

Judgment on Moab (15:1-9)

¹The oracle concerning Moab. **Surely in a night Ar of Moab is devastated and ruined; Surely in a night Kir of Moab is devastated and ruined.** ²They have gone up to the temple and to Dibon, even to the high places to weep. Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba; Everyone's head is bald and every beard is cut off. ³In their streets they have girded themselves with sackcloth; On their housetops and in their squares Everyone is wailing, dissolved in tears. ⁴Heshbon and Elealeh also cry out, Their voice is heard all the way to Jahaz; **Therefore** the armed men of Moab cry aloud; His soul trembles within him. ⁵**My heart cries out for Moab; His fugitives are as far as Zoar and Eglath-shelishiyah, For** they go up the ascent of Luhith weeping; **Surely on the road to Horonaim they raise a cry of distress over their ruin.** ⁶**For** the waters of Nimrim are desolate. **Surely** the grass is withered, the tender grass died out, There is no green thing. ⁷**Therefore** the abundance which they have acquired and stored up They carry off over the brook of Arabim. ⁸**For** the cry of distress has gone around the territory of Moab, Its wail goes as far as Eglaim and its wailing even to Beer-elim. ⁹**For** the waters of Dimon are full of blood; **Surely** I will bring added woes upon Dimon, A lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon the remnant of the land.

Prophecy of Moab's Devastation in 3 years (16:1-14)

v1-5 Seek Safety in Israel

¹**Send the tribute lamb to the ruler of the land,** From Sela by way of the wilderness to the mountain of the daughter of Zion. ²**Then, like** fleeing birds or scattered nestlings, The daughters of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon. ³**Give us** advice, make a decision; Cast your shadow like night at high noon; Hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive. ⁴Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you; Be a hiding place to them from the destroyer." **For the extortioner has come to an end, destruction has ceased, Oppressors have completely disappeared from the land.** ⁵**A throne will even be established in lovingkindness, And a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David; Moreover, he will seek justice And be prompt in righteousness.**

v6-8 Moab's Pride & Judgment

⁶**We have heard of the pride of Moab, an excessive pride; Even of his arrogance, pride, and fury; His idle boasts are false.** ⁷**Therefore Moab shall wail; everyone of Moab shall wail.** You shall moan for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth **As** those who are utterly stricken. ⁸**For** the fields of Heshbon have withered, the vines of Sibmah as well; The lords of the nations have trampled down its choice clusters Which reached as far as Jazer and wandered to the deserts; Its tendrils spread themselves out and passed over the sea.

v9-12 Isaiah's Sympathy for Moab

⁹**Therefore** I will weep bitterly for Jazer, for the vine of Sibmah; I will drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh; **For** the shouting over your summer fruits and your harvest has fallen away. ¹⁰And gladness and joy are taken away from the fruitful field; In the vineyards also there will be no cries of joy or jubilant shouting, No treader treads out wine in the presses, **For** I have made the shouting to cease. ¹¹**Therefore** my heart intones like a harp for Moab, And my inward feelings for Kir-hareseth. ¹²**So** it will come about when Moab presents himself, When he wearies himself upon his high place, And comes to his sanctuary to pray, **That he will not prevail.**

v13-14 Moab's Glory to be Degraded

¹³This is the word which the LORD spoke earlier concerning Moab. ¹⁴**But now** the LORD speaks, saying, "**Within three years, as** a hired man would count them, the glory of Moab will be degraded along with all his great population, and his remnant will be very small and impotent."



Moab's Sin = idolatry & Pride

15:2 they worship idols

16:6 Moab is famous for his excessive pride; arrogance, pride, fury & idle boasts

Moab's Judgment = Devastation & Ruin

15:1 in a night Ar & Kir are devastated & ruined

15:9 added woes brought upon Dimon, a lion upon the fugitives of Moab & the remnant of the land.

16:7 everyone of Moab shall wail & moan for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth as those utterly stricken

16:10 the shouting will cease

16:12 when Moab comes to his sanctuary to pray, he will not prevail.

16:14 Yahweh speaks, "Within three years, as a hired man would count them, the glory of Moab will be degraded along with all *his* great population, and *his* remnant will be very small *and* impotent."

The Aftermath of Judgment – Weeping and Wailing over the Total Devastation of the Land

15:2 they weep and wail over Nebo and Medeba, everyone's head is bald & every beard is cut off

15:3 they gird themselves with sackcloth; everyone is wailing, dissolved in tears

15:4 Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, the armed men of Moab cry aloud; his soul trembles within him

15:5 His fugitives are as far as Zoar *and* Eglath-shelishiyah / they weep on the ascent of Luhith & raise a cry of distress over their ruin on the road to Horonaim

15:6 the waters of Nimrim are desolate, the grass is withered, there is no green thing

15:7 their abundance are carried off over the brook of Arabim

15:8 the cry of distress has gone around the territory of Moab, Its wail *is* as far as Eglaim & Beer-elim

15:9 the waters of Dimon are full of blood

16:2-4 daughters of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon asking for advice, help & refuge for their outcasts & fugitives

16:4 the extortioner & oppressors have disappeared, destruction has ceased

16:8 fields of Heshbon & vines of Sibmah have withered, trampled by the lords of the nations

16:9 the shouting over your summer fruits & your harvest have fallen away.

16:10 gladness & joy are taken away from the fruitful field & the vineyards, no treacher treads out wine in the presses

The Prophet's Sympathy – Weeps for Moab

15:5 My heart cries out for Moab

16:9 I will weep bitterly for Jazer, the vine of Sibmah, Heshbon & Elealeh

16:11 my heart intones like a harp for Moab & Kir-hareseth

The Prophet's Advice – Seek Help from Israel

16:1 Send the *tribute* lamb to the ruler of the land, *to the mountain of the daughter of Zion*

Why Seek Help from Israel?

16:5 A throne will even be established in lovingkindness, a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David who will seek justice & be prompt in righteousness

We know scarcely anything of the history of the Moabites after the account of their origin in [Gen 19](#) until the time of the exodus. It would seem, however, that they had suffered from the invasions of the Amorites, who, under their king Sihon, had subdued the northern part of Moab as far as the Arnon ([Nu 21:21-31](#)). This conquest was no doubt a result of the movement of the Amorites southward, when they were pressed by the great wave of Hittite invasion that overran Northern Syria at the end of the 15th and the early part of the 14th centuries BC. The Amorites were forced to seek homes in Palestine, and it would seem that a portion of them crossed the Jordan and occupied Northern Moab, and here the Israelites found them as they approached the Promised Land. They did not at first disturb the Moabites in the South, but passed around on the eastern border ([Dt 2:8,9](#)) and came into conflict with the Amorites in the North ([Nu 21:21-26](#)), defeating them and occupying the territory ([Nu 21:31-32](#)). But when Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, saw what a powerful people was settling on his border, he made alliance with the Midianites against them and called in the aid of Balaam, but as he could not induce the latter to curse them he refrained from attacking the Israelites ([Nu 22; 24](#)). The latter, however, suffered disaster from the people of Moab through their intercourse with them ([Nu 25](#)). Some time before the establishment of the kingdom in Israel the Midianites overran Moab, as would appear from the passage in [Gen 36:35](#), but the conquest was not permanent, for Moab recovered its lost territory and became strong enough to encroach upon Israel across the Jordan. Eglon of Moab oppressed Israel with the aid of Ammon and Amalek ([Jdg 3:13-14](#)), but Eglon was assassinated by Ehud, and the Moabite yoke was cast off after 18 years. Saul smote Moab, but did not subdue it ([1 Sam 14:47](#)), for we find David putting his father and mother under the protection of the king of Moab when persecuted by Saul ([1 Sam 22:3,4](#)). But this friendship between David and Moab did not continue. When David became king he made war upon Moab and completely subjugated it ([2 Sam 8:2](#)). On the division of the kingdom between Rehoboam and Jeroboam the latter probably obtained possession of Moab ([1 Ki 12:20](#)), but it revolted and Omri had to reconquer it (M S), and it was tributary to Ahab ([2 Ki 1:1](#)). It revolted again in the reign of Ahaziah ([2 Ki 1:1; 3:5](#)), and Moab and Ammon made war on Jehoshaphat and Mt. Seir and destroyed the latter, but they afterward fell out among themselves and destroyed each other ([2 Ch 20](#)). Jehoshaphat and Jehoram together made an expedition into Moab and defeated the Moabites with great slaughter ([2 Ki 3](#)). But Mesha, king of Moab, was not subdued ([2 Ki 3:27](#)), and afterward completely freed his land from the dominion of Israel (M S). This was probably at the time when Israel and Judah were at war with Hazael of Damascus ([2 Ki 8:28,29](#)). Bands of Moabites ventured to raid the land of Israel when weakened by the conflict with Hazael ([2 Ki 13:20](#)), but Moab was probably subdued again by Jeroboam II ([2 Ki 14:25](#)), which may be the disaster to Moab recounted in [Isa 15](#). After Mesha we find a king of the name of Salamanu and another called Chemosh-nadab, the latter being subject to Sargon of Assyria. He revolted against Sennacherib, in alliance with other kings of Syria and Palestine and Egypt, but was subdued by him, and another king, Mutsuri, was subject to Esarhaddon. These items come to us from the Assyrian monuments. When Babylon took the place of Assyria in the suzerainty, Moab joined other tribes in urging Judah to revolt but seems to have come to terms with Nebuchadnezzar before Jerusalem was taken, as we hear nothing of any expedition of that king against her. On the war described in Judith, in which Moab (1:12, etc.) plays a part. See JUDITH.

