

# The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

## Chapter 15

**Theme:** God promised to judge and punish Moab, the descendants of Lot and ancient enemies of Israel.

**Outline:**

- 1-5 Grief for Moab's Great Judgment
- 6-9 Great Calamities of the Judgment

**Preparatory Reading:** Genesis 19; Jeremiah 48; Isaiah 16; Isaiah 13.

**Related Links:**

- A. *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah (outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/isaiah-introduction.pdf>.
- B. *Overview of O.T. Prophets (slides)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/old-testament-prophets-slides.pdf>.
- C. *Chronological Table and Notes for Prophets* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/prophets-table-with-notes.pdf>.
- D. *The Prophets of God (sermon outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/prophets-of-god.pdf>.
- E. *The Sordid Story of Lot (sermon outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/sordid-story-genesis-19.pdf>.
- F. *Balaam the Prophet (slides of enmity)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/balaam.pdf>.
- G. *Balaam and Prophecies (outline of enmity)* ... <https://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/balaam-and-his-prophecies.pdf>.
- H. *Interpreting Bible Prophecies (slides)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/prophecy-interpretation.pdf>.
- I. *Exposition of Isaiah 13 (burden outline for comparison)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/isaiah-13.pdf>.
- J. *Exposition of Isaiah 16 (for second half of prophecy)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/isaiah-16.pdf>.

**Introduction:**

- A. This section of Isaiah, chapters 13-34 (or other end points depending on view) are national warnings.
  - 1. In the center of the world in God's eye was Mt. Zion, the joy of the whole earth; He would protect.
  - 2. Other nations, from Libya to Persia, would be judged for hurting His people and/or rejecting Him.
  - 3. These chapters need not be in the order of when they were delivered or when they were fulfilled.
  - 4. For example, chapters 13-14 were prophecies of Media/Persia crushing Babylon 200 years away.
  - 5. For example, chapters 15-16 describe Babylonians crushing Moab about 100 years away (Jer 48).
  - 6. For example, chapter 17 has Assyria taking Syria and Samaria while Ahaz then Hezekiah reigned.
  - 7. There is no problem to think of Isaiah's international prophecies being collected, collated, and combined together in this section without much regard to date of prophecy or fulfillment (Pr 25:1).
  - 8. However, we trust God's providence for chapter divisions and these chapters being in the book.
- B. There are two prophecies combined here through the last two verses of the next chapter (Is 16:13-14).
  - 1. The body of both chapters, terrible destruction and desolation, was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar.
  - 2. Jeremiah had a nearly identical prophecy about Moab, but he testified after Assyria (Jer 48:1-47).
  - 3. But the Assyrians would bring a great reduction of Moab in three years from Isaiah (Is 16:13-14).
- C. This enemy nation of Israel originated ... if the truth be told ... when Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom.
  - 1. Let every reader tremble about the consequences of their compromises that are not initially seen.
  - 2. Lot compromised with the world, and it greatly corrupted him and his family in the city of Sodom.
  - 3. He could have been like Abraham, but he was nothing like him, but he and his wife are proverbs.
  - 4. The two nations by Lot's daughters are related (Ezek 25:1-11; Amos 1:13-15; 2:1-3; Zep 2:8-11).
  - 5. For more about the sordid story of Lot ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/sordid-story-genesis-19.pdf>.
  - 6. Evil of incremental compromise (slides) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/incremental-compromise.pdf>.

