
Observations from Isaiah

LESSON XIII : THE COMING JUDGEMENT UPON ASSYRIA, PHILISTIA AND MOAB (14:23-16:14)

General outline (from Young's *Isaiah*):

- I. The Crisis and the Messiah (1:1-12:6)
 - A. Introduction to the Entire Prophecy (1:1-31)
 - B. Early Messages of Isaiah (2:1-5:30)
 - C. Judah's True Hope: The Messianic King (6:1-12:6)
- II. The Theocracy and the Nations (13:1-39:8)
 - A. Judah and the World Power (13:1-27:13)
 - 1. The Growth of the Mesopotamia Power (13:1-14:32)
 - a. The Judgement Will Come (13:1-8)
 - b. The outpouring of judgement (13:9-22)
 - c. The Fall of the Babylonian King (14:1-11)
 - d. The End of the Babylonian King (14:12-21)
 - e. The Destruction of Babylon, Assyria, and Philistia (14:22-32)
 - 2. The Downfall of Moab, Syria, and Other Nations (15:1-18:7)
 - a. The Oracle of Moab (15:1-9)
 - b. Moab's Suffering (16:1-14)
 - c. Judgement Over Syria (17:1-14)
 - d. Distant Effect of Judgement (18:1-7)

e. The Destruction of Assyria and Philistia (14:24-32)

<i>The LORD Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand. I will crush the Assyrian in my land; on my mountains I will trample him down. His yoke will be taken from my people, and his burden removed from their shoulders." This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has</i>	<i>The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD</i>	<i>Sworn hath Jehovah of Hosts, saying, 'As I thought — so hath it not been? And as I counselled — it standeth; To break Asshur in My land, And on My mountains I tread him down, And turned from off them hath his yoke, Yea, his burden from off their shoulder turneth aside. This [is] the counsel that is counselled for all the earth, And this [is] the hand that is stretched out for all the nations. For Jehovah of Hosts hath purposed, And who</i>
--	---	--

purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back? This oracle came in the year King Ahaz died: Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken; from the root of that snake will spring up a viper, its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent. The poorest of the poor will find pasture, and the needy will lie down in safety. But your root I will destroy by famine; it will slay your survivors. Wail, O gate! Howl, O city! Melt away, all you Philistines! A cloud of smoke comes from the north, and there is not a straggler in its ranks. What answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? "The LORD has established Zion, and in her his afflicted people will find refuge." (NIV)

of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden. Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent. And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it. (KJV)

doth make void? And His hand that is stretched out, Who doth turn it back?' In the year of the death of king Ahaz was this burden: Rejoice not thou, Philistia, all of thee, That broken hath been the rod of thy smiter, For from the root of a serpent cometh out a viper, And its fruit [is] a flying saraph. And delighted have the first-born of the poor, And the needy in confidence lie down, And I have put to death with famine thy root, And thy remnant it slayeth. Howl, O gate; cry, O city, Melted art thou, Philistia, all of thee, For from the north smoke hath come, And there is none alone in his set places. And what doth one answer the messengers of a nation? 'That Jehovah hath founded Zion, And in it do the poor of His people trust!' (YLT)

— ASSYRIA —

WHY AN ASSYRIAN PROPHECY HERE? — Isaiah has just delivered an amazing prophecy concerning judgement upon Babylon. He now turns to the nation of Assyria (14:24-27). "The probable sense of the passage is that which makes it refer to the predicted destruction of Sennacherib (Isaiah 10); and the design of the prophet in referring to that here is, to assure the Jews of the certain destruction of Babylon, and to comfort them with the assurance that they would be delivered from their captivity there.... As God would have fulfilled the prophecy respecting the proud and self-confident Assyrian, so they might have the assurance that he would fulfill his predictions respecting the no less proud and self-confident king of Babylon; and as he would have delivered his people from the invasion of the Assyrian, even when he was at the gates of Jerusalem, so he would deliver them in their captivity in Babylon." [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

