

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Chapter 16

Theme: God exhorted Moab to repent and reform, but condemned her pride and promised great trouble.

Outline:

- 1-5 Moab Beseeched to Repent
- 6-8 Moab's Pride Against Reform
- 9-11 Mutual Grief for Judgment
- 12-14 Two Judgments Distinguished

Preparatory Reading: Genesis 19; Jeremiah 48; Isaiah 15; Isaiah 13.

Related Links:

- A. *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah (outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-introduction.pdf>.
- B. *Overview of O.T. Prophets (slides)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/old-testament-prophets-slides.pdf>.
- C. *Chronological Table and Notes for Prophets* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prophets-table-with-notes.pdf>.
- D. *The Prophets of God (sermon outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prophets-of-god.pdf>.
- E. *The Sordid Story of Lot (sermon outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/sordid-story-genesis-19.pdf>.
- F. *Balaam the Prophet (slides of enmity)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/balaam.pdf>.
- G. *Balaam and Prophecies (outline of enmity)* ... <https://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/balaam-and-his-prophecies.pdf>.
- H. *Interpreting Bible Prophecies (slides)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prophecy-interpretation.pdf>.
- I. *Exposition of Isaiah 13 (burden outline for comparison)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-13.pdf>.
- J. *Exposition of Isaiah 15 (for second half of prophecy)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-15.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.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/sordid-story-genesis-19.pdf>.

6. Evil of incremental compromise (slides) ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.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.letgodbetrue.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.

***** *Moab Beseched to Repent – Verses 1-5* *****

1 Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

- A. If the Moabites were sensible of the danger, they should appeal to Judah for protection.
 1. Daniel offered pagan king Nebuchadnezzar a lengthening of tranquility (Dan 4:27).
 2. Sennacherib was taking all the fenced cities of Judah, some cities of Philistines, etc.
- B. The ruler of the land was truly Judah and Jerusalem, for David had fully defeated Moab.
 1. From Sela to the wilderness was a description of the entirety of the land of Moab.
 2. The king of Judah was the ruler of Moab by David's victory and Jehovah's religion.
 3. After David's victory, Moab rebelled or paid Israel (II Sam 8:2; II Kings 1:1; 3:4).
 4. The lamb is collective for tribute lambs or a similitude for a peace offering to Judah.
- C. The daughter of Zion, a figurative expression for Jerusalem, is truly the church of God.
 1. Daughter = bride = church; Zion = mountain = Jerusalem = church. God's nation.
 2. Dissecting this further will cloud the issue. Moab needed to repent to God's church.
- D. Note the language play, *the daughters of Moab* would be lost, if no repentance (Is 16:2).
 1. The prophet did not say deliver their lamb to Mt. Zion but rather to Zion's daughter.
 2. In contrast, the next verses warn that Moab's daughters would be distressed to flee.
- E. If this is taken ironically (Calvin), along with Isaiah's ironic grief, it becomes too ironic.
 1. We take it seriously by considering all that is written in these five verses (Is 16:1-5).
 2. Verse five is certainly true, and the other appeals to shelter can hardly be sarcastic.

2 For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

- A. If Moab neglects God's and Judah's favor by repentance, her daughters are doomed.
- B. Like lost birds without nest or home, their dear daughters would flee the doomed nation.
- C. For any that have found a lost young bird on the ground, the sorrowful picture is perfect.
- D. Terrified girls of Moab would wade across Arnon in panic to unknown dangers there.

3 Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth.

- A. Isaiah exhorted Moab to take wise counsel, turn to right conduct, and favor the Jews.
 - 1. In light of the direction and warning, they should hold a council to humbly submit.
 - 2. They should do what is right and fair, knowing God's people and ancient relatives.
 - 3. They should shelter escaped or vagabond Jews with a great shadow in an evil day.
 - 4. They should hide the outcasts of Israel who were fleeing the same Assyrian army.
 - 5. They should not betray or discover the fugitive Jews to the enemies they had to flee.
- B. The advice here for Moab was to be very different from vile Edomites (Ob 1:13-14).
 - 1. God chastens His own, but woe to those using it (Ps 137:7; Zec 1:15; Ezek 25:1-17).
 - 2. Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons had used Moab for a shelter (Ruth 1:1-2).
 - 3. David had used Moab before, and now Isaiah called them to repeat (I Sam 22:1-5).