At a later date Moab was overrun by the Nabathean Arabs who ruled in Petra and extended their authority on the east side of Jordan even as far as Damascus (Josephus, Ant, XIII, xv, 1,2). The Moabites lost their identity as a nation and were afterward confounded with the Arabs, as we see in the statement of Josephus (XIII, xii, 5), where he says that Alexander (Janneus) overcame the Arabians, such as the Moabites and the Gileadites. Alexander built the famous stronghold of Macherus in Moab, on a hill overlooking the Dead Sea, which afterward became the scene of the imprisonment and tragical death of John the Baptist (Josephus, BJ, VII, vi, 2; Ant, XVIII, v, 2; [Mk 6:21-28](#)). It was afterward destroyed by the Romans. Kir became a fortress of the Crusaders under the name of Krak (Kerak), which held out against the Moslems until the time of Saladin, who captured it in 1188 AD.

Moab ("from father"), i.e. the incestuous offspring of Lot's older daughter, near Zoar, S.E. of the Dead Sea ([Gen. 19:37](#)). Originally the Moabites dwelt due E. of the Dead Sea, from whence they expelled the Emims. Their territory was 40 miles long, 12 wide, the modern Belka or Kerak ([Deut. 2:10, 11](#)). Afterward, Sihon king of the Amorites drove them S. of the river Arnon, now wady el Mojib ([Num. 21:13, 26-30](#); [Judg. 11:13, 18](#)), which thenceforward was their northern boundary. Israel was forbidden to meddle with them ([Judg. 11:9, 19](#)) on account of the tie of blood through Lot, Abraham's nephew, for Jehovah gave Ar unto the children of Lot, having dispossessed the giant Emims. It was only when Moab seduced Israel to idolatry and impurity ([Num. 25](#)), and hired Balaam to curse them, that they were excluded from Jehovah's congregation to the tenth generation ([Deut. 23:3, 4](#)). Ammon was more roving than Moab and occupied the pastures to the N.E. outside the mountains. Moab was more settled in habits, and remained nearer the original seat Zoar. Its territory after the Amorite conquest was circumscribed, but well fortified by nature ([Num. 21:20](#), margin); called "the field of Moab" ([Ruth 1:1-63](#)), and "the corner of Moab" ([Num. 24:17](#); [Jer. 48:45](#)). The country N. of Arnon, opposite Jericho reaching to Gilead, was more open; vast prairie-like plains broken by rocky prominences; "the land of Moab" ([Deut. 1:5](#); [32:49](#)). Besides there was the Arboth Moab, "plains (rather deep valley) of Moab," the dry sunken valley of Jordan ([Num. 22:1](#)). Outside of the hills enclosing Moab proper on the S.E. are the uncultivated pastures called midbar, "wilderness," facing Moab ([Num. 21:11](#)). Through it Israel advanced. The song ([Exo. 15:15](#)) at the Red Sea first mentions the nation, "trembling shall take hold upon ... the mighty men of Moab." Israel's request for a passage through Edom and Moab, and liberty to purchase bread and water, was refused ([Judg. 11:17](#); [Num. 20:14-21](#)). In Israel's circuitous march round the two kingdoms they at last, when it suited their own selfish ends and when they could not prevent Israel's march, sold them bread and water ([Deut. 2:28, 29](#); [23:3, 4](#)). The exclusion of a Moabite from the congregation only forbade his naturalization, not his dwelling in Israel nor an Israelite marrying a Moabite. Ruth married Naomi's son, but became a proselyte.... Israel was occupying the country N. of Arnon which Moab had just lost to Sihon, and which Israel in turn had wrested from him, and with its main force had descended from the upper level to the Shittim plains, the Arboth Moab, in the Jordan valley, when Balak, alarmed for his already diminished territory, induced

the Midianite "elders" to join him and hired Balak; virtually, though never actually, "warring against Israel" ([Josh. 24:9](#); [Judg. 11:25](#)). The daughters of Moab, mentioned in [Num. 25:1](#), were those with whom Israel "began whoredom," but the main guilt was Midian's, and on Midian fell the vengeance ([Num. 25:16-18](#); [31:1-18](#)). Moab's licentious rites furnished the occasion, but Midian was the active agent in corrupting the people. Balak (contrast "the former king of Moab," [Num. 21:26](#)) was probably not hereditary king but a Midianite; the Midianites taking advantage of Moab's weakness after Sihon's victories to impose a Midianite king. Zippor = bird, his father, reminds us of other Midianite names, Oreb "crow," Zeeb "wolf"; Sihon may have imposed him on Moab. The five "princes" or "kings" of Midian were vassal "dukes of Sihon dwelling in the country" ([Josh. 13:21](#); [Num. 31:8](#)). The licentious-ness of the neighboring cities of the plain and Moab's origin accord with the more than common licentiousness attributed to Moab and Midian in [Num. 25](#): EGLON...king of Moab, with Ammon and Amalek, smote Israel and occupied Jericho, but was slain by the Benjamite Ehud ([Judg. 3:12-30](#)). Saul fought Moab successfully, himself also a Benjamite ([1 Sam. 14:47](#)). David moved away to Moab the land of his ancestry, fleeing from Saul, his and Moab's enemy, and committed to the king his father and mother ([1 Sam. 22:3, 4](#)). Probably some act of perfidy of Moab, as the murder or treacherous delivering of his parents to Saul, caused David 20 years afterward to slay two thirds of the people, and make bondmen and tributaries of the rest ([2 Sam. 8:2](#); in this war Benaiah slew two lion-like men, [2 Sam. 23:20](#); compare also [Ps. 60:8](#), "Moab is my washpot"; yet among David's heroes was "Ithmah the Moabite," [1 Chr. 11:22, 46](#)), fulfilling Balaam's prophecy, [Num. 24:17, 19](#): "out of Jacob shall come he that shall destroy him that remaineth of Ar" (Hebrew, namely, of Moab).

Among Solomon's foreign concubines were Moabitish women, to whose god Chemosh he built "a high place on the hill before (facing) Jerusalem" ([1 Kings 11:1, 7, 33](#)), where it remained until Josiah defiled it four centuries afterward ([2 Kings 23:13](#)). At the severance of Israel from Judah Moab was under Israel, because the Jordan fords lay within Benjamin which in part adhered to the northern kingdom. At Ahab's death MESH...who had paid for the time the enormous tribute, 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams with with the wool, revolted ([2 Kings 1:1](#); [3:4, 5](#)). His first step was, he secured the cooperation of Ammon and others enumerated in [Ps.](#)