SWORN BY AN OATH OF GOD — "*Hath sworn:* (see Gen 24:7; Ex 13:5,11; 33:1; Num 32:10; Heb 3:18; 6:13). Yahweh is often represented as making use of an oath to denote the strong confirmation, the absolute certainty of what he utters. The oath here was designed to comfort the Jews, when they should be in Babylon, with the assurance that what he had thus solemnly promised would assuredly come to pass." [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE PROPHECY AND FULFILLMENT — “*That I will break*: That I will break his power; that I will discomfit and destroy his army. *The Assyrian*: Sennacherib (see Isa 10.) *In my land*: That is, in the land of Canaan. This is often called his land; and this expression shows that the passage does not and cannot refer to the king of Babylon, for he was destroyed in his own city (Dan 5) *And upon my mountains*: That is, upon the mountains of Palestine. The army of Sennacherib was destroyed on the mountains that were near to Jerusalem.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

WOULD AFFECT THE THEN-KNOWN WORLD — “*This is the purpose*: This is the sum of the whole design — a design that embraces the destruction both of the king of Assyria, and of Babylon. *Upon the whole earth*: The successive kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia embraced the whole earth, and to destroy them would in fact affect all the nations.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE PROVIDENTIAL OVERSIGHT OF GOD — “*As I have thought* (v24): As I have designed, or intended. *God’s promises never fail; his purposes shall all be accomplished* (cp Isa 46:10,11). *This passage is full proof that God does not change, that whatever his purposes are, they are inflexible. Change supposes imperfection; and it is often affirmed that God is immutable* (1 Sam 15:29; Mal 3:6; James 1:17.) ... *Who shall disannul it?* (v27): *Who has power to defeat his purposes? Difficult as they may be in appearance, and incredible as their fulfillment may seem, yet his purposes are formed in full view of all the circumstances; and there is no power to resist his arm, or to turn him aside from the execution of his designs. By this assurance God designed to comfort his people when they should be in Babylon in a long and dreary captivity* (cp Ps 137.) *And by the same consideration his people may be comforted at all times. His plans shall stand. None can disannul them. No arm has power to resist him. None of the schemes formed against him shall ever prosper. Whatever ills, therefore, may befall his people; however thick, and gloomy, and sad their calamities may be; and however dark his dispensations may appear, yet they may have the assurance that all his plans are wise, and that they all shall stand. No matter how many, or how mighty may be the foes of the church; no matter how strong their cities, or their ramparts; no matter how numerous their armies, or how self-confident may be their leaders, they have no power to resist God. If their plans are in his way they will be thrown down; if revolutions are necessary among human beings to accomplish HIS purposes, they will be brought about; if cities and armies need to be destroyed in order that his plans may succeed, and his church be safe, they will be demolished, just as the army of Sennacherib was laid pale in death, and as Babylon — the haughtiest of cities — was overthrown. Who can stand against God? and who can resist the execution of his will?”* [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

— PHILISTIA —

GOD’S CARE FOR HIS OWN (COMFORT TO THE JEWS AGAINST POSSIBLE PHILISTINE INVASION) — The remaining five verses of this chapter (14:28-32) centers on the Philistines. “It relates solely to Philistia; and the design is to comfort the Jews with the assurance that they had nothing to apprehend from them. It is not to call the Philistines to lamentation and alarm, for there is no evidence that the prophecy was promulgated among them; but it is to assure the Jews that they would be in no danger from their invasion under the reign of the successor of Ahaz, and that God would more signally overthrow and subdue them than had been done in his time. It is not improbable that at the death of Ahaz, and with the prospect of a change in the government on the accession of his successor, the Philistines, the natural enemies of Judah, had meditated the invasion of the Jews.... In the time of Ahaz, and while he was engaged in his unhappy controversies with Syria and Ephraim, the Philistines took advantage of the enfeebled

state of Judah, and made successful war on it, and took several of the towns (2 Chron 28:18); and at his death they had hope of being able to resist Judah, perhaps the more so as they apprehended that the reign of Hezekiah would be mild, peaceable, and unwarlike.... *Rejoice not thou*: Rejoice not at the death of Ahaz, king of Judah. It shall be no advantage to thee. It shall not be the means of making an invasion on Judah more practicable.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE “ROD WHO SMOTE THEE” — Isaiah tells the Philistines not to rejoice since the “rod that struck you is broken” which at first glance would likely refer to Ahaz who had just died (v28). There is no record however of Ahaz ever making offenses against the Philistines. “The rod which smote thee is the Davidic scepter, which had formerly kept the Philistines in subjection under David and Solomon, and again in more recent times since the reign of Uzziah. This scepter was now broken to pieces, for the Davidic kingdom had been brought down by the Syro-Ephraimitish war, and had not been able to recover itself; and so far as its power over the surrounding nations was concerned, it had completely fallen to pieces. Philistia was thoroughly filled with joy in consequence, but this joy was all over now.” [K&D, *Isaiah*]

