

## Isaiah Chapter 15

“The burden of Moab” is aimed at Israel’s enemies in the eastern Trans-Jordan. The prophet reminds his readers of the fall of Ar, the capital of Moab, and Kir, their chief fortress. Bajith, Dibon, Medeba, Heshbon and so on, form a list of Moabite cities that will be overrun by the coming Assyrian invasion. Zoar was the city to which Lot fled after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Nimrim was a Moabite oasis near the Dead Sea.

Verses 15:1 - 16:14: The demise of Moab taught Israel not to depend on that nation any more than others, but to depend on the Lord.

**Isaiah 15:1 "The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, [and] brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, [and] brought to silence;"**

Moab was a country about 30 miles square, east of the Dead Sea, South of the Amon River, and North of the Zered River. Ar and Kir were the two major cities of Moab.

We decided that "burden" probably was a prophecy speaking against (in this case) Moab, who had been enemies of God's people on the east. The two cities mentioned here are no longer in existence, and it is believed that they were attacked at night and destroyed.

**Isaiah 15:2 "He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads [shall be] baldness, [and] every beard cut off."**

Moab chose the temple of the Moabite god Chemosh, (they were three miles North of the Arnon), as the place of weeping because that god had failed to deliver the nation.

“Nebo ... Medeba”. Nebo is the mountain at the North end of the Dead Sea where the Lord took Moses to view the Promised Land. Medeba is 5 miles southeast of Nebo.

“Bald ... every beard”. Shaving heads and beards expressed disgrace and humiliation.

The high places were where they went to worship their false god. The shaving of their head, and beards was done as a type of mourning to get their god's attention. They could cry to these false gods all day, and get no help.

**Isaiah 15:3 "In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly."**

In this, we see the mourning was not just the leaders, but all in the community. When they did not go to the high places, they would get on top of their houses and put on sackcloth, and throw ashes on their heads as a form of mourning.

Howling shows great grief. They wept, because no help came.

Wearing of sackcloth occurs 46 times in the Bible as a sign of mourning.

**Isaiah 15:4 "And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard [even] unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him."**

The city Heshbon was just under 20 miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea in a territory claimed by both Israel and Moab. Elealeh was about a mile away from Heshbon. The location of Jahaz was over 10 miles south of Heshbon.

This just shows that the mourning and grief would even reach the soldiers in the field. The soldiers saw how useless it was to try to win against the army blessed of God.

The cities mentioned here had been part of Reuben's land he had inherited, when they had separated the land by tribes.

**Isaiah 15:5 "My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives [shall flee] unto Zoar, a 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."**

"My heart shall cry out". The prophecy expresses much greater sympathy for Moab's plight than for the other nations to be judged, even allowing for a surviving remnant.

It is unusual for a prophet to sympathize with those being destroyed, but that is the case here. It could possibly be, because Moab is the country Ruth will come from. The word that was translated "heifer" here, means a female calf.

The only connection that I can make is, possibly, that the city is as helpless as the 3 year old heifer. The heifer has no control of her destiny, and neither does this city.

**Isaiah 15:6 "For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing."**

This is speaking of a great drought. Ordinarily, this water of Nimrim is gushing forth with water from springs. The springs have been dried up. When there is no rain and the waterway is dry, there is no way for the land to have moisture to produce hay. Everything requires water to be green.

This is possibly the Wadi Numeira, the drying up of whose waters, along with the dead grass, pictures widespread devastation in Moab.

**Isaiah 15:7 "Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows."**

Probably this is the Zered River; the refugees from Moab had to cross this to pass over into Edom to escape their invaders.

The animals, or the people, cannot live where there is no water. It appears the flowing waterway from the springs had provided so much water in the past they had an abundant crop of hay and plenty to drink. Now with the water dried up, they have no prosperity at all.

**Isaiah 15:8 "For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim."**

The shouts of the fugitives reached all the way from the northern part of Edom (Eglaim), to its southern extremity (Beer-elim).

This is just speaking of the battle being great. All of their howling to their false god got them nothing. Though the howling is wide spread, it is to no avail. The troops swarm down upon them and destroy them.

It appears they swept across the border, and did not stop until they were defeated. I am saying this in the past tense, because it is past tense to us, but to Isaiah it was future tense, because this was prophecy.

**Isaiah 15:9 "For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land."**

This shows the severity of the battle. Dimon is the same as Dibon. These waters would probably be from the Arnon.

The blood in the river shows that many will be thrust through with the sword. There will be so much blood shed that the blood will run into the river.

This religious center of heathendom is appropriate as a closing representation of the whole land of Moab.

Lions: Flight from invading armies would not bring security, but new dangers from the beasts of the wilderness.

### **Isaiah Chapter 15 Questions**

1. What is "burden" in verse 1?
2. What are the two major cities in Moab?
3. What were the high places used for?
4. Who was the false god they worshipped, probably?

5. Why did they shave their heads and beards?
6. Did crying to these gods help?
7. In their streets, they shall gird themselves with \_\_\_\_\_.
8. What is the Scripture saying, when it uses the word "howl"?
9. How many times in the bible is the word "sackcloth" used?
10. What is verse 4 saying about the soldiers?
11. Who is Isaiah sympathizing with in verse 5?
12. From what country does Ruth of the bible come from?
13. What does "heifer" mean?
14. What is verse 6 speaking of?
15. Ordinarily, this water of Nimrim is gushing forth with water from \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Why is the land not producing hay?
17. Why had they had abundant crops in the past?
18. What shall the waters of Dimon be full of?
19. What is another name for Dimon?
20. What does "blood in the water" mean?
21. What other danger were there for those who escaped Moab?