[83:8-7](#).... in an invasion of Judah, which was before Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahaziah ([2 Chr. 20:1-35](#)), therefore still earlier than the invasion of Moab by the confederate kings of Edom, Israel (Jehoram, Ahaziah's son), and Judah ([2 Kings 3](#)). Mutual dissension, under God, destroyed this heterogeneous mass. Then followed the joint invasion of Moab by Jehoshaphat of Judah, Jehoram of Israel, and the king of Edom ([2 Kings 3](#)). The Septuagint states that the Moabite king assembled all old enough to bear a sword girdle. His mistaking the water glowing red with the morning sun for the mutually shed blood of the invaders (which observe he remembered had happened to his own and the allied forces attacking Jehoshaphat) caused Moab to rush forward for spoil, only to be slaughtered by the allies. At Kirhareth or Kerak his immolation of his own son struck superstitious fear into the besiegers so that they retired ([2 Kings 3:27](#); compare [Micah 6:5-8](#)); and then followed all the conquests which Mesha records on the Moabite stone. Then too Moab, indignant at his former ally Edom having joined Israel against him, when Israel and Judah retired, burned the king of Edom alive, reducing his bones to lime; or, as Hebrew tradition represents, tore his body after death from the grave and burned it ([Amos 2:1](#)). Moabite marauding "bands" thenceforward at intervals invaded Israel, as under Jehoahaz ([2 Kings 13:20](#)). A century and a half later, in Isaiah's "burden of Moab" ([Isa. 15--16](#)) Moab appears possessing places which it had held in the beginning N. of Arnon, and which had been vacated by Reuben's removal to Assyria ([1 Chr. 5:25, 26](#)). Compare also [Jer. 48](#), a century later, about 600 B.C. Isaiah ([Isa. 16:14](#)) foretells, "within three years, as the years of an hireling (who has a fixed term of engagement, so Moab's time of doom is fixed) ... the glory of Moab shall be contemned." Fulfilled by Shalmaneser or Sargon, who destroyed Samaria and ravaged the whole E. of Jordan (725-723 B.C.). As Ammon, so Moab probably, put itself under Judah's king, Uziah's protection, to which Isaiah ([Isa. 16:1](#), "send ye the lamb (the customary tribute) to the ruler ... unto ... Zion") refers ([2 Chr. 26:8](#); [2 Sam. 8:2](#); [2 Kings 3:4](#)). Moab contrasts with Ammon, Edom, Philistia, Amalek, Midian, as wealthy, abounding in vine-yards, fruitful fields, and gardens, and civilized to a degree next Israel. Hence flowed "pride" (he is exceeding proud), loftiness, arrogance, and haughtiness of heart" ([Jer. 48:26, 29](#); [Isa. 16:6, 7](#)). This sin is what brought on Moab destruction, "for he magnified himself against the Lord," "boasting against God's people that whereas Israel was fallen Moab remained flourishing" ([James 5:6](#)). In [Isa. 25:10-12](#) Moab is the representative of Israel's and the church's foes, especially antichrist, the last enemy. Jehovah, as a "swimmer," strikes out right and left, so shall smite the foe with rapidity, cleaving a way through them on every side. [Zeph. 2:8](#), "Moab ... Ammon ... reproached My people and magnified themselves against their border," i.e., haughtily seizing on the territory vacated by Gad and Reuben, E. of Jordan, after these had been carried captive, as if Ammon, instead of Judah, Israel's own brother, were Israel's heir ([Jer. 49:1](#)). "Moab therefore shall be as Sodom (from whose doom her ancestor had been rescued) ... nettles ... salt pits (S. of the Dead Sea) ... perpetual desolation." Moab was doomed to feel Nebuchadnezzar's heavy hand ([Jer. 25:9-21](#)), though for a time acting in concert with Chaldaean bands against Jehoiakim ([2 Kings 24:2](#)); but should recover after 70 years, at Babylon's fall, for righteous Lot's sake ([Exo. 20:6](#)). Spiritual blessings under Messiah are finally meant. Moab sent messengers to Jerusalem to Zedekiah (so read for "Jehoiakim") to consult as to shaking off Nebuchadnezzar's yoke ([Jer. 27:1-8, 10, 11](#)). By submission to Nebuchadnezzar's yoke, according to Jeremiah's counsel, Moab though chastised was not carried captive as Judah. But for her usurpation of Israel's land, and for saying "Judah is like unto all the pagan," i.e. fares no better for having Jehovah for her God than the pagan who have idols, God "would open her side from the cities on her frontiers, the glory of the country (a glorious country in richness of soil), Bethjeshimoth, Baalmeon, and Kiriathaim, unto the men of the East," i.e. to the marauding Bedouin ([Ezek. 25:8-11](#)). Sanballat of Horonaim, the molester of Nehemiah's work, was a Moabite ([Neh. 2:19](#); [4:1](#); [6:1](#)).

...Some of Judah's descendants in Shelah's line had dominion in Moab, and some Benjamite chiefs were born and settled in Moab ([1 Chr. 4:21-23](#); [8:8-10](#)). The name of the family Pahath Moab, "governor of Moab," among those returned from Babylon ([Ezra 2:6](#)), implies a former connection with Moab as ruler. Daniel ([Dan. 11:41](#)) foretells "Moab shall escape out of his (Antiochus Epiphanes') hand." So Porphyry says, in marching against Ptolemy, Antiochus turned out of his course to assail the Jews, but did not meddle with Moab, Edom, and Ammon. Nay, he used their help in crushing the Jews, Moab's old enemy; therefore Judas Maccabeus punished them with "a great overthrow" ([1 Macc. 4:61](#); [5:3](#), etc.). Isaiah ([Isa. 11:14](#)) foretells the Jews "shall lay their hand upon Moab," i.e. shall occupy their land at Israel's final restoration.

Brief History of Moab by A R Fausset

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Judgment on Moab (15:1-9)

15:1 The oracle concerning **Moab**. capital of Moab

Surely in a night **Ar of Moab** is devastated *and* ruined;
Surely in a night **Kir of Moab** is devastated *and* ruined.

15:2 They have gone up to the temple and to **Dibon**, *even to the high places to weep.*

Moab *wails over* **Nebo** and **Medeba**; A city east of the Jordan

Northern Moab

Everyone's head is bald *and* every beard is cut off.

15:3 In their streets they have girded themselves with sackcloth;

On their housetops and in their squares

a celebrated city of the Amorites, 20 miles east of the Jordan

Everyone is wailing, dissolved in tears.

15:4 **Heshbon** and **Elealeh** also cry out,

Their voice is heard all the way to **Jahaz**;

Therefore the armed men of **Moab** cry aloud;

His soul trembles within him.

15:5 **My** heart cries out for **Moab**; a small town in the southern extremity of the Dead Sea

Southern Moab

His fugitives are **as far as** **Zoar and Eglath-shelishiyah**,

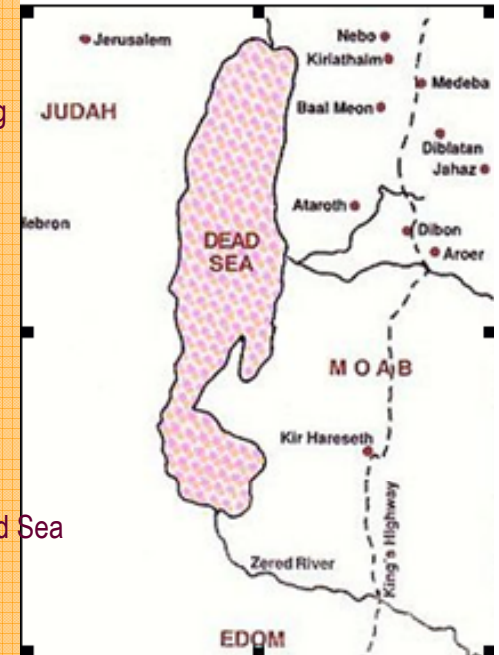
For they go up the ascent of **Luhith** weeping;

Surely on the road to **Horonaim** they raise a cry of distress over *their* ruin.

15:6 **For** the waters of **Nimrim** are desolate.

Surely the grass is withered, the tender grass died out,

There is no green thing.



- 13:1-5 Prophecies against Babylon
- 13:6-16 Judgment in the Day of Yahweh
- 13:17-22 Babylon Falls to the Medes
- 14:1-23 Israel's Taunt against Babylon
- 14:24-27 Judgment on Assyria
- 14:28-32 Judgment on Philistia
- 15:1-9 Judgment on Moab**

15:7

Therefore the abundance which they have acquired and stored up
They carry off over the brook of Arabim.

15:8

Near Border of
Southern Maob

For the cry of distress has gone around the territory of Moab,
Its wail goes as far as Eglaim and its wailing even to Beer-elim.

15:9

For the waters of Dimon are full of blood; = the well of the princes, perhaps near Ar
Surely I will bring added woes upon Dimon, a large town on the northern bank of the river Arnon
A lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon the remnant of the land.

BKC - For centuries Moab, east of the Dead Sea, had been an enemy of Israel. In Israel's wilderness wanderings, Moabite women seduced Israel's men (Num_31:15-17). In the time of the Judges Israel was oppressed by Moab for 18 years (Jdg_3:12-14). Saul fought Moab (1Sa_14:47) and David defeated Moab (2Sa_8:2, 12). Solomon was influenced by his wives to build an altar to Moab's god Chemosh (1Ki_11:7-8). Mesha, Moab's king, had to pay tribute to Ahab, king of Israel (2Ki_3:4). After Ahab died (in 853 B.C.) Mesha rebelled against Joram (also called Jehoram) but was defeated (2Ki_3:5-27). The destruction of Moab described in Isaiah 15-16 caused the Moabites, under Assyrian attack, to flee south to Edom....

Isa 15:1-4 - In chapters 15-16 Isaiah mentioned the names of several Moabite cities and towns. **Ar** and **Kir** had been destroyed before Isaiah recorded this oracle. These unlocated towns may have been near the southern end of the Dead Sea. **Dibon** (modern-day Dhiban) was one of Moab's main cities. **Nebo**, not to be confused with Mount Nebo, is either present-day Khirbet Ayn Musa or Khirbet el Mukkayet. **Medeba** is modern-day Madaba. **Shaving one's head** (cf. Job_1:20; Jer_47:5; Eze_7:18; Amo_8:10; Mic_1:16) and **cutting off one's beard** were signs of humiliation (Isa_7:20; Jer_48:37). **Wearing sackcloth**, coarse dark cloth, pictured one's dejected inward state of mourning (see... Isa_3:24). Here the Moabites were bewailing the last of their cities. People in **Heshbon** and **Elealeh** (cf. Isa_16:9), in northern Moab, wailed. Even Moab's soldiers wailed because of their inability to protect their cities.

Isa 15:5-9 - ... The Moabites, fleeing the invading Assyrians, went south into Edom. **Zoar** was the northernmost Edomite city, directly south of the Dead Sea. **Eglath Shelishiyah** has not been discovered, but it was probably in the desert region. **Luhith** is unidentified but it is linked in parallel structure to **Horonaim** (cf. Jer_48:34), which was in southern Moab.