PEACE TO THOSE IN ISRAEL — *And the first-born of the poor shall feed*: That is, *there shall be safety to those parts of Judah which have long been exposed to the invasions of the Philistines*. Philistia bordered on Judea, and was constantly making wars upon it, so that there was no safety felt. Isaiah now says, that Hezekiah would so effectually and completely subdue them that there should be no danger from their invasion. The phrase ‘the first-born of the poor’ is an Hebraism, a strong, emphatic expression, denoting those who are the most poor; the most abject sons of poverty; those who have an eminence or a double portion of need, as the first-born among the Hebrews were entitled to special distinctions and privileges. The idea is, that *even the most poor and defenseless would be safe*.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE DESTRUCTION OF PHILISTIA — v31 speaks to the judgement coming upon the Philistines from the “north”, i.e., from Hezekiah and Judah, the “root” which would rise against them (v29). “*Art dissolved*: The word ‘dissolved’ is applied to that which melts, or which wastes away gradually, and then to that which faints or disappears. It means here that the kingdom of Philistia would disappear, or be destroyed. It probably conveys the idea of its fainting, or becoming feeble from fear or apprehension. *From the north a smoke*: From the regions of Judah, which lay north and east of Philistia.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE GLORY BELONGS TO THE LORD — “The design of [v32] is obvious. It is to show that Judea would be safe from the invasions of the Philistines, and that God was the protector of Zion. For this purpose the prophet refers to messengers or ambassadors who should be sent for any purpose to Jerusalem, either to congratulate Hezekiah, or to form an alliance with the Jews. The prophet asks what answer or information should be given to such messengers when they came respecting their state? The reply is, that Yahweh had evinced his purpose to protect his people.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

2. The Downfall of Moab, Syria, and Other Nations (15:1-18:7)

a. The Oracle of Moab (15:1-9)

An oracle concerning Moab: The burden of Moab. Because in Ar in Moab is ruined, the night Ar of Moab is laid destroyed in a night! Kir in waste, and brought to silence; Moab — It hath been cut off,

Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! Dibon goes up to its temple, to its high places to weep; Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba. Every head is shaved and every beard cut off. In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the roofs and in the public squares they all wail, prostrate with weeping. Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz. Therefore the armed men of Moab cry out, and their hearts are faint. My heart cries out over Moab; her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishiyah. They go up the way to Luhith, weeping as they go; on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction. The waters of Nimrim are dried up and the grass is withered; the vegetation is gone and nothing green is left. So the wealth they have acquired and stored up they carry away over the Ravine of the Poplars. Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab; their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim, their lamentation as far as Beer Elim. Dimon's waters are full of blood, but I will bring still more upon Dimon — a lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon those who remain in the land. (NIV)

because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; 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. 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. 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. 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. For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing. Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows. For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim. 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. (KJV)

Because in a night destroyed was Kir of Moab — It hath been cut off. He hath gone up to Bajith and Dibon, The high places — to weep, On Nebo and on Medeba Moab howleth, On all its heads [is] baldness, every beard cut off. In its out-places they girded on sackcloth, On its pinnacles, and in its broad places, Every one howleth — going down with weeping. And cry doth Heshbon and Elealeh, Unto Jahaz heard hath been their voice, Therefore the armed ones of Moab do shout, His life hath been grievous to him. My heart [is] toward Moab, Cry do her fugitives unto Zoar, a heifer of the third [year], For — the ascent of Luhith — With weeping he goeth up in it, For, in the way of Horonaim, A cry of destruction they wake up. For, the waters of Nimrim are desolations, For, withered hath been the hay, Finished hath been the tender grass, A green thing there hath not been. Therefore the abundance he made, and their store, Unto the brook of the willows they carry. For gone round hath the cry the border of Moab, Unto Eglaim [is] its howling, And to Beer-Elim [is] its howling. For the waters of Dimon have been full of blood, For I set on Dimon additions, For the escaped of Moab a lion, And for the remnant of Adamah! (YLT)

