
Isaiah 16

A continuation of ISAIAH 15, this is the word of the LORD to Moab. She is encouraged to put her trust in the Lord, or else, within three years she would begin to pay the price for her lack of repentance. Many modern exegetes (e.g., Skinner, Cheyne) have a conversation between Moab and Judah, one in which *Moab asks for protection* for her fugitives. Others think that the invitation for Moab to send an appeasement offering to Judah was of a sarcastic nature, for no matter what she did, Moab would still be punished. With Kay, Nägelsbach, Alexander, Govett, Jenour, and Rawlinson, I believe that Moab was given a chance for mercy if she would reestablish her tribute to Judah (ISAIAH 16:1), and turn to the Lord (ISAIAH 16:4–5). Because punishment is assured to Moab (ISAIAH 16:6), we can assume that she refused the offer of mercy. A number of important allusions to the Messiah are found in this chapter.

vv. 1–5. Moab is told that her way of escape is to send a tribute of *lambs* (לָמְדָם can actually mean lambs or goats) to Jerusalem. King David defeated Moab and required tribute of her (2 Samuel 8:2). Sometime after the civil war that divided Israel at Solomon’s death, Moab paid a tribute to Israel (2 Kings 3:4) but then broke off from doing so at the death of Ahab (2 Kings 3:5). Now, it seems that Judah is asking for the tribute, with a warning of the evils that will overcome Moab if she refuses. Among these, the women will be found running in despair and arrive at the waters of Arnon (Ammonite territory), where they would not be able to ford the river. The waters will not part before them, however, as they did for the children of Israel before the Red Sea and subsequently, the Jordan. Isaiah pleads with the people of Moab that they should think through this proposal of protection carefully. That they should meet, consider and take counsel together, and not decide too hastily to reject the offer. Moab is then also counseled to protect the fugitive of Judah and possibly of Israel, and hide them from—or at the very least not give their presence away to—the enemy. Multiple suggestions have been tendered as to who the enemy is. By doing what is kind and what is right Moab, in turn, will find kind judgment from Messiah.

1 ¶ SEND ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela[✓] to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

✓ or, Petra, Heb. A rock

SEND ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness. We know from the Moabite stone as well as from 2 Kings that Moab had paid tribute to the Northern Kingdom: “And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass, when Ahab

was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel” (2 Kings 3:4–5). Ahab, was the seventh King of Israel after the civil war. Nothing is known about Moab also paying a tribute to Judah. Rawlinson writes, “The prophet recommends that this [i.e., one such as in 2 Kings 3:4], or some similar, tribute should now be paid to the King of Judah instead, Israel having been absorbed into Assyria¹.” Even before the civil war we read about the subjugation of Moab: “And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David’s servants, and brought gifts” (2 Samuel 8:2). Barnes tries to connect the scripture in Samuel and the one in Kings: “It is probable that as this tribute was laid by ‘David’ before the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and as the kings of Judah claimed to be the true successors of David and Solomon, they demanded that the tribute should be rendered to ‘them,’ and not to the kings of Israel, and this is the claim which Isaiah enforces in the passage before us. The command of the prophet is to regain the lost favor of Israel by the payment of the tribute that was due.” ¶ Rawlinson makes an invaluable contribution here, towards the understanding of this verse: regarding *Sela*, סֵלָע and its relationship to this verse: “The enemy being regarded as in possession of the northern end of the Dead Sea, Moab is recommended to send her tribute round the southern end, and so by way of ‘the wilderness of Judah,’ to

¹ Israel, or the Northern tribes, was taken captive into the north by Sargon, סַרְגִּין, King of Assyria, after Samaria could no longer withstand the three year siege to which she was subjected. She would subsequently be known as the Lost Tribes. Israel had been repeatedly warned by the Lord through His prophetic servants to no avail: “Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day” (2 Kings 17:23). Depending on the chronologist, this took place anywhere from 130 to 175 years after the death of Ahab.