The waters of **Nimrim** (Isa_15:6) probably refer to the Wadi en-Numeirah, in southern Moab. Since it was dried up, the refugees went farther south to the Ravine of the Poplars, possibly near the Dead Sea's southern tip. The wailing extended to **Eglaim** and **Beer Elim**, sites presently unknown, but perhaps near Moab's southern border. Perhaps **Dimon** (Isa_15:9) is **Dibon** (cf. NIV marg.). The water supply there was bloody, indicating much death and destruction had occurred there. But the bloodshed was not over. More terror was to come. It was as if the survivors were being chased relentlessly by a lion.



= a rock, the remotest part of their territory, SE of the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, was capital of the Edomites

Prophecy of Moab's Devastation in 3 years (16:1-14)

16:1 **Send the *tribute* lamb to the ruler of the land,**
From Sela by way of the wilderness to the mountain of the daughter of Zion.

16:2 **Then, like** fleeing birds or scattered nestlings,
The daughters of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon.

16:3 "Give *us* advice, make a decision;
Cast your shadow like night at high noon;
Hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive.

16:4 "Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you;
Be a hiding place to them from the destroyer."

16:5 **For** the extortioner has come to an end, destruction has ceased,
Oppressors have completely *disappeared* from the land.

A throne will even be established in lovingkindness,
And a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David;
Moreover, he will seek justice
And be prompt in righteousness.

16:6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, an excessive pride;
Even of his arrogance, pride, and fury;
His idle boasts are false.

16:7 **Therefore** Moab shall wail; everyone of Moab shall wail.
You shall moan for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth
As those who are utterly stricken.

= wall of potsherds, or of bricks



About half a Roman mile between Heshbon & Sibmah

Prophecy of Moab's Devastation in 3 years (16:1-14)

- 16:8 **For** the fields of Heshbon have withered, the vines of Sibmah as well; a city of Reuben
The lords of the nations have trampled down its choice clusters
Which reached as far as Jazer and wandered to the deserts;
- 16:9 **Therefore** I will weep bitterly for Jazer, for the vine of Sibmah; Jazer is 10 miles NE of Heshbon
I will drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh;
- 16:10 **For** the shouting over your summer fruits and your harvest has fallen away.
And gladness and joy are taken away from the fruitful field;
In the vineyards also there will be no cries of joy or jubilant shouting,
No treader treads out wine in the presses,
For I have made the shouting to cease.
- 16:11 **Therefore** my heart intones like a harp for Moab,
And my inward feelings for Kir-hareseth.
- 16:12 **So** it will come about when Moab presents himself,
When he wearies himself upon his high place,
And comes to his sanctuary to pray,
That he will not prevail.
- 16:13 This is the word which the LORD spoke earlier concerning Moab.
- 16:14 **But now** the LORD speaks, saying, "**Within three years**, as a hired man would count them, the glory of Moab will be degraded along with all his great population, and his remnant will be very small and impotent."



For centuries Moab, east of the Dead Sea, had been an enemy of Israel. In Israel's wilderness wanderings, Moabite women seduced Israel's men (Num_31:15-17). In the time of the Judges Israel was oppressed by Moab for 18 years (Jdg_3:12-14). Saul fought Moab (1Sa_14:47) and David defeated Moab (2Sa_8:2, 12). Solomon was influenced by his wives to build an altar to Moab's god Chemosh (1Ki_11:7-8). Meshah, Moab's king, had to pay tribute to Ahab, king of Israel (2Ki_3:4). After Ahab died (in 853 B.C.) Meshah rebelled against Joram (also called Jehoram) but was defeated (2Ki_3:5-27). The destruction of Moab described in Isaiah 15-16 caused the Moabites, under Assyrian attack, to flee south to Edom....

Isa 15:1-4 - In chapters 15-16 Isaiah mentioned the names of several Moabite cities and towns. **Ar** and **Kir** had been destroyed before Isaiah recorded this oracle. These unlocated towns may have been near the southern end of the Dead Sea. **Dibon** (modern-day Dhiban) was one of Moab's main cities. **Nebo**, not to be confused with Mount Nebo, is either present-day Khirbet Ayn Musa or Khirbet el Mukkayet. **Medeba** is modern-day Madaba. **Shaving one's head** (cf. Job_1:20; Jer_47:5; Eze_7:18; Amo_8:10; Mic_1:16) and **cutting off one's beard** were signs of humiliation (Isa_7:20; Jer_48:37). **Wearing sackcloth**, coarse dark cloth, pictured **one's dejected inward state of mourning** (see... Isa_3:24). **Here the Moabites were bewailing the last of their cities.** People in **Heshbon** and **Elealeh** (cf. Isa_16:9), in northern Moab, wailed. Even Moab's soldiers wailed because of their inability to protect their cities.

Isa 15:5-9 - ...The Moabites, fleeing the invading Assyrians, went south into Edom. **Zoar** was the northernmost Edomite city, directly south of the Dead Sea. **Eglath Shelishiyah** has not been discovered, but it was probably in the desert region. **Luhith** is unidentified but it is linked in parallel structure to **Horonaim** (cf. Jer_48:34), which was in southern Moab.

The waters of Nimrim (Isa_15:6) probably refer to the Wadi en-Numeirah, in southern Moab. Since it was dried up, the refugees went farther south to the Ravine of the Poplars, possibly near the Dead Sea's southern tip. The wailing extended to **Eglaim** and **Beer Elim**, sites presently unknown, but perhaps near Moab's southern border. Perhaps **Dimon** (Isa_15:9) is Dibon (cf. NIV marg.). **The water supply there was bloody, indicating much death and destruction had occurred there. But the bloodshed was not over. More terror was to come. It was as if the survivors were being chased relentlessly by a lion.**

Jaazer, Jazer - A town E. of Jordan in Gilead (Num. 32:1,3-35; 1 Chr. 26:31). Taken by Israel from the Amorites on the way to Bashan (Num. 21:32, 33). Now the ruins, es Szir, ten miles N.E. of Heshbon; a castle and a large walled pool, the "sea" of Jer. 48:32; but Septuagint reads "the cities of Jaazer".... The town gave its name to the surrounding district (Josh. 13:25; 2 Sam. 24:5). This conquest completed their acquisition of the Amorite kingdom. Soon after, Gad occupied it pastorally. **Assigned to the Merarite Levites** (Josh. 21:39), **but occupied by Hebronites** (Kohathites) in David's time (1 Chr. 26:31).

The plants of the Sibmah vine are said in Isa. 16:8 to have come even unto **Jaazer, 15 miles from Heshbon**, near Sibmah, "they wandered through the wilderness in wild luxuriance," namely, that encompassing Moab, "they are gone over the sea," namely, the sea of Jaazer, but others the Dead Sea (Ps. 80:8-11). The vine spread itself round the margin of the sea, and reached beyond to the other side; a sad contrast to the coming desolation, when "the pagan lords" should "break down the principal plants"! "Therefore I will weep with the weeping of Jaazer," i.e. such as Jaazer weeps with. Isaiah is touched with pity for Moab, though an alien.... At Jaazer was the source of a river falling into Jordan, and marshes or pools still at times are at the source of the wady Szir.

Isa 15:1 Ar of Moab - This was the capital of Moab. It was situated on the south of the river Arnon. It was sometimes called "Rabbath Moab." Isaiah Isa_16:7-11 calls it the city 'with walls of burnt brick.' Under the name of Areopolis it occurs in Eusebius and Stephen of Byzantium, and in the acts of many Synods of the fifth and sixth centuries, when it was the seat of a bishop (Reland's "Palestine," pp. 577, 578).

Kir of Moab - ...According to Burckhardt, it lies about three hours, and according to Abulfeda twelve Arabic miles, south of Ar of Moab, upon a very high and steep rocky hill, from which the prospect extends even to Jerusalem, and which, formed by nature for a fortress, overlooks the whole surrounding country. In the wars of the Maccabees (2 Macc. 12:17) it is mentioned under the name of Kapaka Karaka... In the time of the crusades, a pagan prince built there under king Fulco (in the year 1131) a very important castle, which was very serviceable to the Franks, and in 1183 it held out successfully against a formidable siege of a month by Saladin. Abulfeda speaks of it as so strong a fortress that one must abandon even the wish to take it....

Isa 15:2 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; Jos_13:9). It was again occupied by the Moabites (Jer_48:18, 2). Eusebius says it was a large town on the north of the river Arnon. Seetsen found there ruins under the name of Diban in a magnificent plain.

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 (Deu_32:49; 34:1).... 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.

Isa 15:4 Heshbon - This was a celebrated city of the Amorites, twenty miles east of the Jordan (Jos_13:17). It was formerly conquered from the Moabites by Sihon, and became his capital, and was taken by the Israelites a little before the death of Moses (Num_21:25). After the carrying away of the ten tribes it was recovered by the Moabites. Jeremiah (Jer_48:2) calls it 'the pride of Moab.' The town still subsists under the same name....

And Elealeh - This was a town of Reuben about a mile from Heshbon (Num_32:37). ...Its present name is El Aal. 'It stands on the summit of a hill, and takes its name from its situation - Aal, meaning "the high." It commands the whole plain, and the view from the top of the hill is very extensive, comprehending the whole of the southern Belka....

