

Moab Destroyed

Isaiah 15:1-9, 16:1-13

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What do we know about Moab?

The founder of the people of Moab was the son born of the incestuous relationship between Lot and one of his daughters, when his daughters made Lot drunk, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:30-38).

- The Moabites settled in the plains to the south-east of Israel, in what is modern-day Jordan.

At times, the Moabites were great enemies of Israel.

- It was Balak, king of Moab, who hired Balaam the prophet, hoping that he could curse Israel (Numbers 22-25).
- It was Eglon, king of Moab, who oppressed Israel in the days of the Judges (Judges 3:12-30).
- During the time of Saul and David, Israel established a firm control over Moab, but later kings of Israel were not always able to keep them under Israeli dominance.
- Moab had become a tributary of Assyria and was conquered by the Babylonians in 582 BC, upon which the Moabites disappeared from history.

What connection did Moab have with Israel?

- They were related to Israel because Lot was Abraham's nephew. Because of this, God told Israel in Deuteronomy 2:9 that they were not to destroy Moab and take their land.
- David, Israel's greatest king, was one-quarter Moabite. His paternal grandmother Ruth was from Moab.
- David entrusted his father and mother to the protection of the king of Moab when he was a fugitive from Saul (1 Samuel 22:3-4).

For these reasons, there is a great deal of sadness and empathy on Isaiah's part as he describes the coming judgment on Moab.

Isaiah 15:1-9 – Proclamation Against Moab

The burden against Moab.

*Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste
And destroyed,*

*Because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste
And destroyed,*

² *He has gone up to the temple and Dibon,
To the high places to weep.*

Moab will wail over Nebo and over Medeba;

On all their heads will be baldness,

And every beard cut off.

³ *In their streets they will clothe themselves with sackcloth;*

On the tops of their houses

And in their streets

Everyone will wail, weeping bitterly.

⁴ *Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out,*

Their voice shall be heard as far as Jahaz;

Therefore the armed soldiers of Moab will cry out;

His life will be burdensome to him.

⁵ *"My heart will cry out for Moab;*

His fugitives shall flee to Zoar,

Like a three-year-old heifer.

For by the Ascent of Luhith

They will go up with weeping;

For in the way of Horonaim

They will raise up a cry of destruction,

⁶ *For the waters of Nimrim will be desolate,*

For the green grass has withered away;

The grass fails, there is nothing green.

⁷ *Therefore the abundance they have gained,*

And what they have laid up,

They will carry away to the Brook of the Willows.

⁸ *For the cry has gone all around the borders of Moab,*

Its wailing to Eglaim

And its wailing to Beer Elim.

⁹ *For the waters of Dimon will be full of blood;*

Because I will bring more upon Dimon,

Lions upon him who escapes from Moab,

And on the remnant of the land."

v1-4 – What would be laid waste and destroyed?

God announced coming judgment on Moab, against these cities: Ar, Kir, Heshbon and Elealeh.

- Most of this territory was originally part of Israel when Joshua defeated the Amorites and belonged to the tribe of Reuben. Over time, the Moabites had pushed the Israelites out of this region.

v2 – Who went up to the temple?

The picture is of a Moabite man fleeing the destruction of his city, running to his temple and his pagan gods for protection and mourning (*to the high places to weep*).

They will clothe themselves with sackcloth...everyone will wail, weeping bitterly: At this invasion, and as a result of it, there will be great distress and mourning in Moab.

Why was there judgment against Moab?

Jeremiah 48:11-12 – Moab has been at ease from his youth; he has settled on his dregs, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into captivity. Therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent has not changed. Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I shall send him wine-workers who will tip him over and empty his vessels and break the bottles.”

When we are at ease and are never “poured” from vessel to vessel, we “settle on the dregs” and are never refined. God uses the “pouring” process to refine us.

v5 – To where did the refugees of Moab flee?

His fugitives shall flee to Zoar: The connection is interesting because Zoar was the city Lot and his daughters escaped to before hiding in the mountains where Lot’s daughters committed incest with their father, and gave birth to the child Moab, the father of the Moabites.

Why is Zoar described like a three-year-old heifer?

This town apparently had never been under the yoke of strangers.

v6 – What else will characterize the judgment of God against Moab?

The green grass has withered away: The beautiful plains of Moab were wonderful grazing land. But now, under the hand of God’s judgment, the green grass has withered away.

v7 – What would be carried away to the Brook of the Willows?