Jerusalem.” Delitzsch believes that **סֶלַע** corresponds to what is known as “Petra² (*Wady Musa*), near Mount Hor in Arabia Petraea.” Henderson explains that the site of Petra was completely unknown until it was “discovered by Burckhardt, on his route from Damascus to Egypt, in 1812.” ¶ *Unto the mount of the daughter of Zion*. The Targum (Ⓣ) reads, “Unto the mountain of the congregation of Zion.” The mount of the daughter of Zion represents Jerusalem, or it could also imply the temple or House of the Lord situated in Mount Zion.

¶ **MESSIANIC ALLUSIONS**. The Targum (Ⓣ) paraphrase has a Messianic message that well corresponds with the mention of David (which here and in many instances stands for **Messiah**) in ISAIAH 16:5, “They shall bring tribute to the Anointed One (**מְשִׁיחָא**)³ of Israel, who has prevailed over him who was as a wilderness . . .” Lowth also has instead of **שְׁלַח־כֶּרֶב**, *send ye the lamb*, the idea of **שְׁלַח־בֵּר**, where **בֵּר** could be translated *son, chosen one, the chosen one*, or **Messiah** (see Gesenius, under **בֵּר**). With further changes, Lowth rather translates, “I will send forth the son” leaning on the LXX (Ⓛ) and the Syriac (Ⓢ), for the first person singular, *I will send*, **אֲשַׁלַּח**. The Syriac (Ⓢ) version reads, “The prophecy concerning the rest of the land. I will send the son of the ruler of the land from the rock [Petra] city of the wilderness.” The Vulgate (Ⓥ) also preserves the idea of the *lamb*, “*Emitte agnum⁴ Domine, dominatorem terrae, de Petra deserti.*” Calvin writes—although not believing it himself—“Jerome explains it as referring to **Christ**, because he drew his birth from the Moabites (Ruth 1:4; Matthew 1:5), from whom Ruth was descended; and that opinion has been adopted by almost all Christians; as if the Prophet had said, ‘O Lord, though a judgment so severe as this awaits the Moabites, still thou wilt not utterly destroy them; for they will send thee a *Lamb, the ruler of the world.*’”

² Linda & I had the opportunity to visit the beautiful wonders of Petra as part of our trip to the Holy Land in 2012. At the time I wrote in part, “Beside seeing all the beautiful sandstone, we also rode in a horse chariot and camel (I also rode a horse and a donkey in Petra) and had more fun watching the Bedouin and the donkeys, horses and camels than anything else.” I took lots of photos there as it is one of the most spectacular places I have ever visited.

³ Barnes, quoting the Targum (Ⓣ), suggests that if one thinks of **מְשִׁיחָא** as *messiah*, or *anointed one*, then it could fit the king of Judah (the kings were also anointed), to whom Moab needed to send the sheep and the goats.

⁴ *Agnus* means *lamb* in Latin. The Douay, which translates the Vulgate (Ⓥ) into English, has, “Send forth, O Lord, the lamb, the ruler of the earth, from Petra of the desert.” Or the VL into Spanish has, “Envía, Señor, el **Cordero** dominador de la tierra, de la Piedra del desierto.”

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.

✓ or, a nest forsaken

For it shall be, [that], as a wandering bird cast out of the nest. Those who suggest the futility of Moab’s repentance are quite mistaken. There is no instance in Scripture where the Lord—through His prophets—has *invited* people to humble themselves, or repent, if the existence for a pardon had been eliminated. If He gives a warning, it is always because He also gives a way for the escape. It needs to be understood, then, that ‘for it shall be’ here is a warning, “For it shall be that if they do not comply, it will come to pass that as a wandering bird &c.” A more correct translation is to take the **1** as *else, lest, or otherwise*. Gesenius provides several examples, including Psalm 143:7: “Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, *lest* I be like unto them that go down into the pit” (emphasis added). ¶ Calvin has, “By the metaphor of *birds* he describes the terror with which they shall be struck, so that they will flee at the rustling of a leaf.⁵ He threatens that the Moabites, who had abused their tranquility, shall have a trembling and wearisome flight.” ¶ *[So] the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon*. The Syriac (Ⓢ) has, “So that the daughters of Moab shall be deserted at the fords of Arnon.” Henry has, “*The daughters of Moab* (the country villages, or the women of your country) shall flutter about the *fords of Arnon*, attempting that way to make their escape to some other land, *like a wandering bird thrown out of the nest half-fledged.*” Henry, with his wonderful one-liners adds, “Those that will not yield to the fear of God shall be made to yield to the fear of everything else.”