— MOAB —

These next two short chapters (15:1-16:9, 23 verses total) is directed to the land of Moab. “There are special features of this oracle that make it at once one of the most moving and yet most

enigmatic of Isaiah's prophecies. It is poetic literature of a high order. The inspired poet-prophet presents us with graphic pictures of judgment on Moab, sketching them often in the briefest of phrases. What makes the oracle so memorable, however, is not so much its appeal to the eye of the imagination as to the inward ear. Through its verses the anguished wailing of the bereaved and the fugitives touches the heart of the reader. ***One is reminded of the justice of the judgment; for the godly in every age must take the side of God in his righteous acts of judgment, but the reader is not forbidden to mourn at the consequences of the people's sins.*** And to his utter astonishment, he discovers that the inspired page is wet too with the tears of the prophet himself Jeremiah wept for Judah (Jer 9:1), but Isaiah for Moab!" [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

MOAB — "The land of Moab, ***so called from Moab the son of Lot, by his oldest daughter*** (Gen 19:31-37), was situated on the east side of the river Jordan and adjacent to the Dead Sea, and on both sides of the river Arnon, although, strictly and properly speaking, the river Arnon was regarded as its northern boundary. Its capital city was on the river Arnon. The first residence of Lot, after fleeing from Sodom, was Zoar (Gen 19:30) on the southeast of the Dead Sea; from thence he removed into the mountainous region where his two sons were born (Gen 19:30).... The Israelites passed by the land in journeying to Canaan, without distressing or embarrassing them; because God had said that he had given 'Ar to the children of Lot for a possession' (Deut 2:9). But the adjacent region in the possession of the Amorites, the Israelites took, after a signal victory, and gave to the tribes of Reuben and Gad (Num 21:31-35). Thus the territory of the Jews, being bounded by the river Arnon, was adjacent to that of Moab.... There was always a great antipathy between the Jews and the Moabites, and they were the natural and constant enemies of the Jewish nation. The foundation of the enmity was laid far back in their history. Balaam seduced the Israelites to sin by means of the daughters of Moab (Num 25:1,2); and God ordered that this people should not enter into the congregation of his people, or be capable of office, to the tenth generation, because they had the inhumanity to refuse the children of Israel a passage through their land in their journey to Canaan (Deut 23:3). Eglon, king of the Moabites, was the first who oppressed Israel after the death of Joshua. ***Ehud*** killed him and subdued the Moabites (Judges 3:21). Toward the end of this period, however, peace and friendship were restored, mutual honors were reciprocated, as ***the history of Ruth shows, and Moab appears to have been a place of refuge for outcasts and emigrant Hebrews*** (Ruth 1:1; 1 Sam 22:3; Jer 40:11; Isa 16:3). David subdued Moab and Ammon, and made them tributary (2 Sam 8:2-12; 23:20). The right to levy this tribute seems to have been transferred to Israel after the division of the kingdom, for after the death of Ahab, they refused to pay the customary tribute of 100,000 lambs and as many rams (2 Kings 1:1; 3:4; Isa 16:1). ***Soon after the death of Ahab they began to revolt*** (2 Kings 3:4,5). They were subsequently engaged in wars with the Jews.... ***It is remarkable that Jeremiah has introduced much of this chapter into his prophecy in his 48th chapter....*** After the exile, intimate connections took place between the Jews and the Moabites by marriages (Ezra 9:1ff; Neh 13:1). These marriages, however, were dissolved by Ezra as being, in his view, contrary to the law of Moses. In the time of the Maccabees little mention is made of them ... [and] ***their name is lost under that of the Arabians***, as was also the case with Edom and Ammon." [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE PROPHECY IN A NUTSHELL — (1) Ar and Kir, the capitals of Moab, are destroyed suddenly in one night, 15:1. (2) In the midst of the consternation, the people hasten to the high places, and to the altars and temples of the gods, to implore protection. They are seen in the streets with sackcloth, and on the tops of the houses, crying out with loud lamentations, and every expression of sorrow and despair, 15:2-4. (3) Some of the fugitives flee to Zoar for protection, and others to countries beyond their own borders, because everything in their own land was withered