- D. Moab is east of the Dead Sea on a plateau 3000 feet above its sea and 4300 above the Mediterranean.
1. Historical and geographical Moab east of the Dead Sea in Jordan ... <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moab>.
  2. For a simple map for Bible reference (page 18) ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/isaiah-introduction.pdf>.
  3. Giants called Emims had dwelt there, but were defeated by the Moabites (Deuteronomy 2:9-11).
  4. Zoar, where Lot first fled in disobedience to the angels (Gen 19:23), was in Moab of later years.
  5. Amorites had been conquerors of Moab, but Israel conquered them (Num 21:21-35; Judges 11:18).
  6. God gave the land to Moab (Deut 2:8-11) ... but He took the Amorites' land (Numbers 21:31-35).
  7. The Ammonites (Moab's brother) challenged Jephthah, but he defeated them (Judges 11:12-33).
  8. Balaam and Balak first tried to destroy Israel by cursing and then by fornication (Num 25:1-2).
  9. God did not want any descendants of Lot in the congregation for ten generations (Deut 23:3-8).
  10. These child-sacrificing idolaters were extremely cruel like some other pagan nations (II Kgs 3:27).
  11. Ehud and Eglon show enmity (Judges 3:21), but Elimelech and Naomi friendliness (Ruth 1:1-2).
  12. David had used them for a shelter for his parents ... which will be implied in the prophecy (Is 16:3).
  13. God rejected and punished intermarriage with either family from Lot (Ezra 9:1-3; Neh 13:1-3).
  14. Moab disappeared from nations under Arabian possessions along with Edomites and Ammonites.
  15. The perfect tense is irrelevant, still a prophecy 100 years away, but typical of prophets (Is 14:4-5).
  16. Moab is not as important in the Bible as Babylon, so we will spend less time and detail than for it.

\*\*\*\*\* *Grief for Moab's Great Judgment – Verses 1-5* \*\*\*\*\*

***1 The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence;***

- A. The burden of Moab = God's judgment prophesied against Moabites, a common use.
1. Jeremiah used other words – *Against Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts* (Jer 48:1).
  2. Compare Babylon (Is 13:1), Damascus (Is 17:1), Egypt (Is 19:1), Arabia (Is 21:1,11,13), valley of vision (Is 22:1), Tyre (Is 23:1), beasts of the south (Is 30:6).
  3. And Nineveh (Nah 1:1), Phoenicia (Zech 9:1), Israel (Zech 12:1), Israel (Mal 1:1).
  4. God hated the Jews for mocking prophecies (*burdens*) of judgment (Jer 23:33-40).
  5. They were a *burden* to the prophets to deliver but especially to those being judged.
  6. Every reader should humble Himself before the warnings of scripture and repent.
- B. More prophesied judgment against Moab, mostly by Nebuchadnezzar (Is 25:10; Jer 9:25-26; 12:14-15; 25:11-12; 48:1-47; Ezek 25:8-11; Am 2:1-3; Zeph 2:8-11).
- C. The *because* repeated in this verse explains Moab's weeping, howling, and mourning.
1. The Moabites trekked to Bajith and Dibon, their high places, to weep to their gods.
  2. The Moabites howled about the ruin of Nebo and Medeba by a destructive enemy.
  3. They mourned in the way pagans do by shaving heads and cutting beards (Is 15:2).
- D. The two cities named here are known in Bible history about this neighboring nation.
1. Ar = a city of Moab known by God to be avoided by Israel (Num 21:28; Deut 2:9,18).
  2. Kir = Kirharesh (16:11) = Kirhareth (16:7; II Kgs 3:25) = Kirheres (Jer 48:31,36).

- E. Whether in a night battle, by surprise, or in decline of the nation, two cities were ruined.
1. Invasion at night brings horrible surprise and confusion, like Egypt and Sennacherib, and like other references throughout the Bible (Job 27:20; Matt 24:43; I Thess 5:2).
  2. They were *laid waste*, meaning a violent destruction of them by an invading nation.
  3. They were *brought to silence*, meaning their ordinary commerce and society ended.
  4. Their origin by sinful incest was in the night, so why not their destruction from God.

***2 He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.***

- A. The *he* that went up to Bajith and Dibon is Moab under a pronoun; see the second clause.
1. These pagan idolaters went up to their high places to weep before their vain idols.
  2. Compare the name Bajith with others – Bamo**th**baal and Bethbaalmeon (Josh 13:17).
  3. Though as we shall see, their chief and great deity was Chemosh (Is 16:12 cp Num 21:29; I Kings 11:7,33; II Kings 23:13; Jeremiah 48:7,13,46).
- B. In addition to Ar and Kir being wasted, the nation also howled for Nebo and Medeba.
- C. God had rejected their form of mourning for His church (Leviticus 19:27-28; 21:5).
1. Let us never consider taking the ideas of pagans for our God (Deut 12:1-4,29-32).
  2. God has revealed what we should do for worship (Matt 28:18-20; II Tim 3:16-17).