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.

✓ Bring

Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday. Here we have a temporary change of topic. The Targum (Ⓣ) reads, “Take counsel, execute counsel. Make thy shadow as the night in the day, in the midst of the noonday.” The LXX (Ⓛ) has, “Take farther counsel, and continually make thou a shelter from grief: they flee in darkness at

⁵ Reference to Leviticus 26:36, *Rain in Due Season*.

mid-day.” The Douay translation, “Take counsel, gather a council: make thy shadow as the night in the midday.” Why make full daylight like the shadow of the night? To *hide* the outcasts in the dark shade and not flash a light upon them—not betray them. It is the same idea as what follows below, “... hide the outcasts, bewray [ASV, betray] not &c.” The prophet Isaiah sees in vision when Moab will have the opportunity to lend a hand to the people of Judah. Moab is admonished to do everything in her power to protect the people of Judah who would be outcasts in the upcoming wars, and by so doing, Moab would be eventually blessed. Barnes has “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’ (ISAIAH 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.” ¶ *Hide the outcasts; bewray*⁶ *not him that wandereth*. The Douay (Vulgate, **V**) translation, “Hide them that flee; and betray not them that wander about.” Some exegetes feel that the outcasts refer to Moab (see note on ISAIAH 16:4), but this is unlikely. Nägelsbach well points out that Judah would one day be scattered to the land of Moab: “This was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar, and in Jeremiah 40:11 Moab is expressly named among the lands into which scattered Judah (נִדְּרָהּ)⁷, out of all the places *they were driven*, Jeremiah 40:12) had fled.”

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

✓ wringer ✓ ✓ the treaders down

Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler. The Targum (**T**)⁸ reads, “Let the outcasts dwell with thee, O kingdom of Moab; be a covert unto them from before the spoilers.” This verse, again, seems to plead with Moab to show tender mercies to the outcasts of Judah

who would likely travel to Moab and seek refuge. The Douay translation, “My fugitives shall dwell with thee: O Moab, be thou a covert to them from the face of the destroyer.” The Syriac (**S**) version, along with most moderns, completely changes the meaning, by making the outcasts those of Moab rather than those of Judah, “Let the outcasts of Moab dwell with you; be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler.” I prefer to think of Judah as being the outcasts here, for the Lord using the possessive says, *my outcasts*, נִדְּרָהּ, much as He would say, *my people*. And who are the Lord’s people, but Israel? Calvin has: “This passage ought to be carefully observed; for God shows how great is the care which he takes of his people, since the injuries done to them affect him in the same manner as if they had been done to himself; as he declares by Zechariah, that *whenever they are touched, the apple of his eye is touched* (Zechariah 2:8) ... Let us therefore learn from this passage to be kind and dutiful to fugitives and exiles, and especially to believers, who are banished for their confession of the word ... If we wish to obtain any alleviation of our calamities, let us be kind and compassionate, and not refuse assistance to the needy ... When calls them *his banished* ... he likewise means, that they continue to be under his defence and protection, because, though they are banished and driven out of their native country, still he acknowledges them to be his people. That calamity which the Jews endured might be regarded as an evidence that they were cast off; but the Lord acknowledges them to be *his children*, though he chastises them severely.” ISAIAH 16:3–4, then, seems to be a warning to Moab not to lack compassion for the terrible afflictions of a suffering Judah (and not again repeat what happened when Israel came up out of Egypt). ¶ *For the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.* The Targum (**T**) has, “For the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, all that trampled underfoot have come to an end.” Why should Moab hide the outcasts and do that which was right? Because the *extortioner is an end*, those who do wickedly will be pushed away, and the throne will be given to its rightful heir, even Messiah who will triumph. Some here translate כֵּן as *when* (LHI) or *until* (Calvin). Calvin suggests: “Let my banished dwell with thee, Moab, be thou a place of concealment from the face of the destroyer, until the extortioner shall have ceased.” Calvin is not so far off, the idea being that the world, represented here by Moab, needs to protect the people of God until Messiah comes triumphantly, at which point He will protect them Himself (ISAIAH 16:5). As Balaam said of Israel before they entered into the land of Canaan: “Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee” (Numbers 24:9b). Nägelsbach feels that instead of אֲרָרְךָ, translated here

