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (KJV)

We know that refers to Jesus Christ. There is no doubt.

But when I read that—I don't know when it first dawned on me, but probably forty years ago. I had been in the church in about ten years—and saying, "Well, why does Christ have the name 'Everlasting Father?'" That seems to refer to God the Father. And yet, why is Christ called 'the Everlasting Father?'" "

In fact, when the apostasy occurred in the Worldwide Church of God, I was surprised they didn't quote this trying to claim that the trinity and they're all one and all of this. They never did that, which I'm thankful for.

But the question remained: Why would Christ be called the Everlasting Father? And I asked ministers in the Worldwide Church of God over the years and never got a satisfactory answer, but this is the answer. We just read that Christ ... this prophecy in Isaiah 22:21, the prophecy now switches to Jesus Christ. And it says, "He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah." So here in Isaiah when it calls Christ the Father, it must be referring to the fact that He will have a role of a father to those in Judah and Jerusalem during the time of the Millennium.

Now back to Isaiah 22 and let's read verse 22. Again, this has to be Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 22:22. *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. (KJV)*

Now, who has the ability to open and shut? Certainly not a man. Not any man. It falls to Jesus Christ alone. Now again, keep your finger here and let's go to Revelation 3:7. This is the letter to the church in Philadelphia. It has to refer to Jesus Christ. So this prophecy in Isaiah went to Eliakim and then is now solely focused on Jesus Christ. Revelation 3:7.

Revelation 3:7. *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things [says] he that is holy [Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament], he that is true, he that [has] the key of David, he that [opens], and no man [shuts]; and [shuts], and no man [opens]; (KJV)*

It has to refer to Jesus Christ.

Now back to Isaiah 22. Let's look at verse 23.

Isaiah 22:23. *And I will fasten him [Jesus Christ] as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. (KJV)*

Has to be referring to Christ! Beginning of verse 24 and I'm reading out of the King James.

24) And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, (KJV)

But the New Revised Standard Version has the following translation.

Isaiah 22:24. *And they will hang on him the whole weight of his ancestral house, ... (NRSV)*

"The weight of it," now that could be referring to the sins of all humanity, the weight of the sins being put on Jesus Christ because remember John the Baptist when he saw Christ the very first time? He said, "Behold! The One who takes away the sins of the world!" And Christ's ancestral house extends all the way back to Adam. And since

Adam there has been nothing but trouble. And His ancestral house, going all the way back to Adam, has been nothing but a house of sin.

Now look at verse 25.

25) In that day, [says] 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 [has] spoken it. (KJV)

You see Christ became sin and had to die for us, had to fall down and die for all of us.

Look at 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 21. Just as a reminder that His place was removed, He was cut down because of our sins and paid the penalty for our sins. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says:

2 Corinthians 5:21. *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NKJV)*

So you see here in Isaiah 22 what's going on is God is presenting us today with this tremendous incredible contrast between two. We have one of two choices between:

1. Shebna and his human pride (when Judah was in dire straits and needed to focus on repentance and looking to God and survival) and his focus was on his legacy and his sepulcher—that horrible example of pride;
2. Jesus Christ, who was the ultimate example of humility, who gave up His Godhead to become flesh to die for us, suffer horrible pain so that we could live.

Look at that contrast here in Isaiah 22.

Now, the fact is you see God is putting this contrast in front of all of us and what He's saying to us is "I want you to see this contrast and I want you to act on it. I want you to do something about it." Not just look and say, "Oh, this is interesting and that's nice." No. To change the way we live and to do something about it.

But here's the problem we all face. Pride is the one sin that has permeated the Church of God in the latter days. It has infested the Church of God in the latter days. It infected the Worldwide Church of God beginning in the 1960s. It continues to this very day and it is something that God hates. And God is throwing it in front of us today to give it to us a choice. What are we going to do about it?

So now I'm ending the introduction. We can see now as we look back why God sometimes throws us a curveball. In the middle of Isaiah 22, this man Shebna is brought up. Then He leads to Eliakim and then to Jesus Christ and shows us a contrast between the pride of Shebna and the humility of Jesus Christ. So the title of the sermon is just that:

Shebna And The Sin Of Pride

Now let's go to Proverbs chapter 6 and we'll read 16 and the beginning of verse 17. Now God sets the stage here for what we're going to talk about because God says:

Proverbs 6:16. *These six things [I] hate: [no], seven are an abomination ... (KJV)*

And that is an idiom that gives extra emphasis when you hear "six, no" and then "seven." Proverbs 6 verse 16.