and dried up, 15:5-7. (4) Amazement and dread are spread throughout the land, with their streams are full of blood and more judgement to come, 15:8,9. (5) The prophet pities and weeps with them (15:5; 16:1:11), advising them to seek the favor of Judah by sending to them the customary tribute which was due and which had been for a long time withheld, 16:1. (6) Some of the fugitives are seen at the fords of Arnon endeavoring to escape to Judea, and making supplication for reception, and imploring blessings on the land, 16:2-6. (7) They are repulsed, and the answer to their supplication is given in such a tone as to show the deep sense of the injury received from Moab which the Jewish people entertained, 16:7. (8) The prophet then proceeds in his description of the utter wasting of the country of Moab — desolation which excited the deepest feelings in his heart, and so great as to move his most tender compassion, 16:8- 12). (9) Then follows a limitation of the time when all this would take place: within three years all this would be fulfilled, 16:13,14. [taken loosely from Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

WHEN WAS THIS FULFILLED? — “It is impossible to determine the exact historical circumstances of this oracle or even to identify the enemy with any certainty; it could have been Assyria or some incursive force of hungry and rapacious nomads from the desert — perhaps Israel (cf. 2 Kings 14:25) or even Judah, though this last seems very unlikely.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

DESTRUCTION IN THE NIGHT — “*Because in the night*: The fact that this was to be done in the night denotes the suddenness with which the calamity would come upon them. Thus the expression is used in Job to denote the suddenness and surprise with which calamities come: *Terrors take hold on him as waters, A tempest stealeth him away in the night*, Job 27:20. So a thief is represented as coming in the night — in a sudden and unexpected manner (Job 24:14; see also Matt 24:43; 1 Thes 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE CITIES OF MOAB — “None of the place names in these verses can be identified with certainty apart from Zoar (v. 5), which is at the southeastern tip of the Dead Sea. It looks as if the general direction of flight for most of the fugitives was southward to Edom. The reference to ‘the waters of Nimrim’ (v. 6) seems to suggest that they were the center of a normally fertile area. Perhaps they passed it during the dry season and saw its withered vegetation as a symbol of their own condition (contrast Ps 84:6).” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] “*Ar of Moab*: This was the capital of Moab. it was situated on the south of the river Arnon.... *Kir of Moab*: Probably this city was the modern Kerek or Karak.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

MOAB MOURNS — “*He is gone up*: That is, the inhabitants of Moab in consternation have fled from their ruined cities, and have gone up to other places to weep. *To Bajith, and to Dibon*: ... Dibon, perhaps the same place as Dimon in Isa 15:9, was a city given by Moses to Gad, and afterward yielded to Reuben (Num 32:3,33,34; Josh 13:9).... *Moab shall howl over Nebo*: Nebo was one of the mountains on the east of the Jordan. It was so high that from it an extended view could be taken of the land of Canaan opposite. It was distinguished as being the place where Moses died (Deut 22:49; 34:1). The meaning of this is, that on mount Nebo, Moab should lift up the voice of wailing. Jerome says that the idol Chamos, the principal idol of Moab, was on mount Nebo, and that this was the place of its worship. This mountain was near the northern extremity of the Dead Sea.... *And over Medeba*: This was a city east of the Jordan in the southern part of the territory allotted to Reuben. It was taken from the Reubenites by the Moabites.... *On all their heads shall be baldness*: ... To cut off the hair of the head and the beard was expressive of great grief. It is well known that the Orientals regard the beard with great sacredness and veneration, and that they usually dress it with great care, Great grief was usually expressed by striking external acts. Hence,

they lifted up the voice in wailing; they hired persons to howl over the dead; they rent their garments; and for the same reason, in times of great calamity or grief, they cut off the hair, and even the beard.... *They shall gird themselves with sackcloth*: The common token of mourning; and also worn usually in times of humiliation and fasting. It was one of the outward acts by which they expressed deep sorrow (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31; 1 Kings 21:27; 2 Kings 19:1; Job 16:15).”
[Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE PROPHET’S COMPASSION UPON THE LOST — “*There is no other prophecy in the book of Isaiah in which the heart of the prophet is so painfully affected by what his mind sees, and his mouth is obliged to prophesy. All that he predicts evokes his deepest sympathy, just as if he himself belonged to the unfortunate nation to which he is called to be a messenger of woe.*”