⁶ Divulge, reveal, betray (Webster).

⁷ From נִדְּרָהּ, to scatter, drive, banish.

⁸ Stenning.

as *the land*, we should have *the earth* for, “according to the context, signifies the whole earth. For the world-power that is characterized in the preceding words dominates not a single land, but the whole earth.”

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.

✓ or, prepared

And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David. The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “Then the throne of the **Messiah** (מְשִׁיחָא) of Israel shall be established in goodness, and He shall sit upon it in truth in the city of David.” Cheyne has, “We hardly need to ask, Whose throne? ‘Kindness and faithfulness,’ ‘justice and righteousness’ are it is true, the pillars of every divinely prospered king (Proverbs 20:28; 29:14), but here we are manifestly in the **Messianic** region of thought.” ¶ *Judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.* This righteous Davidic King will be no other than **Messiah** Himself. Isaiah seems in this verse to dwell on the beautiful day when **Messiah** shall reign, and thus speaks of righteous judgment, and other descriptions of His throne. But now, as suddenly as we gazed together on the refreshing waters of **Messiah**, we return together to the draught of the desert, even to the pride of Moab, or of the world.

vv. 6–8. But will Moab listen? There is a huge difference between predestination and foreknowledge.⁹ The Lord knows the end from the beginning and knows that Moab will be too proud to listen. Consequences will come forth as a result of Moab’s prideful disobedience. All that she prized in terms of buildings and agriculture will be devastated.

6 ¶ We have heard of the pride of Moab; [he is] very proud: [even] of his haughtiness and his pride, for he is very

⁹ Some have incorrectly suggested that if God knows the future, that this, in effect, determines the future. As a result, they argue, the principle of *agency* and *free will* are limited by God’s foreknowledge. The same individuals freely admit that a person’s knowledge of history—or of the past—does not affect history. This is truly putting an artificial limit on God, based on human constraints. In reality, God can see the future as well as the past. That is why God sends Prophets to warn us, that we may make the needed corrections now, while we can. The blessings in a Patriarchal Blessing, likewise, are contingent to the recipient living the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The sacred principle of *moral agency* is never violated.

proud; and his wrath, [but] his lies, [shall] not [be] so and all his evil works.