Proverbs 6:16. *These six things [does] the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: (KJV)*

And what is the first one mentioned?

17) A proud look, ... (KJV)

The New International and the New Living Translation say "haughty eyes." And I think we've all seen that. We've seen people strutting around with a proud look and with haughty eyes. It's the very first sin that God hates. The one that angers Him the most and that is the sin of pride.

And so today, what we're going to see is that the sin of pride predates human beings. And we're also going to see that pride has been around since day one of human existence. Human nature hasn't changed since then. And we're going to see that pride is something that the Church of God if prophesied to struggle with right up until the return of Jesus Christ. Because you see when you get down to it, pride is the source of almost every sin when you think about it and dig down deep enough. And we see that really every day in the greater Church of God.

So, you could say, "Okay. Why do we have a sermon on pride after we've finished the Days of Unleavened Bread?" Usually you would think it would be appropriate to bring it up during the Days of Unleavened Bread, sin and all of that. So, we're going to talk about five reasons today, in the balance of the sermon, of why focus on pride at this time. Okay the first thing we want to establish is:

1. Pride was the first sin, the sin of pride was the first one ever committed—ever!

Let's go to Ezekiel chapter 28 talking about Satan. We know Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 talk about Satan. So, let's go to Ezekiel 28 and I'm going to read three verses out of the New Living Translation. It doesn't change the meaning at all from the King James but it's just more readable language. Ezekiel 28 and beginning in verse 12, it says:

Ezekiel 28:12. *Son of man, weep for king of Tyre [which we know is a symbol of Satan]. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord: "You were the perfection of wisdom and beauty. (NLT)*

It can't be referring to a human being, "perfection of wisdom and beauty." Verse 14:

14) I ordained you and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. ... (NLT)

Obviously, this is referring to a spirit being and not a human being.

14b) ... You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire. (NLT)

Right at the throne of God! Verse 15:

15) "You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you. (NLT)

And what was that evil that was found in Satan? Let's turn to Isaiah 14 and see. We'll begin in verse 13. We'll read verses 13 and 14 of Isaiah 14. Now, as we go there and we read these two verses, notice the focus on the self. It's all about me. It's all about what I can get and what I can do. Isaiah 14 and verse 13, referring to Satan, it says:

Isaiah 14:13. *For [you have] said in [your] heart, ... (KJV)*

That means *down deep in your innermost being.*

13b) ... [you have] said in [your innermost being] I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will [also sit] upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. (KJV)

The Tanakh Translation says: "I will match the Most High."

"I will be equal to God. I will be right there with God" (paraphrasing). And we know his motivation was he wanted to compete with God. He wanted to take over. So, the very first sin that was ever committed was the sin of pride because Satan had the idea in his head that he could do a better job of being God than God could and that he could do a better job than God was doing at that time.

So, we see here the sin of pride was the very first sin ever committed. And we have to remember that we're at the end of 6000 years of Satan's prideful influence on humanity. And what do we see today? Nothing but pride. I don't care where we look. We see nothing but pride. So, the first point is that pride was the first sin ever committed.

2. Pride is at the core of our human nature.

Let's turn over to Daniel 5 and just see one scripture about King Nebuchadnezzar. Remember Nebuchadnezzar built Babylon. It was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It had the Hanging Gardens. It had a river flowing through it. It had all these buildings and trees and gardens and all of that. And he was very prideful about it. Daniel 5 verse 20, but notice what it says about Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 5:20. *But when his [Nebuchadnezzar's] heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened [by pride or] in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: (KJV)*

Now we know that God took his throne away from him. He lived for seven years as an animal. His hair grew long; his nails grew long. He just lived like an animal—lost his mind for a while—seven years.

Now the Hebrew word here for “hardened,” “his heart was lifted up,” “his mind was hardened in pride,” is Strong's 8631 and it means *to grow arrogant*. So, we see here his heart was lifted up and his mind grew arrogant in pride—part of our human nature. Now, let's jump to the New Testament, Christ's first sermon in Mark chapter 7 and we're going to read verses 21 through 23, Mark 7:21-23. Christ brought a spiritual component to the law and in His first sermon, Christ said the essential things that separated His teachings from the teachings of the scribes and the Pharisees. We read here in Mark 7 and verse 21:

Mark 7:21. *For from within, out of the heart of [man, that means man's human nature], proceed [out from his heart, from inside him, proceed] evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22) Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, [and the big one] pride, ... (KJV)*

Les talked about in the sermonette the pride of life—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. It fits right in with this scripture here. Verse 23:

23) All these evil things come from within, and [they] defile the [person, the] man. (KJV)

They defile us.