***3 In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.***

- A. The Moabites under a plural pronoun now are described in mourning for their nation.
- B. God's judgment brings great sorrow, howling, grief, and weeping. Consider it well.
- C. This is the fate of any that reproach or touch God's church (Ps 105:13-15; II Thess 1:6).

***4 And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.***

- A. Three more wasted cities of Moab would cry out loudly – Heshbon, Elealeh, and Jahaz.
- B. The armed soldiers of Moab would be afraid for their lives by the potent enemy army.
1. Soldiers, especially if armed, should be the most courageous defenders of a nation.
  2. But they, like the rest of the nation, would grieve for their own lives in hopelessness.
  3. They would have no ability or idea of preservation from this overwhelming enemy.

***5 My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.***

- A. Moab was an inveterate and perpetual enemy of Israel and deserved all described here.
1. God's judgments are always perfect, and they are never as much as sinners deserve.
  2. The verse here – implying Isaiah's grief – matches others (Is 16:9-11; Jer 48:31-36).
- B. Was Isaiah sincere here with grief for reprobates? Or is it irony? Or narrative liberty?
1. The first clause here could be sarcasm or irony by Isaiah the prophet or God Himself.
  2. The first clause here could be a literary device to augment grief by personalization.
  3. The first clause here could be Moab or a Moabite in the first person for intensity.
- C. But the prophet Isaiah, under inspiration from God, could be moved by their calamities.
1. Consider the news of such calamity falling on a neighbor by inspiration in your soul.
  2. If you find this hard to believe, then read of it elsewhere (Is 16:9-11; Jer 48:31-36).
  3. We read of no such thing for Babylon, by psalmist or Isaiah (Ps 137; Isaiah 13-14).
  4. But God had a regard for Moab by a connection to Abraham (Deut 2:8-9 cp 2:4-7).
  5. He definitely treated them different than the Canaanites that were to be annihilated.
  6. Still troubled by his compassion? Think upon Moses with wicked Israel (Ps 106:23).
  7. Still troubled by his compassion? Think upon your Lord (Luke 19:41-46; Jn 11:35).
  8. God's ministers want to save men, not destroy them, better than most offended men.
  9. Jeremiah did not desire the woeful day (Jer 8:18-19; 9:10,18-19; 13:17; 17:16; etc.).
  10. He wrote *Lamentations* – bewailing Judah's trouble – though they well deserved it.
  11. Paul would have been accused from Christ for the rebels of the Jews (Rom 9:1-5).
  12. Recall Jonah and his wicked failure of compassion for children and cattle (Jon 4:11).
  13. Isaiah and Jeremiah, as prophets, knew God would recover a remnant (Jer 48:47).
  14. How could Isaiah blast without pity, since Judah was a cousin and even more guilty?
  15. There was no pity for the seven nations of Canaan, but they were not Israel's cousins.
  16. Sons of Zeruah & Sons of Thunder ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/sons-of-zeruah.pdf>.
  17. Are you more like David or Joab? ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/david-or-joab.pdf>.
- D. We would not have a problem with irony or personalization here, but we choose grief.
1. Irony is usually the last resort requiring impossibility of any other sense (II Sa 6:20).
  2. God showed mercy to these idolaters when Israel came out of Egypt (Deut 2:9-11).
  3. Cousins from Shem rather than cousins from either Japheth or Ham – much better.
  4. They were related through Terah, father of Abraham, totally unlike the Canaanites.
  5. Moab's judgment was not for sins worse than Judah's sins under king Manasseh.
  6. God judged Ammon for crimes against Israel, Moab for others (Am 1:13-15; 2:1-3).
  7. God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and so also His faithful prophets.
  8. David said he cried rivers, not for judgment, but for disobedience (Psalm 119:136).
  9. God takes no pleasure judging wicked men when they do not repent (Ezekiel 18:32).
  10. There was an exhortation for Moab to repent, which they rejected (Isaiah 16:1-5).
  11. In light of offered reform, there should be sincerity, as Daniel with Nebuchadnezzar.
  12. Habakkuk asked God in wrath on Jews and Babylon to remember mercy (Hab 3:2).
  13. Men like Moses are esteemed in scripture for begging God for mercy for sinners.