[K&D, *Isaiah*] “*My heart shall cry out for Moab*: This is expressive of deep compassion.... The phrase denotes great inward pain and anguish in view of the calamities of others; and is an expression of the fact that we feel ourselves oppressed and borne down by sympathy on account of their sufferings.... In the parallel place in Jer 48:36, there is no doubt that the heart of the prophet is intended; and here, *the phrase is designed to denote the deep compassion which a holy man of God would have, even when predicting the ills that should come upon others. How much compassion, how much deep and tender feeling should ministers of the gospel have when they are describing the final ruin — the unutterable woes of impenitent sinners under the awful wrath of God in the world of woe!*” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

b. Moab’s Suffering (16:1-14)

<i>Send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, from Sela, across the desert, to the mount of the Daughter of Zion. Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so are the women of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. “Give us counsel, render a decision. Make your shadow like night — at high noon. Hide the fugitives, do not betray the refugees. Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you; be their shelter from the destroyer.” The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land. In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it — one from the house of David — one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the</i>	<i>Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion. 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. Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth. 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. 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. We have</i>	<i>Send ye a lamb [to] the ruler of the land, From Selah in the wilderness, Unto the mount of the daughter of Zion. And it hath come to pass, As a wandering bird, a nest cast out, Are daughters of Moab, [at] fords of Arnon. Bring ye in counsel, do judgment, Make as night thy shadow in the midst of noon, Hide outcasts, the wanderer reveal not. Sojourn in thee do My outcasts, O Moab, Be a secret hiding-place to them, From the face of a destroyer, For ceased hath the extortioner, Finished hath been a destroyer, Consumed the treaders down out of the land. And established in kindness is the throne, And [one] hath sat on it in truth, in the tent of David, Judging and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness. We have heard</i>
--	--	---

cause of righteousness. We have heard of Moab's pride — her overweening pride and conceit, her pride and her insolence — but her boasts are empty. Therefore the Moabites wail, they wail together for Moab. Lament and grieve for the men of Kir Hareseth. The fields of Heshbon wither, the vines of Sibmah also. The rulers of the nations have trampled down the choicest vines, which once reached Jazer and spread toward the desert. Their shoots spread out and went as far as the sea. So I weep, as Jazer weeps, for the vines of Sibmah. O Heshbon, O Elealeh, I drench you with tears! The shouts of joy over your ripened fruit and over your harvests have been stilled. Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards; no one sings or shouts in the vineyards; no one treads out wine at the presses, for I have put an end to the shouting. My heart laments for Moab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth. When Moab appears at her high place, she only wears herself out; when she goes to her shrine to pray, it is to no avail. This is the word the LORD has already spoken concerning Moab. But now the LORD says: "Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them, Moab's splendor and all her many people will be despised, and her survivors will be very few

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. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kirhareseth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken. 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. 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. 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. Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh. 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. This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time. 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

of the pride of Moab — very proud, His pride, and his arrogance, and his wrath, Not right [are] his devices. Therefore howl doth Moab for Moab, all of it doth howl, For the grape-cakes of Kir-Hareseth it meditateth, Surely they are smitten. Because fields of Heshbon languish, The vine of Sibmah, Lords of nations did beat her choice vines, Unto Jazer they have come, They have wandered in a wilderness, Her plants have spread themselves, They have passed over a sea. Therefore I weep with the weeping of Jazer, The vine of Sibmah, I water thee [with] my tear, O Heshbon and Elealeh, For — for thy summer fruits, and for thy harvest, The shouting hath fallen. And removed have been gladness and joy from the fruitful field, And in vineyards they sing not, nor shout, Wine in the presses treadeth not the treader, Shouting I have caused to cease. Therefore my bowels for Moab as a harp do sound, And mine inward parts for Kir-Haresh. And it hath come to pass, when it hath been seen, That weary hath been Moab on the high place, And he hath come unto his sanctuary to pray, And is not able. This [is] the word that Jehovah hath spoken unto Moab from that time, And now hath Jehovah spoken, saying, 'In three years, as years of an hireling, Lightly esteemed is the honour of Moab, With all the great multitude, And the remnant [is] little, small, not

and feeble.” (NIV)

all that great multitude; and the mighty!’ (YLT)
remnant shall be very small and
feeble. (KJV)