4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

- A. God spoke in the first person asking for Moab to show mercy to His outcasts (Is 16:3).
 - 1. If Moab wanted to avoid their calamities, they needed to shelter outcasts of Judah.
 - 2. If Moab wanted to avoid ruin, they needed to cover Jews from the spoiling invaders.
- B. The appeal to reason here is that God's chastening would end and Judah be great again.
 - 1. God would kindly make Judah and Jerusalem great again, so count on her kindness.
 - 2. The situation and timing could be the political change from evil Ahaz to Hezekiah.
 - 3. The end of extortioners, spoilers, and oppressors could be Israel/Syria or Assyria.
- C. Think of the great difference sheltering Israelites made to Rahab's family (Joshua 6:17).

5 And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.

- A. The house of David seemed weak at times, but because of the anointing it would endure.
 - 1. Isaiah prophesied earlier that God would break Assyria for this anointing (Is 10:27).
 - 2. The sure mercies of David are God's promise David's rule would not end (Is 55:3).

- B. This verse was fulfilled by the good king Hezekiah by fifteen additional years of reign.
- C. This verse was also fulfilled by Jesus Christ for any Moabites truly repenting of sin.
- D. But we do not read of this contrary and wicked nation repenting ... due to their pride.

***** *Moab's Pride Against Reform – Verses 6-8* *****

6 We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.

- A. Isaiah speaks in the plural of the reputation Moab had among the Israelites especially.
 - 1. Keep this in mind in immediate opposition to advice to humbly submit (Is 16:1-5).
 - 2. Keep this in mind with Isaiah's sorrowing for these people. They would not repent.
 - 3. Keep this in mind with the judgment that immediately follows by the *therefore*.
- B. Isaiah identified one of the chief sins of this nation – pride and haughtiness primarily.
 - 1. Moab's reputation must have been well known, like the Cretian reputation (Tit 1:12).
 - 2. Pride is the most damning fault or error of all. Condescend to where you belong!
 - 3. Haughtiness and pride are closely related, which Jeremiah mocked (Jeremiah 48:26).
 - 4. He exalted himself against Almighty God and His people (Jer 48:42; Zep 2:8-10).
 - 5. Like Edom, Moab thought it invincible by a mountain location (Obadiah 1:1-4).
 - 6. Like Edom and Ammon, Moab had reproached those better than they (Jer 48:26-27).
 - 7. Pride is what keeps men from repenting to humbly submit to God, like Moab here.
- C. But what of wrath? Why is it connected closely here to Moab's pride and haughtiness?
 - 1. First, only by pride cometh contention – all fighting is due to pride (Pr 13:10; 21:24).
 - 2. Second, pride and arrogance produce cruelty and roughness (Pr 18:23; I Sam 25:17).
 - 3. Third, there is a very cruel event in Moab's history God remembered (Amos 2:1-4).
- D. But what of the *lies that shall not be so*? What does this obscure language here mean?
 - 1. Paul's advice is to compare spiritual with spiritual ... Jeremiah to Isaiah (I Cor 2:13).
 - 2. Jeremiah explained that Moab's wrath would not be effectual by his lies (Jer 48:30).

7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kirhareth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken.

- A. *Therefore*, because of pride and haughtiness leading to wrath and lies, God would judge.
 - 1. There might have been a lengthening of tranquility by repentance, but it was not so.
 - 2. God would take away their joy and reduce them to a small, feeble remnant (Is 16:14).
- B. The city of Kir (Is 15:1; 16:11) had once been preserved, but it now would be ruined.
 - 1. Its inhabitants had been killed, but the foundation had been preserved (II Kgs 3:25).
 - 2. God would tear this chief and great city apart for their pride, wrath, and lies to Israel.
- C. God can easily reduce you to howling, external or internal, so repent today of any faults.