The abundance they have gained: The picture is of fleeing refugees, carrying all their possessions with them.

v8 – What do you think was the cry [that] has gone all around the borders of Moab?

The report of their invasion. Their prominent cities would be first and it would just be a matter of time before the rest of Moab would be invaded.

- Their pain in the midst of judgment would be evident to all. Everyone around the borders of Moab would see God’s judgment against them.

v9 – What would be full of blood?

The waters of Dimon: the inhabitants of the country are slain in great numbers, so that the waters adjoining to the cities would be discolored with human gore.

- Dimon signifies bloody; the place shall answer to its name. Perhaps it was that place in Moab where the waters seemed to the Moabites as blood (2 Ki. 3:22-23). But now, says God, I will bring more upon Dimon, more blood than was shed, or thought to be seen, at that time.

What would happen to those who escape Moab?

Lions upon him who escapes from Moab: If the judgment of the attack did not complete the work of judgment, God would send lions upon him who escapes. God will finish His work of judgment.

Isaiah 16:1-13 – Moab Destroyed

*Send the lamb to the ruler of the land,
From Sela to the wilderness,
To the mount of the daughter of Zion.*

² *For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest;
So shall be the daughters of Moab at the fords of
the Arnon.*

³ *“Take counsel, execute judgment;
Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day;
Hide the outcasts,
Do not betray him who escapes.*

⁴ *Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab;
Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler.
For the extortioner is at an end,*

*Devastation ceases,
The oppressors are consumed out of the land.*

⁵ *In mercy the throne will be established;
And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David,
Judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness.”*

⁶ *We have heard of the pride of Moab—
He is very proud—
Of his haughtiness and his pride and his wrath;
But his ies shall not be so.*

⁷ *Therefore Moab shall wail for Moab;
Everyone shall wail.
For the foundations of Kir Hareseth you shall mourn;
Surely they are stricken.*

⁸ *For the fields of Heshbon languish,
And the vine of Sibmah;
The lords of the nations have broken down its choice
plants,*

*Which have reached to Jazer
And wandered through the wilderness.
Her branches are stretched out,
They are gone over the sea.*

⁹ *Therefore I will bewail the vine of Sibmah,
With the weeping of Jazer;
I will drench you with my tears,
O Heshbon and Elealeh;*

*For battle cries have fallen
Over your summer fruits and your harvest.*

¹⁰ *Gladness is taken away,
And joy from the plentiful field;
In the vineyards there will be no singing,
Nor will there be shouting;
No treaders will tread out wine in the presses;
I have made their shouting cease.*

¹¹ *Therefore my heart shall resound like a harp for Moab,
And my inner being for Kir Heres.*

¹² *And it shall come to pass,
When it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place,
That he will come to his sanctuary to pray;
But he will not prevail.*

¹³ *This is the word which the Lord has spoken concerning
Moab since that time. ¹⁴ But now the Lord has spoken,
saying, "Within three years, as the years of a hired man,
the glory of Moab will be despised with all that great
multitude, and the remnant will be very small and feeble."*

v1 – Why would Moab send the lamb to the ruler of the land?

The idea behind this is that Moab should resume their bringing of tribute to Jerusalem, thereby submitting themselves to God again.

- This kind of tribute is described in 2 Kings 3:4-5, where Mesha, King of Moab, who once paid tribute to Israel, stopped doing so when King Ahab of Israel died.
- Here, Isaiah counsels Moab to resume this payment of tribute.

v2 – What would God's judgment of Moab be like?

As a wandering bird thrown out of the nest: Isaiah paints a powerful picture of the helpless state of Moab under the hand of God's judgment (confused, weak, and vulnerable).

- Their only recourse is to submit themselves to Jerusalem and its King again.

v3 – What was God's word to Judah regarding the Moabite outcasts who take refuge with them?

Hide them and do not betray them. This great sympathy was probably due to the connection between Moab and the royal house of David.

What is the principle here that we should apply today?

As Judah was to be a place of refuge for Moab under judgment, the church should also be when people receive the judgment that fits their rebellion against God.

- If people humbly flee for refuge among God's people, the church should be a place that will hide the outcasts and receive those who escape, never to betray them.

v4 – How is it Moab would return the favor to Judah being a place of refuge for them?

This is a sudden and curious change of focus from verse 3 where Judah was counseled to receive the outcasts of Moab. Now, Moab is asked to receive the outcasts of Judah.

