

Isaiah Chapter 16

Moab's only hope is in making peace with Judah. "Send ye the lamb" means they must pay tribute to the Davidic dynasty. Sela refers to Petra, the capital of Edom, which was carved out of the rocks and served as a natural hiding place. "Let mine outcasts dwell with thee" seems to refer to Israel's fleeing to Petra during the last days to escape the invasion from the north (predicted in Ezekiel 38 and 39). The reference to one sitting on the throne in the tabernacle of David would seem to place this passage in a millennial context.

Isaiah 16:1 "Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion."

"Send ye the lamb": This was an action showing submission to an overlord, as Mesha did to Omri king of Israel (in 2 Kings 3:4).

Sela was a place in Edom not far from Petra (2 Kings 14:7), from which fugitives of Moab were to send to Judah for help. Mount of the daughter of Zion speaks figuratively of Jerusalem and her inhabitants.

We will see a call for repentance and recompense in these first few verses. In the physical sense, this is saying; send the lambs you owe in tribute. "Sela" means rock, and many believe this place to be Petra.

Zion sometimes means Jerusalem, and other times it is speaking of the church. This then, in the spiritual, is a call for repentance.

Isaiah 16:2 "For it shall be, [that], as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, [so] the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon."

A wandering bird, cast out of the nest, has very little hope for survival. Arnon is the largest river in Moab. If the Arnon is full of blood, what help will that be? Possibly, the daughters of Moab, here, are speaking of the people of the little villages.

Perhaps, they are spoken of as daughters, because they are not strong against such an attack.

The fugitives fled to the south to escape the Assyrians entering Moab from the north.

Isaiah 16:3 "Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth."

Isaiah could be saying that they should call their council together and think about the judgment. Perhaps, they should take more consideration for those who have sought refuge here.

Moab asked Judah for shade from the wilting noonday sun, i.e., from their invaders.

Outcasts and wanderers appear to me, to be those who have fled their homeland seeking refuge.

Isaiah 16:4 "Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land."

In a sense, this is exactly what Moab was to Naomi, and her husband, and sons. They had fled their homeland because of a famine in the land. They sought and found refuge in Moab.

Covert indicates covering, or hiding place. The extortioner being at an end means that they will not have to protect them for long.

Moab continued its plea to Judah for refuge. The prophet anticipated the day when the oppression by the Assyrians would be no more.

Isaiah 16:5 "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."

“Throne ... tabernacle of David”: The Davidic king will some day sit on His throne in Zion, ending all injustices such as those committed by the Assyrians.

This has to be speaking of Jesus who will come, full of mercy. The judgment and sitting on the throne of David appears to be speaking of the 1000 year reign of Jesus at His second coming. The reign of righteousness is surely the reign of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Isaiah 16:6 "We have heard of the pride of Moab; [he is] very proud: [even] of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: [but] his lies [shall] not [be] so."

This immediately jumps back to the near future of Moab. The pride of Moab caused them not to receive the forgiveness needed. They would not do what Isaiah had shown them, and they are condemned afresh. Though a small nation, Moab's pride was well known.

Moab is too proud and haughty to ask for the mercy offered. They lie to cover up their sin.

Isaiah 16:7 "Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely [they are] stricken."

This is a renewed warning of the great destruction, and how all the people living in Moab will cry out in mourning for the land of Moab.

This is the same city called Kir (in 15:1).

Isaiah 16:8 "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."

We studied in chapter 15 about how the water had been turned to blood. Now we see the grape vines being torn down and destroyed. The area mentioned here had been given to Reuben for an inheritance.

Sibmah was a suburb of Heshbon. "Jazer ... sea". Moab's vines rather than being on stakes, ran along the ground to Moab's extreme northern border, stretching from the desert of the east to the Dead Sea on the west. This perhaps signified the export of raisins and wine to Judah.

It seemed the vines were flourishing so in the past that they had voluntarily grown into other areas, possibly into the land that was given to Gad. It appears it was questionable whether Heshbon was actually in Reuben's or Gad's inheritance. Jazer was a city of Gad.

Isaiah 16:9 "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."

This is just saying, there was no water to water the vines with. It was so bad; Isaiah is speaking of catching his tears for water to put on the vines. The vines had been destroyed, as well. There would be no harvest in the early summer, as there had been in the past.

Isaiah displayed genuine emotion over the destruction of so rich an agricultural resource. This reflected the Lord's response too.

Isaiah 16:10 "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."

The normal gladness at harvest time is not to take place.

There had always been gladness at the harvest time of the grapes. The grapes, many times, had been crushed and made into wine. We see the joy being taken away from these people, because there is no harvest of grapes.

Notice, that this came upon them because they had left God. The punishment was from God.

Isaiah 16:11 "Wherefore my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh."

It grieves Isaiah to tell them this. He feels for them so much that his stomach hurts.

The prophet and the Lord reflected deeply felt sorrow over this necessary judgment of Moab.

Isaiah 16:12 "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."

Moab's religion had utterly failed. Rather than deliverance, the nation found weariness in their repeated rituals to their national god.

It appears that Moab will see the error of worshipping Baal in the high places, and return to the worship of God. The problem is, they have waited too long to come. God will not hear them.

Isaiah 16:13 "This [is] the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time."

Isaiah assures them that, this is not something he has decided to say against Moab. This Word came from the LORD.

Isaiah 16:14 "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."

It appears from this that Moab had been very prosperous. Isaiah is giving them a time on this prophecy. Within 3 years, this terrible punishment from God would descend upon Moab. Not only will the greatness of Moab cease, but their population shall be greatly reduced.

"Within three years". Moab had 3 more years of "glory," perhaps till 715. B.C. when the Assyrian king, Sargon, overran the country. Assyria was not to completely obliterate Moab. Babylon received no such promise.

God always saves a remnant. This is no exception. He will allow a remnant to live. They will be small and feeble.

Isaiah Chapter 16 Questions

1. What does "Sela" mean?
2. What place do many believe Sela is?
3. What does Zion mean?
4. In the spiritual, verse one of chapter 16 is a call to _____.
5. What happens to a wandering bird that has been cast out of the nest?
6. What is the largest river in Moab?
7. Who are the daughters of Moab speaking of?
8. What should Moab take more consideration of?

9. Who were the outcasts and wanderers?
10. What does covert mean?
11. Who is verse 5 speaking of, prophetically?
12. Who will one day sit on the throne of David?
13. What caused Moab not to receive the forgiveness they needed?
14. Who will howl for Moab?
15. What was another name for Kirharesh?
16. What happens to the grape vines in verse 8?
17. What territory is spoken of that had many grape vineyards?
18. Sibmah was a suburb of _____.
19. What does Isaiah say he would do to water the vines?
20. Why was there no gladness now?
21. Where had much of the worship of Baal gone on?
22. When Moab turns to God, will He hear them?
23. How soon after Isaiah wrote this prophecy, will it come to pass?
24. Who was the Assyrian king who overran Moab?
25. Will God leave anyone in Moab?