8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.

- A. The agricultural prosperity of Moab was ruined by the invading and marauding army.
 - 1. This common result of an invading army had already been presented (Isaiah 15:6).
 - 2. Fields and vineyards would not yield due to trampling, polluting, few farmers, etc.
 - 3. Practiced in the Bible (II Kgs 3:25) and also after, it is called *scorched-earth policy*.
 - 4. Vineyards take many years to produce wine in quality and quantity, thus the loss.
- B. There might be metaphorical reference to chief persons by plants, but we choose direct.
 - 1. Heathen armies do not wander; they march with certain orders to achieve objectives.
 - 2. Heathen armies avoid the wilderness, for there is nothing there for them to spoil.
- C. The vineyards were very extensive as indicated by the last four clauses of this verse.
 - 1. The distance from Heshbon and Sibma to Jazer, emphasized here, was 15 miles.
 - 2. The sea is a metaphor of the lake of Jazer; the vineyards reached that far (Jer 48:32).
 - 3. There is help here, as in many places in this prophecy, to compare with Jeremiah 48.

***** *Mutual Grief for Judgment – Verses 9-11* *****

9 Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.

- A. Here again, as before, a choice must be made from sincerity, irony, or Moabite (Is 15:5).
- B. The speaker here loudly laments and wails over the great loss of Moab's fine vineyards.
 - 1. As in the previous verse, the vineyards wandered about 15 miles between the cities.
 - 2. Two other cities would be destroyed that the speaker weeps over with tears (Is 15:4).
- C. The invading and marauding army ruined the vintage, thus stealing the joy of harvest.
- D. God can remove all the joy of life from sinners, and He can increase it for His children.

10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.

- A. Most know that wine regions have great celebrations of a new, crop, vintage, or harvest.
- B. Notice what is now missing from a new vintage – gladness, joy, singing, and shouting.
- C. What caused this great change in happiness and prosperity? God destroyed the vintage.
 - 1. Note that Almighty God knows human joy quite well and can remove it (Acts 14:17).

2. God can remove the joy of life from sinners, and He can increase it for His children.
3. The solution is simple – repent and obey – for fullness of joy (Hag 1:5-11; 2:15-19).
4. God can give joy in trouble greater than a vintage (Psalm 4:7; 63:3-6; Hab 3:17-18).
5. There are also times when we should wisely turn our joy to mourning (Jas 4:8-11).

11 Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh.

- A. The speaker, as two verses earlier, feels the coming pain of God’s destruction of Moab.
- B. Is this Isaiah sincerely of himself, ironically, ironically for God, as a Moabite, etc.?
- C. We choose to believe the repetition is a lesson from God for pit (Is 15:5; Jer 48:31-36).

***** *Two Judgments Distinguished – Verses 12-14* *****

12 And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.

- A. When enemies invaded as above, the Moabites went to their high places for divine help.
 1. Isaiah had presented this initial response of the Moabites earlier (Is 15:2; Jer 48:35).
 2. Remember how Balak took Balaam to high places overlooking Israel (Num 22:41).
 3. It was common for Canaanites to seek to high places they had made for devotions.
 4. The wicked Jews followed this among the population (I Kgs 3:1-4; 14:22-23; etc.).
 5. Religious devotion to the wrong god or hypocritically to the right God will not work.
 6. It becomes wearisome, so both false worshippers make changes without repentance.
 7. God had already mocked the vain high places of the Moabites earlier (Num 21:28).
- B. Since their convenient places of worship did not work, they went to their big house.
 1. Chemosh was their chief deity – their national god (Num 21:29; I Kings 11:7,33).
 2. Romish sinners copy this vanity by taking pilgrimages to larger churches or to Rome.
 3. Baptist sinners copy this vanity by asking more to pray for them rather than repent.
- C. False worship of false gods is utter vanity, which is to be mocked (Jonah 3:8; I Sam 12:21; Psalm 31:6; Isaiah 44:9-20; Jer 2:13; Hab 2:18-20).
 1. Moab’s prayers to idols helped no more than Nisroch helped Sennacherib (Is 37:38).
 2. Jeremiah mocked Chemosh and rightly so for the defeat of Moab (Jer 48:7,13,46).
- D. Josiah later defiled the temple Solomon built for Moab’s Chemosh (II Kgs 23:13-14).
- E. Earlier Jephthah had been very delicately mocked this pagan idol (Judges 11:12-28).