We have heard of the pride of Moab; of his haughtiness and his pride, for he is very proud. Delitzsch speaks of a contrast between a Moab who will have to humble herself and the present arrogance of Moab, “the prophecy enters here upon a new stage, commencing with Moab’s sin, and depicting the fate of Moab in still more elegiac strains. ‘We have heard of the pride of Moab, the very haughty (pride), his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath, the falsehood of his speech.’ The future self-humiliation of Moab, which would be the fruit of its sufferings, is here contrasted with the previous self-exaltation, of which these sufferings were the fruit. ‘We have heard,’ says the prophet, identifying himself with his people. Boasting pompousness has hitherto been the distinguishing characteristic of Moab in relation to the latter (see ISAIAH 25:11). The heaping up of words of the same verbal stem (cf., ISAIAH 3:1) is here intended to indicate how thoroughly haughty was their haughtiness (cf., Romans 7:13, ‘that sin might become exceeding sinful’), and how completely it had taken possession of Moab.” Regarding these words based on the same root, Henderson explains: “Four different forms of the same word are here employed, the more emphatically to express the overbearing pride of the Moabites.” These are, respectively, “pride of / וָאִוְנָה, pride / אָוֹן, his haughtiness / וָאִוְנָתוֹ, and finally, and his pride / וְהָאִוְנָה.” ¶ *And his wrath, his lies, and all his evil works.* The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) (in contrast to the Inspired Version) has לֹא־כֵן. Delitzsch has, “[Moab] boasted and was full of rage towards Israel, to which, so far as it retained its consciousness of the truth of Jehovah, the talk of Moab . . . must necessarily appear as לֹא־כֵן, *not-right*, i.e., at variance with fact.” Henderson has for לֹא־כֵן, *unstable, untrue, false*, and yields, “to speak falsely, feignedly, &c.). Calvin takes כֵן to mean *so*, therefore לֹא־כֵן as *not so*. YLT speaks of the *devices* of Moab, much like saying the *evil works* or *designs*. “We have heard of the pride of Moab—very proud, His pride, and his arrogance, and his wrath, Not right *are* his devices.”

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

✓ or, mutter

Therefore (לְכִי) shall Moab howl for Moab (לְמוֹאָב), every one shall howl. This points to the pain or anguish to be experienced by Moab. ¶ For the foundations of Kirhareth shall ye mourn; surely [they are] stricken. To mourn for the foundations means that the rest of the structure is gone. Cheyne has, “Kir-Hareth or Kir-Heres (ISAIAH 16:11); usually explained as ‘brick-fortress,’ and identified with Kir-Moab. Prof. E. H. Palmer, however, suggests another meaning. ‘Asking one of the Arabs where the Moabite Stone was found, the latter replied that it was “between the *hárithin*,” i.e., between the two *háriths* . . . On Mr. Palmer’s demanding a further explanation, the Arab pointed out the two hillocks upon which the ruined village of Dhibán stands. . . . Nearly all the towns in Moab are built upon similar eminences, and Mr. Palmer found that they are invariably called *Háriths* by the Arabs’ (*Athenaeum*, August 19, 1871).”

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.

✓ or, plucked up

For the fields of Heshbon languish, [and] the vine of Sibmah. Henderson, leaning on Jerome, says, “*Sibmah* was only half a Roman mile distant from Heshbon, and is mentioned on account of the superior excellence of its grapes.” Barnes has, “The ‘fields’ here evidently mean ‘vineyards,’ for so the parallelism demands. So in Deuteronomy 32:32: ‘Their vine is of the vine of Sodom, / And of the fields of Gomorrah.’” ¶ *The lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come [even] unto Jazer.* Delitzsch says, “This *Sibmah* wine was cultivated, as the prophet says, far and wide in Moab - northwards as far as *Ja’zer* (between Ramoth, i.e., Salt, and Heshbon, now a heap of ruins), eastwards into the desert, and southwards across the Dead Sea—a hyperbolic expression for close up to its shores.” While the destruction of these valued vineyards and fields seem to be meant, some moderns suggest that it was the wine itself that was so strong as to cause intoxication to those who imbibed. ¶ *They wandered [through] the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.* *Going over the sea* seems to be an expression of how widely known the vines had become, being cultivated beyond the present borders into other nations even beyond the Euphrates. Delitzsch asks, “But what sea can the sea of Jazer be? Probably some celebrated large

pool, like the pools of Heshbon, in which the waters of the *Wady (Nahr) Sir*, which takes its rise close by, were collected. Seetzen found some pools still there.”

Henderson says, “The יַם, sea, spoken of, is by some interpreted of a lake or sea in the vicinity of Jazer; but as there is no appearance of any in the region, it seems preferable to refer it to the Dead Sea, the only water which, in such connexion, deserves the name.”