Then look at Proverbs 14:12. It's also repeated in Proverbs 16:25, talking about human nature and the way that seems right to a human being is not the right way because it is motivated by pride. Proverbs 14:12 said:

Proverbs 14:12. *There is a way which [seems] right unto a man [a human], but the end ... are the ways of death. (KJV)*

That's exactly what happened to Shebna. His motivation was pride to exalt himself, to enhance his legacy after he died, and guess what? He died a horrible death. So we can never forget that pride is at the core of our human nature. Pride was the very first sin and it's also the core of our human nature. Now that leads us to the third point we need to make about pride.

3. Pride existed among the disciples.

Pride existed among the disciples. You would think that having the daily influence of Jesus Christ for three and a half years and seeing Christ's humility that pride would not be a problem with the disciples. They were with Him morning, noon and night. They ate with Him. They slept with Him. They walked with Him. They heard His talk. They heard what He said. They saw what He did. All examples of humility, but it did not stop them from struggling from with pride.

Now, as with Shebna and being surrounded by the Assyrians, what do you think the focus of the disciples should be as they approach the death of Jesus Christ? What do you think their focus should be? Maybe getting closer to God knowing their Savior is not going to be with them. You know they didn't have a clue. Didn't have a clue—the same as Shebna.

Look at Matthew chapter 20. We're going to read verses 20 through 24. The disciples are all gathered together and then, we see here in verse 20:

Matthew 20:20. *... came to [Christ] the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, ... (KJV)*

And it says she:

20b) ... [worshipped] him, and [she desired] a certain thing of him. (KJV)

She wanted Him to do something for her. Verse 21:

21) And he said unto her, What [do you want]? [What will you have Me do?] She [said] unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on [your] right hand, and the other on [your] left, in [your] kingdom. (KJV)

Now the two sons were standing—I'm sure she was in the middle. One was standing on the right side; one was standing on her left side. Verse 22:

22) But Jesus answered and said, [You don't] know ... what [you're asking. You don't have a clue]. Are [you] able ... (KJV)

He's now not talking to her. He's talking to her two boys and they're standing right in front of Him.

22b) ... Are [you] able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (KJV)

And, again, they didn't have a clue of what was going to happen, but:

22 continued) ... They [said] unto him, [Yes,] We are able. (KJV)

"We'll do it. We'll do exactly what You want so we can sit on Your right hand and Your left hand."

23) And he [said] unto them, [You] shall [indeed drink] of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, [I don't have that authority.] but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. (KJV)

Verse 24, notice what happened. Notice the reaction of the other ten.

24) And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two [brothers]. (KJV)

Now, why were they indignant? Were they indignant because you're prideful and exalting yourself? No. They were indignant because they were saying, 'Who do you think you are? I should be on His right hand or I should be on His left hand. Not you.' That was their attitude—pride right to the end. Right before Christ was taken, pride was coming to the surface in the lives of the disciples. They didn't have God's holy spirit inside them at that point.

But the lesson for us here in this third point: If pride can infect the disciples, it can infect us too. Now, that leads us to the fourth reason why we're talking about pride today and why it's important.

4. Pride is prophesied to infect the end-time church.

This prophecy about Shebna and Jesus Christ is there for a reason for us today because pride just is infesting the greater church today.

Now we know we're in the Laodicean Era, so we're going to look at Christ's warning to Laodicea to better understand His message to Laodicea. And so, you can be turning over there, but we need to understand the dynamics of the town of Laodicea to better

understand the message that Christ is giving us and the lessons we need to learn now, almost 2,000 years later. We need to understand what was going on in Laodicea in the late first century. Now in previous sermons, I've talked about this before, but we'll just kind of summarize.

The residents of Laodicea were incredibly wealthy. Let me read from Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's Commentary.

Revelation 3:14

[Laodicea was] ... destroyed by an earthquake, 62 A.D.; ...

Now this was 30 to 35 years prior to John writing down Christ's words in the Book of Revelation.

[It was] ... destroyed by an earthquake, 62 A.D.; [and] rebuilt by its wealthy citizens without the help of [Rome] (Tacitus, Annals, xiv., 27).