14. Solomon warned against gladness at calamities (Prov 17:5; 24:17-18; Job 31:29-30).

15. More about irony in the Bible (pgs. 44-47) ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/figures-of-speech.pdf>

- E. Those that survived the slaughter in their cities would flee to their border city of Zoar.
1. This was at the end of the Dead Sea where Lot had hoped to stay (Gen 19:20-23).
  2. But once the fire fell from heaven, the compromiser fled Zoar (Gen 19:24-25,30).
- F. Embrace the words ... *an heifer of three years old* ... without any apparent connection.
1. It is the job of pastors to study the word and resolve difficulties – this one is easy.
  2. By comparing Jeremiah 48, the six lost words describe the nature of their howling.
  3. The Moabites would cry out like the bellowing of such a strong heifer (Jer 48:34).
  4. The ellipsis here of these words ... *have they uttered their voice* ... is not uncommon.
  5. By continuing the verse, the Holy Spirit identified *weeping* and a *cry* for the context.
  6. We thank God our translators by providence supplied, *the brother of* (II Sam 21:19).
  7. Once you learn grammatical disconnections or ellipses like this, they become easier.

\*\*\*\*\* *Great Calamities of the Judgment – Verses 6-9* \*\*\*\*\*

***6 For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.***

- A. Obviously a prosperous city by water supply, this city and region would dry up and fail.
1. It is sometimes a practice of warfare to destroy a nation by a *scorched-earth policy*.
  2. God might send a drought to lessen water, but armies often did as well (II Kgs 3:25).
  3. Furthermore, if the farmers are greatly depleted, who will direct the water to plants?
- C. What Moab had depended on from this region would no longer contribute to wealth.

***7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.***

- A. Trusting the *therefore* here, we conclude this speaks of Moabites running from danger.
1. The three uses of the plural pronoun *they* indicates the Moabites more than invaders.
  2. Saved wealth carried away to a willowed brook does not match Assyria or Babylon.
  3. Invading troops do not typically lay up abundance in the sense of foresightful saving.
  4. The crying and howling that follows next is not the conquerors but the conquered.
- B. While enemies usually steal savings and treasures for themselves, it is not obvious here.
- C. Think not this is a remedy of the evil, but rather a picture of bleak despair of fugitives.
1. The cost of living as a fugitive without means of income is high and deleterious.
  2. If they had to flee the nation as the next verse implies, there is a high degree of loss.
- D. Allowing a disconnection of grammar or ellipsis like occurred in verse 5 about the heifer, these could be invading soldiers carrying away the wealth of Moab to Babylon.

***8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim.***

- A. The Moabites were forced by invading foreign armies to flee their country for refuge.
- B. These were border cities of the nation, for there was no safety in the interior cities.
- C. While each of these places could be studied Biblically and historically, it does not profit.

***9 For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.***

- A. While *Dimon* may be a city thus named, it might also be *Dibon* (Is 39:1 cp II Kgs 20:12).
  - 1. Due to the slaughter of Moabites by invaders, the river Arnon would run with blood.
  - 2. Not only would the invaders draw blood, but wild beasts would attack and kill also.
- B. God would bring *more* calamities upon this city than those listed thus far, even lions.
  - 1. Those that seemed to escape by fleeing to mountains would be killed by wild lions.
  - 2. *More* troubles exacerbate difficulties (Job 1:13-19; Lev 26:18,21,24,28; Eze 14:21).
- C. When God judges, there is no escape, for He will bring other means (Jer 15:3; Am 5:19).
- D. An early lesson said (Is 9:12) ... *His anger not turned away, His arm stretched out still.*

**Practical Lessons Gleaned from Isaiah 15**

- 1. When you pitch your tent toward Sodom or compromise with sin, you cannot see all the consequences.
- 2. There may be a burden of you. It is your duty to examine yourself and repent of any sins against God.
- 3. God will not accept pagan practices (like marring beards or skin for grief), even if done toward Him.
- 4. God can reduce even confident and prepared persons (like Moab's soldiers) to despair of their lives.
- 5. Compassionate men like Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul are different from Saul, Joab, Jonah, and Satan.
- 6. Preparations you may have made for the evil day can be eliminated at once by the God of providence.
- 7. God can bring judgment after judgment – life can get worse (*more* at Dimon) – if you do not repent.