

be noted that the first of them, that he will be removed from his treasurership, has surely been fulfilled by the time of Isaiah 36, for there Eliakim already possesses the higher office, and Shebna has a lower position. We have no evidence about the other and more serious part of the prediction -- that he will be driven away into a distant country and die there, but we can safely assume that the prediction was fulfilled.

What is the cause of the rebuke? Does verse 16 accuse Shebna of vainglory, or does it merely state that he has built a great sepulchre for himself and is trying to make himself a lasting name, as is true of most men in similar positions? The succeeding verses tell him that these efforts are not to succeed. He will be pulled down from his position (v. 19) and will die in another land (v. 18).

In any event, we are safe in concluding that there is more in back of it than is mentioned here. Humility is always more pleasing to the Lord than pride. Yet the mere fact of hewing out a great sepulchre and making a memorial for oneself does not ordinarily bring down God's wrath. We can safely assume that there are other characteristics of Shebna, not described here, which make it necessary that Isaiah should devote a number of verses of his great book to stating God's wrath against this one individual.

Many conclude from verse 16 that Shebna is a foreigner who has been promoted to high position in the land of Judah. They do not think that he is actually a citizen, since he is rebuked for making his habitation here, and acting as if he had a permanent position. I think they are reading more into it than the words will bear. I do not see how we can tell from the passage whether he is a foreigner or a Judean.

Verses 20 to 24 give a wonderful promise about Eliakim. God will commit Shebna's important governmental position to Eliakim, so that he will be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The key of the house of David will be laid upon his shoulder. He will be fastened as a nail in a sure place, and will be "a glorious throne to his father's house." Some have gathered from the references to "father's house" in this verse and in verse 24 that Eliakim proceeded to do a great many things for his own relatives, to which perhaps they were not entitled, and have concluded that these verses involve a rebuke to Eliakim. I think that this again is