And so Rome offered to help them rebuild, but the town was so wealthy and so prideful they said, "We don't need your help, we can do it ourselves. We have need of nothing. We don't need your help."

Now the wealth came from three things in Laodicea. It came from banking. It came from this highly sought after black wool that was rich and glossy. And it came from eye medicine and a medical school that they had. And they were very prideful of those three areas. Expositor's Bible Commentary says:

The great Roman road stretching to the inland in Asia from the coast at Ephesus ran straight through its center making Laodicea an important center of trade and communication. In addition, its wealth came from the production of a fine quality of famous glossy black wool, whether dyed or natural in color is not known. That the city's banking assets were noteworthy is evidenced by the fact that Cicero ...

Cicero was a Roman politician, statesman, and orator.

[Their] banking assets were noteworthy [because] Cicero cashed huge bank drafts in Laodicea. Laodicea also had a famous school of medicine and a special ointment known as Phrygian powder famous for its cure of eye defects. It was either manufactured or distributed there, as were ear ointments also.

So, they were very prideful about what came out of Laodicea.

Now, with that in mind, let's go to Revelation 3 and pick up the context in verse 14. This is to the end-time church Era—what's happening, what will be happening in the end-time church.

Revelation 3:14. *“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

15) I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I [would] you were cold or hot. (NKJV)

And we’ve talked about that before. Cold is refreshing, and if you’re taking a bath after a hard day, hot is just wonderful when you slip into a hot bath, but lukewarm water is good for nothing. It doesn’t refresh you. If you’ve been working hard, jumping into a lukewarm bath doesn’t do much for anybody. And Christ is saying, “I wish you were cold or I wish you were hot.”

16) So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.

17) Because you say, ... (NKJV)

“Because you say,” Laodicea said it then and the modern-day church, the greater Church of God today says it now:

17b) ... ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’— (NKJV)

And then Christ admonishes; He says:

17 continued) ... [you don’t know] that [you are] wretched, [and] miserable, [and] poor, [and] blind, [and] naked—(NKJV)

And then verse 18, He gives them some counsel. He says:

18) I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; ... (NKJV)

And He’s saying, “You’re not rich. You think you’re rich, but you’re not rich.”

18b) ... that you may be rich; and [buy from Me] white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; (NKJV)

He says, “You’re naked. You don’t have any protection. I see right through you. I wish you had white garments on,” indicating righteousness.

And then in a play on words, talking about their prideful look at the eye salve they have, and He says:

18 continued) and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (NKJV)

And He’s obviously referring to spiritually seeing. “You’re prideful about your eye ointment, but you don’t have a clue. I’m talking spiritually. I want you to see spiritually

and the only way you can do that is to come to Me and buy eye salve, spiritual eye salve, from Me.”

So clearly back then and also being a prophecy to the end-time church today, Laodicea and the Laodicean era that we’re in now has a problem with pride because the church says, “We are rich. We are wealthy and we don’t need anything.”

There is a spiritual arrogance and pride in the greater church today. I think we all know that. We hear it all the time. “We’re the only ones Christ is dealing with.” I heard that directly from a minister of the group that we came out of. “We’re the only ones Christ is dealing with.” And I’ve heard it from others saying, “We are the only ones that have and teach the whole truth. All of the rest of you are inferior. We’ve got it all.” Others say, “We are the only ones going to the place of safety.” I’ve heard that so many times. “The rest of you are going to have to go through the tribulation, but we—in this corporation—are the only ones going to the place of safety.” What pride!

And then we have individuals—generally the leaders of various groups—saying, “I’m a prophet.” That’s several prophets we’ve seen. “I am an apostle,” claiming to be an apostle, taking that title to themselves. What pride! Another guy says, “I’m going to train the two witnesses.” I can’t find that in the Bible, but there’s a prideful proclamation of that. And others say, “You don’t have the knowledge that I have. You can’t come close to the knowledge that I through my superior intellect have been able to glean out of the Bible.”

And you see arrogance, spiritual arrogance and pride just infests the church today. And that pride causes the end-time church to see itself how it wants to see itself. We talk about that at Passover time. We need to see ourselves as God sees us, not as we want to see ourselves. We need to see ourselves as Christ sees us. We need to see ourselves in relation to the example of Jesus Christ when He walked this earth.

So, this fourth point is that the end-time church is infected with pride and it’s something we need to be aware of because that leads to the fifth point, the last point.