Rawlinson explains, “The young shoots or slips are taken by the cultivators and spread further and further. They are even carried across the Dead Sea, and planted on its western shore.” Grapevines were best propagated, in a pre-phylloxera era, through cuttings of the young woody canes.

vv. 9–14. The LORD (see ISAIAH 16:13) will join Moab in weeping for Moab, He will feel pain for her. Where at one time there had been shouts of joy for the harvest, there would be silence. Moab will take her petitions to her gods in the high places, but the no-gods will not listen; she will then take her petition to her temple, but her no-gods at the temple will not hear. This prophecy against Moab had been known from before, but now it would begin to come to pass.

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. ✓

✓ or, the alarm is fallen upon &c.

Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah. The people of Jazer would mourn for the loss of the fruit of the vine of Sibmah, and with great tears. I will speak a few words here about my own tears, those for a tangerine tree. Sometime after 1991, Linda gave me a tangerine tree which I planted in the front of our California home. Oh, how I loved this tree. I loved it so much, that I asked a friend to help me graft it lest some harm would befall this tree whose fruit reminded me of Chilean tangerines. The graft did not take. Over the next few years the tree grew in strength and beauty and fruitfulness, but the last crop it would give would be in the winter of 2000–2001. By the next winter the tree was completely dead. I was filled with so much comfort when I wept over my tangerine tree. I was sure the tree would be healed and live. The comfort I felt, however, was the love of God, through the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. I wish I knew what variety it was. Linda has bought for me several tangerine trees, since then, which I planted in the back garden. This experience has taught me what it is to weep for a vine

or for a tree.¹⁰ I have quite a bit of empathy for Moab, here. Henry points out, regarding Moab, that while in former days shouts of joy had been heard, “Nothing is said of their praising God for their abundance, and giving him the glory of it.” ¶ *I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh.* Delitzsch has, “The beauties of nature and fruitfulness of the land, which come into the possession of any nation, are gifts from the riches of divine goodness, remnants of the paradisiacal commencement of the history of man, and types of its paradisiacal close; and for this very reason they are not matters of indifference to the spirit of prophecy. And for the same reason, it is not unworthy of a prophet, who predicts the renovation of nature and the perfecting of it into the beauty of paradise, to weep over such a devastation as that of the Moabitish vineyards which was now passing before his mind (cf., ISAIAH 32:12–13).” ¶ *For the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.* Delitzsch has, “the word וַיִּשְׂרֹא, which was the shout raised by the pressers of the grapes, to give the time for moving their feet when treading out the wine (ISAIAH 16:10; Jeremiah 25:30). A וַיִּשְׂרֹא of this kind had fallen upon the rich floors of Heshbon-Elealeh, inasmuch as they had been trodden down by enemies—a *Hedad*, and yet no *Hedad*, as Jeremiah gives it in a beautiful oxymoron (Jeremiah 48:33), i.e., no joyous shout of actual grape-treaders.” Most of the ancient versions have the וַיִּשְׂרֹא rather, to be the shouting of the conquering peoples rather than to the joyful one emanating from the treaders of the grapes.

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.

Harvest time bring joy. But the time would come when the noises of harvest and treading would cease to be heard. The Syriac (S) version reads, “Nor shall they tread out wine in the press; nor shall men tread out wine with their feet; for I have made the vine treaders to cease.” This translation reminds us of a completely different type of treading—the atoning sacrifice of our Lord: “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his

¹⁰ These other tangerine, lemon and orange trees were extremely productive, and were yielding fruit even after we moved back to Chile in 2014.

apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment” (ISAIAH 63:1–3).