Even unto Jahaz - This was a city east of Jordan, near to which Moses defeated Sihon. It was given to Reuben (Deu_2:32), and was situated a short distance north of Ar, the capital of Moab.

Isa 15:5 Unto Zoar - Zoar was a small town in the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, to which Lot fled when Sodom was overthrown (Gen_19:23).... the town lay on the east side of the Dead Sea.... Josephus, speaking of this place, calls it Ζοαρων της Αραβιας *Zoaron tes Arabias* - Zoar of Arabia (Bell. Jud. iv. 8, 4).... The exact place is now unknown. In the time of Eusebius and Jerome, it is described as having many inhabitants, and a Roman garrison. In the time of the crusaders, it is mentioned as a place pleasantly situated, with many palm trees....

By the mounting up of Luhith - The "ascent" of Luhith. It is evident, from Jer_48:5, that it was a mountain, but where, is not clearly ascertained. Eusebius supposes it was a place between Areopolis and Zoar.... The whole region there is mountainous.

In the way of Horonaim - This was, doubtless, a town of Moab, but where it was situated is uncertain. The word means "two holes." The region abounds to this day with caves, which are used for dwellings (Seetzen). The place lay, probably, on a declivity from which one descended from Luhith.

Isa 15:6 For the waters of Nimrim - ... Nimrah, or Beth Nimra, meaning a "house of limpid waters," was a city of Reuben east of the Dead Sea (Num_32:3; compare Jer_48:34). It was, doubtless, a city celebrated for its pure fountains and springs of water. ... This flows into the Jordan, and as it flows along gives fertility to that part of the country of Moab.' (Eli Smith.) It is possible that the waters failed by a common practice in times of war when an enemy destroyed the fountains of a country by diverting their waters, or by casting into them stones, trees, etc. This destructive measure of war occurs, with reference to Moab, in 2Ki_3:25, when the Israelites, during an incursion into Moab, felled the fruit trees, cast stones into the plowed grounds, and "closed the fountains, or wells."

Isa 15:8 Unto Eglaim - This was a city of Moab east of the Dead Sea, which, Eusebius says, was eight miles south of Ar, and hence, says Rosenmuller, it was not far from the south border of Moab. It is mentioned by Josephus ("Ant." xiv. 1), as one of the twelve cities in that region which was overthrown by Alexander the Great.

Unto Beer-elim - literally, "the well of the princes." Perhaps the same as that mentioned in Num_21:14-18, as being in the land of Moab, and near to Ar:

Isa 15:9 For the waters of Dimon - Probably the same as "Dibon" Isa_15:2. Eusebius says it was a large town on the northern bank of the river Arnon. Jerome says that the letters "m and b" are often interchanged in oriental dialects....

Isa 16:1 From Sela in the wilderness - The word 'Sela' (σέλα *se/a*) 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... To this place they had fled with their flocks on the invasion from the north. ... It lies... southeast of the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. It derived its name from the fact that it was situated in a vast hollow in a rocky mountain, and consisted almost entirely of dwellings hewn out of the rock. It was the capital of the Edomites (2Ki_19:7); but might have been at this time in the possession of the Moabites. Strabo describes it as the capital of the Nabatheans, and as situated in a vale well watered, but encompassed by insurmountable rocks (xvi. 4), at a distance of three or four days' journey from Jericho. Diodorus (19, 55) mentions it as a place of trade, with caves for dwellings, and strongly fortified by nature.

Isa 16:2 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. The river Arnon, now called Mujeb, flows in a deep, frightfully wild, and rocky vale of the same name (Num_21:15; Deu_2:24; 3:9), in a narrow bed, and forms at this time the boundary between the provinces of Belka and Karrak (Seetzen).

Isa 16:7 Kir-hareseth - literally, "wall of potsherds, or of bricks." ... This was a city of Moab, but where it was situated is unknown. Vitringa supposes that it was the same as Kir Moab (Isa_15:1), which, Gesenius says, is not improbable, for it is now mentioned as in ruins, and as one of the chief cities.

Isa 16:8 And the vine of Sibmah - Sibmah, or Shimbah, was a city of Reuben (Num_32:38; Jos_13:19). Jeremiah, in the parallel place (Jer_48:32) speaks of the vine of Sibmah also. He also says that the enemies of Moab had taken Sibmah, and that the vine and wine had been destroyed (Jer_48:33). There was no more certain mode of producing desolation in a land where grapes were extensively cultivated than to cut down the vines. ... At this time it is probable that Sibmah belonged to the Moabites. It is mentioned here as being distinguished for the luxuriant production of the grape.... Jerome says, that between Sibmah and Heshbon there was scarcely a distance of five hundred paces, half a Roman mile.

Albert Barnes

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

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Damascus

- 1 Damascus is about to be removed from being a city, & become a fallen ruin
- 2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken; They will be for flocks to lie down in, And there will be no one to frighten *them*
- 3 sovereignty will disappear from Damascus & be like the glory of the sons of Israel

Aram

- 3 sovereignty will disappear from the remnant of Aram & be like the glory of the sons of Israel

The Nations

- 12 Alas, the uproar of many peoples Who roar like the roaring of the seas, And the rumbling of nations Who rush on like the rumbling of mighty waters!
- 13 The nations rumble on like the rumbling of many waters, But He will rebuke them and they will flee far away, And be chased like chaff in the mountains before the wind, Or like whirling dust before a gale.
- 14 At evening time, behold, *there is* terror! Before morning they are no more. Such *will be* the portion of those who plunder us, And the lot of those who pillage us

Israel

- 3 The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim
- 4 in that day that the glory of Jacob will fade, And the fatness of his flesh will become lean
- 5 It will be like the reaper gathering the standing grain, As his arm harvests the ears, Or like one gleaning ears of grain In the valley of Rephaim
- 6 Yet gleanings will be left in it like the shaking of an olive tree, Two *or* three olives on the topmost bough, Four *or* five on the branches of a fruitful tree, Declares the LORD, the God of Israel
- 7 In that day man will have regard for his Maker, And his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel
- 8 he will not have regard for the altars, the work of his hands, Nor will he look to that which his fingers have made, Even the Asherim and incense stands
- 9 In that day their strong cities will be like forsaken places in the forest, Or like branches which they abandoned before the sons of Israel; And the land will be a desolation
- 10 For you have forgotten the God of your salvation And have not remembered the rock of your refuge. Therefore you plant delightful plants And set them with vine slips of a strange *god*
- 11 In the day that you plant *it* you carefully fence *it* in, And in the morning you bring your seed to blossom; *But* the harvest will be a heap In a day of sickness and incurable pain
- 12 many peoples & nations rush upon Israel

Judah

- 14 At evening time, behold, *there is* terror! Before morning they are no more. Such *will be* the portion of those who plunder us, And the lot of those who pillage us

Isaiah 17

The Land of Whirring Wings

- 1 land of whirring wings which lies beyond the rivers of Cush
- 2 sends envoys by the sea in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters / swift messengers
- 2,7 a nation tall and smooth, a people feared far and wide, a powerful and oppressive nation whose land the rivers divide

BKC - Cush included modern-day southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia

Fausset, McKenna. K&D - Ethiopia

Gill – either Egypt or Ethiopia

Clarke - Egypt

The Judgment

- 1 Alas, oh land of whirring wings
- 4 Yahweh has told me, "I will look from My dwelling place quietly Like dazzling heat in the sunshine, Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
- 5 before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms & the flower becomes a ripening grape, then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives & remove & cut away the spreading branches
- 6 they will be left together for mountain birds of prey & for the beasts of the earth
- 6 the birds of prey will spend the summer *feeding* on them & all the beasts of the earth will spend harvest time on them

The World

- 3 all you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth
- 3 will see a standard is raised on the mountains & hear the trumpet blown

The Aftermath of Judgment

- 7 At that time a gift of homage will be brought to the LORD of hosts from a people tall and smooth, a people feared far & wide, a powerful and oppressive nation, whose land the rivers divide - To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, Mount Zion

Isaiah 18

Prophecy of Damascus' Destruction (17:1-14)

The Fallen Ruin (v1-3)

17:1 The oracle concerning Damascus.

"Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city,
And it will become a fallen ruin.

17:2 "The cities of Aroer are forsaken;
They will be for flocks to lie down in,
And there will be no one to frighten them.

17:3 "The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim,
And sovereignty from Damascus
And the remnant of Aram;
They will be like the glory of the sons of Israel,"
Declares the LORD of hosts.