5. If we allow pride to come into our lives, pride will take us farther and farther away from God and Christ and Their truth.

Here is the real danger today. Pride will take us away, put distance between us, God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the truth that’s in the Bible. It will take us away from that.

Let’s go to Psalm 10 and verse 4. This says it all here. David says it in Psalm 10:4. It’s just amazing how scriptures written thousands of years ago apply directly word for word today. Psalm 10:4, it says:

Psalm 10:4. *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. (KJV)*

Now, this is very interesting because it says through pride of his countenance, of himself, pride in himself. Number one, he doesn't seek after God, but notice God is not in all his thoughts. God is in some of his thoughts. Somebody can stand up and go on television and write articles or be in booklets or preach from a pulpit and talk about God, but what this is telling us is God should be in all our thoughts. God should be motivating everything we do, everything we think, everything we say. And what David is telling us is the wicked through pride, that takes us away from God's thoughts, Christ's thoughts, God's Word and separates us because they put themselves before God. Shebna did it. Satan did it.

Now let's go to Proverbs 29 and verse 23, Proverbs 29:23. This applies directly to Shebna and it will apply to Satan at the end of his days. Proverbs 29:23, this is why God put this in His Word about Shebna.

Proverbs 29:23. A man's pride shall bring him low: ... (KJV)

Shebna went from the number two man in Judah, the gatekeeper to the king, to a scribe, and then bounced like a ball, as the prophesy said, in the land, and then died a horrible death. Man's pride shall bring him low. The same will happen to Satan in due course.

23) ... but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit. (KJV)

So, remember Shebna.

I know a man in the church. He's in the Church of God today, but whenever you talk to him, he always brought up his credentials. If you got an email from him, it always said, MBA, CPA and all the letters that go after stuff like that. Every e-mail is a reminder of kind of who he was. And, then, I noted, after I got to know the man, that in every conversation—I can think of no conversation that this didn't occur where the conversation would come around to his credentials, his status, what he's done, the job that he had and all of that. And he was always bragging about what he knew and what he did. And, over time, the brethren who were exercising God's spirit just became tired of it. You know after you hear it over and over and over again and trying to shift the conversation to other subjects and it would always come back to himself. And today this man is all alone. Nobody wants to follow that. He's all alone.

You see the ultimate end of man's pride shall bring him low (here we read in Proverbs), ultimately it is the lake of fire. Man's pride shall bring him low and that low, the lowest of the low is the lake of fire. You see if we can't get rid of pride, the lake of fire will get rid of us. Very simple—if we can't get rid of pride, the lake of fire will get rid of us eternally.

Look at Proverbs 13 and verse 10. There is great contention within the greater church. You will very rarely see groups cooperating with each other. Rather, they're throwing rocks at each other. They're launching ICBMs at each other. Proverbs 13:10, it says:

Proverbs 13:10. *Only by pride [comes] contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. (KJV)*

Now look at the contention today in the greater church of God—between mates, horrible marriage problems; between brethren, fighting back and forth; between leaders of various groups, making accusations and fighting back and forth; people stubbornly insisting that they know better than anybody else; people stubbornly insisting that their way is the only way—my way or the highway.

Pride—and here's the key, the key of Proverbs 13:10: Where you find contention, you find pride; and where you find pride, you find Satan. I'll say it again. Where you find contention between groups, individuals, mates, marriages, whatever, where you find contention, you find pride; and where you find pride, you find Satan. He is right there in the middle of it. That's why we find this admonition in Proverbs 22:10. It's something that we've had to exercise occasionally, sadly to say, but this is what needs to be done. Proverbs 22:10, it says:

Proverbs 22:10. *Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; [yes], strife and reproach shall cease. (KJV)*

Now the Hebrew word for scorner means *to talk arrogantly*. And it says cast out the one that talks arrogantly; and if you do that, contention and strife will go away.

And we've experienced that. Since we got started in 2008, we've experienced that. When a scorner leaves, all of a sudden peace breaks out. It's just like a revelation, like a miracle, which it is. And, as we get closer to the end, we have to have a sense of urgency to put pride out of our lives. We have to have this ... it's got to be a sense of urgency to root out pride wherever it rears its ugly head because pride—this last point, point number five—will take us away from God and Christ.

And boy, at the end time things get harder and tougher and tougher.

It's just, it's amazing that pride will take us away from God and Jesus Christ. Pride in ourselves, pride in what we've accomplished, pride in the group that we're in, pride in this guy or that guy will take us away from God and Christ. So, that was the fifth point.