“APPEASE THE KING OF JUDAH” — The Moabites were brought under tribute by David but had neglected their obligations. Isaiah encourages them to again seek the Jews’ favor. “The scope of [this chapter] is to give advice to the Moabites and to threaten them with punishment in case, as the prophet foresaw, they should neglect or refuse to follow it. The advice was (16:1-5) to send the customary tribute to the king of Judah, to seek his protection and to submit themselves to him. But the prophet foresaw that, through the pride of Moab (16:6), they would refuse to recognize their subjection to Judah, and that as a consequence they would be doomed to severe punishment (16:7-11) and to a certain overthrow within a specified time (16:12-14).” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

“SEND TRIBUTE FROM THE FARTHEST REACHES OF THE LAND” — “*From Sela in the wilderness*: The word ‘Sela’ means ‘a rock’ and by it here there can be no doubt that there is intended the city of that name which was the capital of Arabia Petrea. The city was situated within the bounds of Arabia or Idumea, but was probably at this time in the possession of the Moabites. It was, therefore, the remotest part of their territory, and the sense may be, ‘Send tribute even from the remotest part of your land;’ or it may be, that the region around that city was particularly favorable to pasturage, and for keeping flocks. To this place they had fled with their flocks on the invasion from the north.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

FUGITIVES FLEEING THE COUNTRY — “*As a wandering bird*: The same idea is presented in Prov 27:8: ‘*As a bird that wanders from her nest, So is a man that wandereth from his place.*’ The idea here is that of a bird driven away from her nest, where the nest is destroyed, and the young fly about without any home or place of rest. So would Moab be when the inhabitants were driven from their dwellings. *The reason why this is introduced seems to be, to enforce what the prophet had said in the previous verse — the duty of paying the usual tribute to the Jews, and seeking their protection. The time is coming, says the prophet, when the Moabites shall be driven from their homes, and when they will need that protection which they can obtain by paying the usual tribute to the Jews.... At the fords of Arnon*: Arnon was the northern boundary of the land of Moab. They would endeavor to cross that river, and thus flee from the land, and escape the desolations that were coming upon it.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

DIFFICULT PASSAGE — The original language is flexible enough here to make it possible to understand these verses in two different manners: either Moab is seeking Israel for refuge but the Jews reject them due to their pride; or Isaiah was pleading with Moab to allow the Jews to seek refuge and they will one day repay the favor, but he also knows that because of their pride they would not. It is interesting to see how the translator’s bias reflects in how they translate this passage: the KJV takes the sense to be “allow the Jews to seek refuge with you because you will need it one day”; while the NIV takes the sense to be Moabite refugees seeking help from Israel. In the word of Grogan, *Isaiah*: “*Neither rendering does violence to the Hebrew.*” “[Some commentators] regard 16:3-5 as a supplicatory address of the fugitive Moabites to the Jews to take them under their protection, and as imploring a blessing on the Jewish people if they would do it; and Isa 16:6 as the negative answer of the Jews, or as a refusal to protect them on account of their pride. But most commentators regard it as addressed to the Moabites by the prophet, or by the Jews, calling upon the Moabites to afford such protection to the Jews who might be driven from their homes as to secure their favor, and confirm the alliance between them; and Isa 16:6 as an

intimation of the prophet, that the pride of Moab is such that there is no reason to suppose the advice will be followed.... This is, probably, the correct interpretation, as if he had said, ‘Take counsel; seek advice in your circumstances; be not hasty, rash, impetuous, unwise; do not cast off the friendship of the Jews; do not deal unkindly with those who may seek a refuge in your land, and thus provoke the nation to enmity; but let your land be an asylum, and thus conciliate and secure the friendship of the Jewish nation, and thus mercy shall be reciprocated and shown to you by him who shall occupy the throne of David’ (16:5). ***The design is, to induce the Moabites to show kindness to the fugitive Jews who might seek a refuge there, that thus, in turn, the Jews might show them kindness. But the prophet foresaw (16:6) that Moab was so proud that he would neither pay the accustomed tribute to the Jews, nor afford them protection; and, therefore, the judgment is threatened against them which is finally to overthrow them.***” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