13:1-5 Prophecies against Babylon

13:6-16 Judgment in the Day of Yahweh

13:17-22 Babylon Falls to the Medes

14:1-23 Israel's Taunt against Babylon

14:24-27 Judgment on Assyria

14:28-32 Judgment on Philistia

15:1-9 Judgment on Moab

16:1-14 Prophecy of Moab's Devastation in 3 years

17:1-14 Prophecy of Damascus' Destruction

K&D - Isa 17:1-3 - The "cities of Aroer" ... represent the land to the east of the Jordan: there the judgment upon Israel (executed by Tiglath-pileser) first began. There were two Aroers: an old Amoritish city allotted to the tribe of Reuben, viz., "Aroer on the Arnon" (Deu_2:36; 3:12, etc.); and an old Ammonitish one, allotted to the tribe of Gad, viz., "Aroer before Rabbah" (Rabbath, Ammon, Jos_13:25). The ruins of the former are *Arair*, on the lofty northern bank of the *Mugib*; but the situation of the latter has not yet been determined with certainty.... The "cities of Aroer" are these two Aroers, and the rest of the cities similar to it on the east of the Jordan.... We meet here again with a significant play upon the sound in the expression 'are 'Aro'er (cities of Aroer): the name of Aroer was ominous, and what its name indicated would happen to the cities in its circuit. עָרֵר means "to lay bare," to pull down (Jer_51:58); and עָרֵרִי, עָרֵרִי signifies a stark-naked condition, a state of desolation and solitude.... Ephraim loses the fortified cities which once served it as defences, and Damascus loses its rank as a kingdom. Those that are left of Aram, who do not fall in the war, become like the proud citizens of the kingdom of Israel, i.e., they are carried away into captivity. All this was fulfilled under Tiglath-pileser.

BKC - Isa 17:1-3 - The oracle...in Isa_17:1-11 was directed against **Damascus**, the capital city of Aram. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had allied with Aram (Isa_7:2) against the Assyrian threat. Here (Isa_17:1-11) Isaiah was again noting that **Aram and Israel would be defeated by the Assyrians** (cf. Isa_8:4).

Damascus would become a **heap of ruins**, no longer a city.... With the cities around Damascus deserted, animals will make the ruins their home (Isa_17:2). Both **Ephraim**, representing Israel, and **Damascus**, representing **Aram** (cf. Isa_7:8), would be defeated (Isa_17:3). Assyria defeated Aram in 732 and Israel in 722.



Prophecy of Damascus' Destruction (17:1-14)

17:4

Now it will come about **in that day** that the glory of **Jacob** will fade,
And the fatness of his flesh will become lean.

The Gleanings Left (v4-6)

17:5

It will be even **like** the reaper gathering the standing grain,
As his arm harvests the ears,
Or it will be **like** one gleaning ears of grain **in the valley of Rephaim.**

17:6

Yet gleanings will be left in it **like** the shaking of an olive tree,
Two or three olives on the topmost bough,
Four or five on the branches of a fruitful tree,
Declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

K&D - Isa 17:4-8 - Hardly a single one will escape the judgment: just as in the broad plain of Rephaim, which slopes off to the south-west of Jerusalem as far as Bethlehem, where it is covered with rich fields of wheat, the collectors of ears leave only one or two ears lying scattered here and there.

Nevertheless a gleaning of Israel ("in it," viz., in Jacob, Isa_17:4; 10:22) will be left, just as when the branches of the olive tree, which have been already cleared with the hand, are still further shaken with a stick, there still remain a few olives upon the highest branch (two, three; cf., 2Ki_9:32), or concealed under the foliage of the branches. ... This small remnant will turn with steadfast gaze to the living God, as is becoming in man as such (*ha'adam*), and not regard the idols as worthy of any look at all, at least of any reverential look

BKC - Isa 17:4-6 - This is the first of three sections beginning with the phrase **in that day**. The others are Isa_17:7-8 and Isa_17:9-11. This refers to the time of God's wrath on His enemies followed by His blessings showered on His people. In some passages, it has eschatological implications (referring to the Tribulation and the Millennium), but in others it refers only to the current situation. In Isa_17:4, 7, 9 the phrase "in that day" refers to the situation mentioned repeatedly throughout the first portion of Isaiah – the invasion of Aram and Israel by the Assyrian army. Because of that invasion Israel would face difficulties, compared to the **fat** of one's **body** wasting away (Isa_17:4), and to the barren appearance of a field (Isa_17:5) and **an olive tree** (Isa_17:6) after harvest. **The Valley of Rephaim** (cf. Jos_15:8; 18:16) was a fertile area west of Jerusalem where David had twice defeated the Philistines (2Sa_5:18-20, 22-25). As a few **olives** are left on an olive tree's higher **branches**, so a few people would be left, but most of them would be slaughtered.



Prophecy of Damascus' Destruction (17:1-14)

The Foreign Fruit (v7-11)

- 17:7 **In that day** man will have regard for his Maker,
And his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.
- 17:8 And he will not have regard for the altars, the work of his hands,
Nor will he look to that which his fingers have made,
Even the Asherim and incense stands.
- 17:9 **In that day** their strong cities will be like forsaken places in the forest,
Or like branches which they abandoned before **the sons of Israel;**
And the land will be a desolation.
- 17:10 **For you have forgotten the God of your salvation**
And have not remembered the rock of your refuge.
Therefore you plant delightful plants
And set them with vine slips of a strange god.
- 17:11 **In the day that you plant it you carefully fence it in,**
And in the morning you bring your seed to blossom;
But the harvest will be a heap
In a day of sickness and incurable pain.

BKC - Isa 17:7-8 - When Israel would be invaded by the Assyrians, God's people would look to their Maker to see the Holy One of Israel.... When faced with the terror and distress of warfare they would realize the inadequacy of worshipping idols. The altars were those set up to idolatrous gods, not to the true God. The Asherah poles were wooden symbols of Asherah, Canaanite fertility goddess and consort of Baal. In the Northern Kingdom of Israel, widely influenced by Baalism, were many Asherah-worshippers. But when under Assyrian attack, Israel would realize that only the Lord could deliver them.

Isa 17:9-11 - As a result of the judgment in that day... Damascus and her strong cities would be abandoned and thickets and underbrush would grow. Because of her unfaithfulness to the true God and her having forgotten Him, her efforts at planting vines and getting a harvest (as if she were secure, in a time of peace) would be fruitless. The plants would be diseased and the people would be in pain.

K&D - Isa 17:9-11 - The reason why the fate of Ephraim's fortified castles was the same as that of the Amoritish castles, which were then lying in ruins, was that Ephraim, as stated in Isa 17:10, had turned away from its true rocky stronghold, namely from Jehovah. It was a consequence of this estrangement from God, that Ephraim planted... plantations of the nature of pleasant things, or pleasant plantations..., i.e., cultivated all kinds of sensual accompaniments to its worship, in accordance with its heathen propensities; and sowed... with strange grapes, by forming an alliance with a zar (a stranger), namely the king of Damascus. On the very day of the planting, Ephraim fenced it carefully..., that is to say, he ensured the perpetuity of these sensuous modes of worship as a state religion, with all the shrewdness of a Jeroboam (see Amo 7:13). And the very next morning he had brought into blossom what he had sown: the foreign Tayer had shot up like a hot-house plant, i.e., the alliance had speedily grown into a hearty agreement, and had already produced one blossom at any rate, viz., the plan of a joint attack upon Judah. But this plantation, which was so flattering and promising for Israel, and which had succeeded so rapidly, and to all appearance so happily, was a harvest heap for the day of the judgment.



17:12 Alas, the uproar of many peoples
 Who roar like the roaring of the seas,
 And the rumbling of nations
 Who rush on like the rumbling of mighty waters!

17:13 The nations rumble on like the rumbling of many waters,
 But He will rebuke them and they will flee far away,
 And be chased like chaff in the mountains before the wind,
 Or like whirling dust before a gale.

17:14 At evening time, behold, there is terror!
 Before morning they are no more.
 Such will be the portion of those who plunder us,
 And the lot of those who pillage us.

K&D - Isa 17:12-14 - It is the destruction of Asshur that the prophet is predicting here (as in Isa_14:24-27; 29:5-8, etc.), though not of Asshur as Asshur, but of Asshur as the imperial kingdom, which embraced a multitude of nations (Isa_22:6; 8:9, 10; 14:26; 29:7, 8) all gathered together under the rule of one will, to make a common attack upon the church of God....The exclamation of woe (*hoi*) is an expression of pain, as in Isa_10:1; and this is followed by a proclamation of the judgment of wrath.... In the expression "it" (*bo*) in Isa_17:13, the many surging nations are kneaded together, as it were, into one mass. It costs God simply a threatening word; and this mass all flies apart...and falls into dust, and whirls about in all directions, like the chaff of threshing-floors in high situations, or like dust whirled up by the storm. The judgment commences in the evening, and rages through the night; and before the morning dawns, the army of nations raised by the imperial power is all destroyed (compare Isa_29:7, 8, and the fulfilment in Isa_37:36).... Syria was the forerunner of Asshur in the attack upon Israel, and that the alliance between Israel and Syria became the occasion of the complications with Asshur.

BKC - Isa 17:12-14 - The raging...nations... are said to be like the roar of surging waters. These peoples were the Assyrians, whom God was using to judge His people. Apparently the "nations" (pl.) means the particular nation which was the dominant power in its day, namely, Assyria. When God would punish (rebuke) them (the Assyrians), they would become like chaff (cf. Isa_29:5), the light and useless part of grain which, when winnowed, blows away. How appropriate that though Assyria brought terror in the evening, the enemy would be gone before morning, for such was the case with the Assyrian army (Isa_37:36-37). Though the Assyrian soldiers had plundered many cities of Judah, 185,000 soldiers were slaughtered overnight.