Now, in conclusion, we began talking about Shebna and his legacy that he was the second most powerful man in Judah. And yet, at the time of Judah's biggest need and the need for leadership from those at the top, his focus was on himself, on his legacy, on his sepulcher and carving out that lintel in his honor. His focus wasn't on the people. It was on his legacy and that legacy was a legacy of pride.

And I personally think it is more than just a coincidence that somehow this lintel has been discovered at this time. I think God, Christ caused it to be discovered because it's lasted to this very day. And it's a witness to us at the end-time of what happened back then when pride was allowed to be at the forefront. They were filled with pride. Shebna

was filled with pride. And I think God has allowed that lintel to be discovered and to be on display as a reminder of when times get tough, what will our focus be and Shebna's was on pride. Not on the brethren. Not on getting close to God. Not on repenting. And it is a witness. That lintel and this story is a witness to the end-time church that is prophesied to struggle with that very same pride.

And God, I believe, inspired Isaiah to contrast Shebna with Jesus Christ our Savior—to show us the difference and to lay it on the table right in front of us. And say, “Okay. Which is it going to be, end-time church? What's it going to be?”

So, we've seen the legacy of Shebna as one of pride, so let's close with a final scripture that sums up the legacy of Jesus Christ. Let's go to Philippians chapter 2. It's amazing to me that Philippians—there is so much in Philippians chapter 2. I mean it's just one astounding teaching after another in that chapter. Philippians 2, we'll begin in verse 3. Paul says to us today:

Philippians 2:3. *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, ... (NKJV)*

Selfish ambition and conceit are synonymous with pride. What's the contrast?

3b) ... in lowliness of mind [which is humility] let each esteem others better than himself.

4) Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (NKJV)

Shebna didn't do that. He could care less what the average Jew was going through. He was interested in his sepulcher, his lintel, his legacy. Verse 5:

5) Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, (NKJV)

Not Satan's mind. Not Shebna's mind. Verse 6:

6) who [referring to Christ], being in the form of God, ... (NIV)

And I'll read this out of the New International Version.

6b) ... did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. (NIV)

You see Satan regarded equality with God as something to seek, as something to lust after, as something to desire, but the New International Version, I think, hits the nail on the head when it said:

6b) ... [Christ], being in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. (NIV)

He was perfectly content to sit on God's right hand. He didn't want to usurp God's authority or to kick God off of His throne as Satan did. Verse 7, but Jesus Christ went even further.

7) but made Himself of no reputation, ... (NKJV)

The New International said, "made himself nothing."

7b) ... taking the form of a bondservant, ... (NKJV)

That means *slave*. The Greek means *slave*.

7 continued) ... and coming in the likeness of men.

8) And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (NKJV)

There is no greater example of humility than this—ever in all human existence, in all of the Bible! Verse 9:

9) Therefore ... (NKJV)

Meaning, because of the verses that we've just read:

9b) ... God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (NKJV)

Now if God is at the center of everything we do, then we will realize our place. We'll realize where we stand in the whole grand scheme of things.

And that reminds me—we won't turn there, but in 2 Samuel 7:18. What did David say when he came in before God? And he said, "God, who am I? And who am I, O Lord, and what is my house that you should do this to me—to allow me to be king of Israel? That you should honor me in this way? Who am I?"

And you see we're faced with the same thing. And we should be so honored that we've been called, so honored that we have God's holy spirit, but, yet, if you look in our lives, who are we that God would do that to us?

So, we should be so thankful with our calling and have the humility that Christ had when He was on this earth because humility is the ultimate antidote for pride. It's the exact opposite of pride. Humility will wash away pride if we allow that to happen.

So, the lessons of this scripture is that if Christ is to be our example—and several scriptures obviously say that He is—and that we are to walk as Christ walked—and there are scriptures that talk about that—then, how humble must we become if we're to follow in His footsteps? How humble must I individually become? To what degree of service should I be to other human beings? Since Christ died—God died—for us, what degree of service should I be to other human beings?

And if God himself shed His divinity, lived a perfect life, willingly died for us that we could be part of His family, how humble should that make me that He did all that for me, for you, as an individual?

Let's learn from the lesson of Shebna. Let's see why God put this into the string of prophetic chapters and all of a sudden threw this in there. Let's learn the lesson of Shebna. And let's continually seek to be humble as Christ was humble.