SEEK SAFE, SECURE REFUGE — “*Make thy shadow*: A shadow or shade is often in the Scriptures an emblem of protection from the burning heat of the sun, and thence, of these burning, consuming judgments, which are represented by the intense heat of the sun. *As the night*: That is, a deep, dense shade, such as the night is, compared with the intense heat of noon. This idea was one that was very striking in the East. Nothing to travelers crossing the burning deserts could be more refreshing than the shade of a far-projecting rock, or of a grove, or of the night. Thus Isaiah counsels the Moabites to be to the Jews — to furnish protection to them which may be like the grateful shade furnished to the traveler by the rock in the desert.”

REJECTED BECAUSE OF PRIDE — “These verses contain the only clear references to the sin of Moab. They save the compassion of this oracle from becoming sentimentalism. ***Mere sentiment may overlook sin, but true divine compassion does not.*** A true prophet would be expected to penetrate beyond the misery that results from God’s judgment to the offenses against him that caused it, and this Isaiah does here. As is so often the case in this book, ***pride causes the fire of God’s wrath to burn.*** Because of pride the Moabites were brought to this sorry pass.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] “The evident design of the prophet here is, to say that Moab was so proud, and was well known to be so haughty, that he would reject this counsel. He would neither send the usual tribute to the land of Judea (16:1), thus acknowledging his dependence on them; nor would he give protection to the exiled Jews as they should wander through his land, and thus endeavor to conciliate their favor, and secure their friendship. As a consequence of this, the prophet proceeds to state that heavy judgments would come upon Moab as a nation.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

ABANDONED BY THAT IN WHICH THEY TRUSTED — “Unhappily, Moab’s sufferings had not driven her to the true and living God but to the idol shrines of her god, Chemosh. There could be no help from such a source.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] “*Is weary on the high place*: The high place denotes the place of idolatrous worship, and here means the same as the temple of Chemosh or his sanctuary. Temples and altars were usually constructed on such places, and especially the temples of the pagan gods. Moab is represented here as looking to her gods for protection. ***Weary, exhausted, worn down with calamities, she is represented as fleeing from the desolate towns and cities, and taking refuge at the altar, and seeking assistance there. This, says Jerome, is the final misery. She is now forsaken of those aids to which she had always trusted, and on which she had relied. Her people slain; her towns destroyed; her strong places broken down; her once fertile fields languishing and desolate, she flees to the shrine of her god, and finds even her god unable to aid and defend her.***” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE PROPHETICAL TIME-TABLE — Again, giving credence to the surety and accuracy of the word of God, Isaiah places a definite time for the prophecy to be complete. Who but the Lord could do such a thing? “*But now the LORD hath spoken (v14)*: This refers to the particular and specific prophecy of Isaiah that destruction should come upon them in three years. Instead of a general but indefinite prediction of calamity to the Moabites, such as had been uttered by the former prophets, or by Isaiah himself before, it was now specific and definite in regard to the time when it should be fulfilled. *Within three years*: We have no means of ascertaining the exact fulfillment of this prediction, nor do we certainly know by whom it was accomplished. *As the years of an hireling*: A man that is hired has a certain time specified during which he is to labor; the years, the months, the days for which he is engaged are agreed on, nor will he suffer any addition to be made to it. So the prophet says that the very time is fixed. It shall not be varied. It will be adhered to by God — as the time is adhered to between a man who employs another and him who is hired. And it means, that exactly at the time which is here specified, the predicted destruction should come upon Moab.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

“When Moab appears at her high place, she
only wears herself out; when she goes to her
shrine to pray, it is to no avail.”

— Isaiah 16:12 NIV