- Isaiah 16:4-5 is an end-times prophecy of how the land of Moab will be a place of refuge for Jews escaping the Antichrist after the abomination of desolation.

Judah will be protected from the face of the spoiler until devastation ceases and the oppressors are consumed out of the land by the Lord Himself.

v5 – Whose throne will be established following Moab giving refuge to Judah?

Following the 70th Week of Daniel, the throne of the Messiah will be established, and the Messiah Himself will sit on the throne: *One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David.* His reign will be wonderful, *judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness.*

v6 – What caused God's judgment of Moab?

We have heard of the pride of Moab: Here is the only place where the sin of Moab is detailed.

- This pride is also referred to in the prophecy of judgment found in Jeremiah 48:1-13. The Moabites took great pride in their vineyards, but God raised up an enemy to destroy everything Moab took pride in.
- Even though Moab had been advised to seek help from Zion's King, Isaiah foresaw at the same time the futility of this advice on account of Moab's pride. Whenever pride is not broken by humility, it will have to be broken by justice.

What was significant about the little nation of Moab having pride?

Despite Moab being a fairly small and insignificant nation, this did not make them immune to the sin of pride. We can easily understand how the great empires of Babylon or Assyria might fall through pride but not the po-dunk backwater of Moab.

What is the principle here that applies to our lives?

We are often slow to see pride in what we think of as small things. It is not only the great and famous of this world who are in danger of pride.

v7 – How is it Moab shall wail for Moab?

All the inhabitants of Moab shall bitterly lament the ruin of their country complaining to one to another.

v8 – What would become of the land of Moab?

Moab was famous for its fields and vineyards but it would be laid waste by the invading army.

v9-11 – What do you think Isaiah thought of the judgment coming upon Moab?

I will bewail the vine of Sibmah...I will drench you with my tears: As Isaiah prophesied of the judgment coming upon Moab, he wasn't happy. *Gladness is taken away, and joy from the plentiful field.* In fact, Isaiah would not even let others be happy at a time like this: *I have made their shouting cease.* He hurts so badly for Moab that he says, *"my heart shall resound like a harp for Moab."*

v12 – How did Isaiah reveal that he knew justice was being served by the judgment on Moab?

When it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he will come to his sanctuary and pray; but he will not prevail: Isaiah knew that Moab looked in the wrong places for answers. The prophet knew the pain of seeing calamity come and watching people turn to the wrong places in the midst of the destruction.

How are people turning to the wrong places today in the face of disturbing trends in our country?

Like wokism, canceling conservative ideas, questions about the government narrative (Covid), encouraging transgenderism, etc...

They think that the electoral process will save us... but either enough people have bought into the globalist utopian vision that they can not be defeated or the electoral process is so corrupted we can't reverse the trend... either way, God is in control and He is giving us the government we have to serve His purposes.

How was Isaiah's attitude about the judgment of Moab similar to Jesus when He wept for Jerusalem?

Matthew 23:37-39 – *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"*

When Jesus saw the desolation to come upon the city that rejected Him, He did not rejoice. Jesus also knew that in the midst of their calamity, they would turn to themselves instead of the LORD.

v13-14 – When would Moab be humbled in God's judgment?

Within three years: This is a pretty specific prophecy... Isaiah, speaking for the LORD, announced that judgment would come upon Moab in this time period. The judgment will humble Moab: *The glory of Moab will be despised.*

- Since we don't know the exact date of Isaiah's prophecy, it is impossible to independently verify the accuracy of the within three years prediction.
- In the phrasing *this is the word which the LORD has spoken*, we gather that most of Isaiah 15-16 was given at an earlier time, and the within three years aspect was added later at the right time.
- King Sargon of Assyria conducted a major operation against the Arabians in 715 B.C., and he may have devastated Moab en route to those tribes."

Why do you think God gave this prophecy against Moab to Judah?

- It was an invitation for Moab to repent; it wasn't unthinkable that this prophecy would get to the Moabites somehow.
- This prophecy was a lesson for God's people on how the LORD judges the proud.
- This prophecy assured God's people that the LORD would deal with other more wicked nations as He also dealt with Israel.

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- God's judgment is terrible... repent while you still can.
- Have mercy on those suffering God's judgment... the church should be a place of refuge.
- Pride may emerge even in the insignificant things... don't let it get any foothold.
- When under the judgment of God, don't turn anywhere else but to God for deliverance (duh!)