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

Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab. Kay suggests that it is Immanuel Himself who weeps, for Moab has not accepted the mercies He has invited them to partake. Young explains that Isaiah assigns a body to God, in his excitement—but we know that God indeed has a body, “Did God also have such tenderness toward Moab, that ancient enemy of His chosen ones? At a later time Isaiah becomes emboldened sufficiently to ascribe bowels to God. ‘Where,’ he asks, ‘is thy zeal and thy strength, the wounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? Are they restrained?’ (ISAIAH 63:15b).” ¶ *And mine inward parts for Kirharesh.* The Syriac (S) version reads, “And my soul for the fortified walls which will be destroyed.” The Douay translation, “And my inward parts for the brick wall.”

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.

And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place. Henry explains, “Men are generally so stupid that they will not believe, till they are made to see, the vanity of idols and of all creature-confidences, nor will come off from them till they are made weary of them. But, when he is weary of his high places, he will not go, as he should, to God’s sanctuary, but to *his* sanctuary, to the temple of Chemosh, the principal idol of Moab (so it is generally understood); and he shall pray there to as little purpose, and as little to his own case and satisfaction, as he did in his high places; for, whatever honours idolaters give to their idols, they do not thereby make them at all the better able to help them.” ¶ *That he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.* The Targum (T) reads, “He shall enter his idol-temple to pray, yet he shall not prevail.” Cheyne says, “The tender compassion of the prophetic writer for Moab leads us to

expect that some happier prospect will be opened than a useless religious ceremony. Lastly, the idea of conversion as resulting from a terrible judgment lies at the very foundation of Old Testament prophecy ... Ewald has with great sagacity restored what in all probability embodies the sense of the lost apodosis:— ‘Then shall Moab be ashamed of Kemosh his confidence, and turn unto Jehovah.’” While such creative interpretation is doubtful for the time of Moab, it is true that the day will come when all the world will be ashamed, who have leaned on any false gods, no-gods who cannot save. Jeremiah has, “And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence” (Jeremiah 48:13).

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

Up to here we read about a vision that Isaiah had received regarding Moab in the past, but now we read that the time will quickly come for its fulfillment.

Delitzsch says, “The *massa* [מַסָּא], i.e., *burden*, that commenced in ISAIAH 15] is now brought to a close, and there follows an epilogue which fixes the term of the fulfilment of what is not predicted now for the first time.”

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. ✓

✓ or, not many

But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned. To contemn means to despise, to treat with contempt or scorn (see Webster). Rawlinson,

leaning on Kay, gives the idea of a hireling as someone who is working under a contract that stipulates a given amount of pay for a specific period of time: “A hireling would not consent to serve a day longer than his contract bound him, nor would his master consent that he should serve a day short of it.” While the beginning of the fulfillment may have begun at the time of Isaiah, from Jeremiah 48:16 it is clear that the prophecy against Moab had still not fully taken place—but would soon be: “The calamity of Moab *is* near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast.” Delitzsch explains, “Unfortunately, we know nothing certain as to the time at which the three years commence. The question whether it was Shalmanassar, Sargon, or Sennacherib who treated the Moabites so harshly, is one that we cannot answer. In Herodotus (2:141), Sennacherib is called ‘king of the Arabians and Assyrians;’ and Moab might be included in the Arabians. In any case, after the fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy in the Assyrian times, there was still a portion left, the fulfilment of which, according to Jeremiah 48, was reserved for the Chaldeans.” And since so many of these prophecies have a latter-day component, we can expect this to be the case with this burden, also. ¶ *With all that great multitude; and the remnant [shall be] very small [and] feeble.* This is a curious phrase when referring to a nation other than Israel, *the remnant*. Delitzsch suggests that the “...history of the nations is but the shadow of the history of Israel.” Rawlinson, leaning on Reverend George Adam Smith, has: “Moab seems to have offered a very slight resistance to Asshur-bani-pal” (History of Asshur-bani-pal, p. 259). Barnes speaks of Moab at the time he wrote his commentary back in 1838, “All travelers concur in the general desolation of that country which was once so thickly studded with towns, and that abounded so richly in flocks, and produced so luxuriantly the grape. It is now strewn with ruins. All the cities of Moab have disappeared.”

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