Damascus was the leading city of Syria, and it still is that today. Many have called it **the oldest city in the world**.... It was Vitringa who wrote, "Damascus has been destroyed oftener than any other town ... it rises again from ashes." But "Damascus" in this chapter refers to **the entire nation of Syria**.

Ephraim is the name of a tribe of Israel, it is the name of a city, it is the name of a mountain, and it is the name of a man. *Ephraim* is often used in Scripture to refer to the ten northern tribes of Israel. The prophets used it in that way: "For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer.... Ephraim is joined to idols" (Hos_4:16-17).

Therefore, we have here in chapter 17 the burden of Damascus and Ephraim or, in other words, **the burden of the nations of Syria and Israel**. Because of the confederacy between Syria and Israel (often for the purpose of coming against Judah), Israel is linked with the judgments pronounced on Syria. Partners in crime means partners in judgment.

"It shall be a ruinous heap" – there will be those quick to point out that this has not been fulfilled, inasmuch as the present-day city of Damascus claims to be the same as the original city. As I have said before, **there is a far-off fulfillment of all these prophecies and a local or contemporary fulfillment also**. There are two possible explanations for the problem presented by this prophecy:

1. Historians are not always accurate in their identification of such things as the locations of ancient cities....**In the area of present-day Damascus there happen to be many ruins of a city, and any one of these ruins could be the original Damascus**. Damascus is like a great many of the ancient cities, in that when it was destroyed in one place, they did not always rebuild on the same site but shifted it somewhat to another location. (Other cities, such as the sacred city of Jerusalem, were rebuilt on exactly the same site because of the significance of the location to the people.)...
2. Damascus has withstood the ravages of war throughout history and has never ceased being a city, although it has shifted locations. It probably is the oldest city in the world. It thus far has survived every catastrophe that has come upon the earth, particularly in a land that has seen army after army march through it. But it **will not survive during the Great Tribulation period**. It will be destroyed; and, as Isaiah says here, it will cease being a city. It will become a ruinous heap.

Both of these explanations show the accuracy of the prophecy that Isaiah gives here.

Isaiah 17: Destruction of Damascus

In the last days, the Bible tells us of a horrible series of events that will take place in the lands of Israel and Syria. One of these events is **the disappearance of Damascus as one of the premiere cities in the world**. **The oldest continuously inhabited city on the planet, Damascus has witnessed at least 5,000 years of human history, and some historians believe the city actually dates back to the seventh millennium BC.** In fact, Paul was on the road to Damascus when Christ first appeared to Him, an event that transformed not only his life, but the course of human history.

In the very near future, Damascus will once again play a major role in human events. The prophet Isaiah provides us with God's commentary on a **future conflict between Damascus and Israel**, and in so doing, he reveals certain prophecies which have been partially fulfilled in the past. **However, the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah 17 remains in the future. The current existence of Damascus, which will one day cease to be a city, as well as the historical absence of the coalition of nations prophesied to attack Israel and be destroyed by God, is proof that Isaiah 17 prophesies events yet future.**

...**Isaiah 17:1-3** ...These opening verses paint a bleak picture. The city of **Damascus** will become a heap of ruins, **utterly destroyed**. Few, if any, buildings will be left standing. The once great city will be devoid of human life and will become home to all manner of wildlife in the absence of humans to chase them away.

According to these verses, **the cities of Aroer, which are located on the northern bank of the Arnon River just east of the Dead Sea, will also be deserted**. However, the passage doesn't say they will be destroyed in the same manner as Damascus, just that they will be deserted. It may be that people simply flee these cities out of fear.

In addition, **many of the fortified cities in northern Israel will also be destroyed**. Those few who remain in Aram, 38 miles south southeast of Damascus, will share the fate of these northern Israeli cities.

...**Isaiah 17:4-6** ...The breadth and scope of destruction is clearly illustrated as God describes **the Israeli landscape as stripped bare of people**. Only a small fraction of people either choose to stay in the land or else survive what is a massive holocaust, leaving only a few inhabitants who struggle in poverty.

Vernon J McGee

Britt Gillette, http://www.raptureready.com/featured/gillette/Isaiah_17.html

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...**Isaiah 17:7-8**...As a result of this event, the people of Israel will once again turn to God Almighty. Currently, the nation of Israel is predominantly secular in nature. Other biblical passages infer that this will change as the prophesied rebuilding of the Temple in the last days indicates a spiritual resurgence among the Jews of Israel. Nevertheless, this passage clearly indicates the people of Israel will turn away from all false idols and gods.

Knowing that this will happen, we must ask: **why does it happen?** The answer is found in the verses that follow... **Isaiah 17:9-11**...The devastation that overshadows Israel will come about because Israel has *“turned from the God who can save them.”* All the hard work performed prior to this event will be lost. Those who have been distracted by the things of this world will be disappointed, for they have forgotten God, and by putting faith in the things of this world, they will ultimately be disappointed. Their only harvest will be *“a load of grief and incurable pain.”* This grief will be brought to a climax when, in the midst of their suffering, the nation of Israel faces an imminent invasion....

Isaiah 17:12-14 ...While Syria and Israel lie in ruin, the enemies of Israel will view her suffering as an opportunity to invade, their ultimate goal to destroy her forever. However, God has a different plan in mind, and He will destroy these invaders Himself. A more in depth illustration of this attack is foreseen in Psalm 83...

So how do we know that Psalm 83 describes the same scene envisioned in Isaiah 17? Let's compare the two. Here's how the intentions of Israel's enemies are described:

- **Plunder & Destruction** - *“This is the just reward of those who plunder and destroy the people of God.”* Isaiah 17:14 (NLT)
- **Destruction** - *“They devise crafty schemes against your people, laying plans against your precious ones. ‘Come,’ they say, ‘let us wipe out Israel as a nation. We will destroy the very memory of its existence.’ This was their unanimous decision.”* Psalm 83:3-5 (NLT)
- **Plunder** - *“for they said, ‘Let us seize for our own use these pasturelands of God!’”* Psalm 83:12 (NLT)

Here's how the fate of Israel's enemies are described:

“They will flee like chaff scattered by the wind or like dust whirling before a storm.” Isaiah 17:13 (NLT)

“O my God, blow them away like whirling dust, like chaff before the wind!” Psalm 83:13 (NLT)

From the description of their fate alone, it is reasonable to conclude that the armies of Isaiah 17:12 are the same nations who sign a treaty against the Lord in Psalm 83:5-8. Below is a list of those nations and their modern geographical equivalents:

Edomites = Jordan / Parts of the West Bank

Ishmaelites = The Arab people

Moabites = Jordan / Parts of the West Bank

Hagrites = Jordan / The Arab people

Gebalites = Lebanon

Ammonites = Jordan

Amalekites = Southern Israel / Gaza

Philistia = Gaza

Tyre = Lebanon

Assyria = Syria / Parts of Turkey and Iraq

The Descendants of Lot = Jordan

By studying the geographical history of these ancient people and places, we can uncover which nations they currently compose. According to Psalm 83, in the aftermath of the destruction of northern Israel and Damascus, Israel will be invaded by armies from Jordan, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza. All of these locations are heavily populated by the enemies of Israel today.

An Expanding War? - But are the nations cited in Psalm 83 the only nations involved in this attack? It's quite possible that additional conspirators are named in the Book of Ezekiel. Isaiah 17 and Psalm 83 might well foreshadow the war of Gog and Magog.

In Ezekiel 38-39, an enormous coalition of nations, “a vast and awesome horde” – will roll down on Israel “like a storm and cover the land like a cloud” Ezekiel 38:9 (NLT). This prophesied future war in Ezekiel has many similarities to Isaiah 17:12-14. Both prophets foresee a time when enemy armies rush toward Israel while she awaits unprepared. Both prophets foresee God's instantaneous destruction of Israel's enemies. And in both scenarios, the marching armies intend to plunder and destroy the people of Israel:

- **Destruction** - *“You will say, ‘Israel is an unprotected land filled with unwalled villages! I will march against her and destroy these people who live in such confidence!’”* Ezekiel 38:11 (NLT)
- **Plunder** - *“But Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish will ask, ‘Who are you to rob them of silver and gold? Who are you to drive away their cattle and seize their goods and make them poor?’”* Ezekiel 38:13 (NLT)
- **Plunder & Destruction** - *“This is the just reward of those who plunder and destroy the people of God.”* Isaiah 17:14 (NLT)

Could the events predicted in Isaiah 17 and Psalm 83 be a catalyst for the war of Gog and Magog prophesied in Ezekiel 38-39? Although it is not a certainty, the possibility can not be completely ruled out.

Today's Headlines

Looking at today's geopolitical landscape, it's not difficult to envision the scenario outlined in Isaiah 17 and Psalm 83. Syria has been adamant in its demand that Israel surrender the Golan Heights, threatening war if Israel fails to comply. Meanwhile, the summer 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah has apparently convinced leaders in Damascus that Syria can be victorious in a conflict with Israel by simply overwhelming the tiny nation with rocket attacks. From a greater perspective, it has convinced the entire Islamic world that Israel isn't the militarily invincible nation they once thought.