13 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.

- A. Isaiah combined two chapters of prophecy together from Almighty God about Moab.
- B. Note first, when the LORD speaks concerning anything, it shall not fail (Is 14:24-27).
- C. Note second, these words distinguish and separate the previous 21 verses from the next.
 - 1. *Since that time* ... since Isaiah began ... to separate that prophecy from the next one.
 - 2. The first 21 verses of Isaiah 15-16 were fulfilled by Nechadnezzar. See Jeremiah 48.
 - 3. The burden and judgment by Isaiah and Jeremiah were the utter desolation of Moab.
 - 4. The simple and obvious solution is both spoke of Nebuchadnezzar (Is 15:1 – 16:13).
- D. *But now* ... must be given significant weight for emphasis to distinguish two prophecies.
- E. Or did Isaiah say that what he prophesied was consistent with previous prophecies and warnings (Ex 15:15; Num 21:29; 24:17; Psalm 60:8; 108:9; Amos 2:2; Zeph 2:9)?

14 But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

- A. In specific contrast to the prophecy given in the previous 22 verses (Isaiah 15:1 – 16:13).
 - 1. There is a very real difference in the timing of the revelations – one then, one now.
 - 2. There is a very real difference in content of the revelations – utter ruin or degraded.
 - 3. Jeremiah wrote about 100 years later agreeing with Isaiah, so it is Nebuchadnezzar.
 - 4. Therefore, the first prophecy (Is 15:1 – 16:13) is Nebuchadnezzar to utterly destroy.
 - 5. Therefore, the second prophecy (Is 16:14) is another king to greatly degrade Moab.
 - 6. For this to be true, the nation grew again between the two events to be again proud.
- B. If this were dated three years from Ahaz (Is 14:28), it would be Hezekiah's third year.
 - 1. If it were Hezekiah's third year, it was be the arrival of Shalmaneser to destroy Israel.
 - 2. We have no Bible or historical evidence that Shalmaneser raided the land of Moab.
 - 3. We assume this to be Sennacherib instead (14th of Hezekiah), thus well after Ahaz.
 - 4. Sennacherib took all the fenced cities of Judah, so it is easy to see him taking Moab.
- C. The description here (Is 16:14) is of Sennacherib's invasion, less than stated previously.
 - 1. The first 22 verses of Isaiah 15-16 were fulfilled by Nechadnezzar. See Jeremiah 48.
 - 2. But now Isaiah warned of Sennacherib that would diminish Moab but not ruin him.
- D. Years of an hireling are certain to never exceed, for they never overwork (Is 21:16 cp Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15; Job 7:1-2; 14:6).

Practical Lessons Gleaned from Isaiah 16

- 1. Repentance is a wonderful privilege and duty, which can work great things with both God and man.
- 2. Kindness to strangers and those in distress is like love of enemies and brings God's favor i.e. Rahab.
- 3. Political environments are to be considered in decisions and planning (Isaiah 16:4-5 cp Eccl 8:1-5).

4. Pride is a terrible sin – one of the very worst – and it keeps us from repentance and the favor of God.
5. God know the joys of men, as the vineyards of Moab, and He can remove them as easily as give them.
6. False religion never looks deep enough to condemn the error but looks to greater and grander efforts.
7. God can chasten and punish and then relieve to give an impression of mercy to crush enemies harder.