Syria's rocket technology is far more advanced than that deployed by Hezbollah, and Syria is known to possess chemical weapons, including the highly lethal VX and Sarin gases. If Syria miscalculates and attacks Israel with these weapons, the Israeli response will be swift and devastating. Israel is armed with nuclear weapons, and if its survival is put in question, it will not hesitate to use them.

If this happens, a mortally wounded Israel will become an irresistible target for her enemies. The surrounding Muslim nations will see an opportunity to destroy her, while Russia will see an opportunity to seize the upper hand in the oil rich Middle East.

Today, the most virulent enemies of Israel reside in the very places named in Psalm 83 – Hamas in Gaza, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Jordan, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Syria leadership and its Axis of Evil partners in the city of Damascus.

As of this writing, the conditions are ripe for the fulfillment of Isaiah 17 and Psalm 83, paving the way for the rapture of the church and the beginning of the tribulation. In light of such developments, we should zealously preach the Gospel of Christ to all who will listen. For the hour is late, and the return of Christ is near.

Britt Gillette, http://www.raptureready.com/featured/gillette/Isaiah_17.html

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Judgment then Blessing on the Land of Whirring Winds (Ethiopia) (18:1-7)

18:1 Alas, oh **land of whirring wings**
 Which lies **beyond the rivers of Cush,**
 18:2 Which sends envoys by the sea,
 Even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters.
Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth,
 To a people feared far and wide,
A powerful and oppressive nation
Whose land the rivers divide.

Fausset - Isa 18:1-7. Isaiah announces the overthrow of Sennacherib's hosts and desires the Ethiopian ambassadors, now in Jerusalem, to bring word of it to their own nation; and he calls on the whole world to witness the event (Isa 18:3). As Isa 17:12-14 announced the presence of the foe, so Isa 18:1-7 foretells his overthrow. **Woe**... is a mistake arising from the wrong rendering "Woe," whereas *the Hebrew does not express a threat, but is an appeal calling attention* (Isa 55:1; Zec 2:6): "Ho." He is not speaking *against* but *to* the Ethiopians, calling on them to hear his prophetic announcement as to the destruction of their enemies.... **beyond** – Meroe, the island between the "rivers" Nile and Astaboras is meant, *famed for its commerce, and perhaps the seat of the Ethiopian government*, hence addressed here as representing the whole empire.... This island region was probably the chief part of Queen Candace's kingdom (Act 8:27)... **Ethiopia** – *literally, "Cush."* Horsley is probably right that the *ultimate* and *fullest* reference of the prophecy is to the restoration of the Jews in the Holy Land through the instrumentality of some *distant* people skilled in navigation (Isa 18:2; 60:9, 10; Psa 45:15; 68:31; Zep 3:10). Phoenician voyagers coasting along would speak of all Western *remote* lands as "beyond" the Nile's mouths. "Cush," too, has a wide sense, being applied not only to Ethiopia, but Arabia-Deserta and Felix, and along the Persian Gulf, as far as the Tigris (Gen 2:13).

Isa 18:2 ambassadors – messengers sent to Jerusalem at the time that negotiations passed between Tirhakah and Hezekiah against the expected attack of Sennacherib (Isa 37:9). **Go** – Isaiah tells them to take back the tidings of what God is about to do (Isa 18:4) against the common enemy of both Judah and Ethiopia. **terrible** – the Ethiopians famed for war-like prowess...

BKC - Isa 18:1-2 - The message in Isa 18:1-7 is directed against the **land of whirring wings, the nation of Cush....** The whirring wings may refer to locusts. Cush included modern-day southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia. Apparently the Cushites sent **envoys** in swift-moving **papyrus boats** (cf. Job 9:26) to suggest that Israel form an alliance with them against the Assyrians. The Cushites, a people who were **tall, fearsome, and aggressive**, spoke a language that would have sounded **strange** to Hebrews because it was non-Semitic. Like Egypt, **Cush is divided by rivers** (cf. Isa 18:7) that is, *by branches of the Nile*. Nothing is known elsewhere in the Bible or from extrabiblical sources about any contacts of this nation with Israel in a joint venture against Assyria.

McKenna - Isa 18:1-3 The Land of Buzzing Wings - In keeping with the pattern of Isaiah's prophecies, he moves from a "woe" upon all nations of the world to a specific "woe" upon Ethiopia, the biblical land of Cush. The historical event that triggered this prophecy is the delegation of ambassadors from Egypt who came to Judah to persuade Hezekiah to join in a mutual pact against the threat of Assyrian vengeance. Accordingly, Isaiah's "woe" against Ethiopia rather than Egypt is explained.

In 716 B.C., the king of Ethiopia took Egypt captive and ruled over the land during the revolt in 714 B.C. against the Assyrians. Descriptive imagery identifies a "land shadowed with buzzing wings" with "vessels of reed" as a special means of transportation. The "buzzing wings" may refer to the land of locusts that swarm across the sky to shadow the sun. "Vessels of reed" undoubtedly refers to the papyrus boats that sailed the Nile and along the Mediterranean coast.

As we know, Isaiah sternly opposed any alliance with a foreign nation but especially with Egypt because he foresaw a "paper tiger" in its posturing of power. To frighten Judah into the alliance, however, they pictured the people of Assyria as giants "tall and smooth of skin" with a history of atrocity and a power that could not be turned back by any one nation alone (Isa 18:2).



Judgment then Blessing on the Land of Whirring Winds (Ethiopia) (18:1-7)

- 18:3 All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, **As soon as** a standard is raised on the mountains, you will see **it**.
 And **as soon as** the trumpet is blown, you will hear **it**.
- 18:4 **For thus** the LORD has told me,
 "I will look from My dwelling place quietly
 Like dazzling heat in the sunshine,
 Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
- 18:5 **For before** the harvest, **as soon as** the bud blossoms
 And the flower becomes a ripening grape,
Then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives
 And remove *and* cut away the spreading branches.

BKC - Isa 18:3 - The prophet exhorted the Cushites to go back home and not try to form an alliance because the Lord would defeat the enemy at the proper time. The Cushites represented **all the people of the world** who desired to see the Assyrians fall. But the Lord promised through Isaiah that **when** the time would come to fight the Assyrians they would know it and would see the enemy fall.

Isa 18:4-6 - God's plans would linger much like the summer heat and harvest dew. The Lord told Isaiah that He would wait till the proper time to cut off the enemy. Isaiah had already been given the reason for this (Isa_10:12, 25, 32). But the Assyrian army first had to complete the task God gave them, to punish the people of Israel by taking them captive. However, once God's purposes had been accomplished He would intervene and **cut them off** (Isa_18:5) just when they, like grapes, were beginning to ripen, to extend their empire. They would be killed and would **be left** on the mountains as food for wild **birds** in the **summer** and **wild animals** in the **winter**.

Fausset - Isa 18:3 - ...Call to the whole earth to be witnesses of what Jehovah ("He") is about to do. He will "lift up an ensign," calling the Assyrian motley hosts together (Isa_5:26) on "the mountains" round Jerusalem, to their own destruction. This (the eighteenth chapter) declares the coming overthrow of those armies whose presence is announced in Isa_17:12, 13. The same motive, which led Hezekiah to seek aid from Egypt, led him to accept gladly the Ethiopian Tirhakah's aid (Isa_36:6; 37:9). Ethiopia, Egypt, and Judea were probably leagued together against the common enemy, 713 B.C....

Isa 18:4 take ... rest ... consider - I will *calmly look on* and not interpose, while all seems to promise success to the enemy; when figuratively, "the sun's heat" and "the night dews" ripen their "harvest"; but "before" it reaches its maturity I will destroy it (Isa_18:5; Ecc_8:11, 12). **like ... dew** - rather, "at the time of the dew cloud." God's "silence" is mistaken by the ungodly for consent; His delay in taking vengeance for forgetfulness (Psa_50:21); so it shall be before the vengeance which in the last day shall usher in the restoration of the Jews (Isa_34:1-8; 57:11, ...2Pe_3:3-10).

Isa 18:5 - ... God will not only disconcert their present plans, but prevent them forming any future ones. Horsley takes the "harvest" and vintage here as referring to purifying judgments which cause the excision of the ungodly from the earth, and the placing of the faithful in a state of peace *on the earth*: not the last judgment (Joh_15:2; Rev_14:15-20).

McKenna - Isaiah counters these scare tactics with a repetition of the prophecy that the LORD of hosts will lift a banner and blow a trumpet that will signal His triumph over all the nations of the earth, including the Assyrian hordes (Isa_18:3). God will do this, however, in His own time. For the present, He will rest and delay His judgment while retaining control of human history and choosing the time for the pruning of the harvest in order to fulfill His good purpose (Isa_18:5-6).

Isa 18:4-6 A Time for Pruning - Isaiah knew what it meant to wait upon the resting Lord. In the temple, he had cried, "How long, O LORD, how long?" The response came as a call for patience and faithfulness. God said, "Until the cities lie ruined ... until the houses are left deserted ... until the LORD has sent everyone far away ..." (Isa_6:11-12). For those of us who carry the burden of impatience, it is not easy to accept the word *until* from the resting Lord. Honesty, however, leads to the confession that whenever we take the will of God into our hands and act ahead of His timing, we fail miserably. We must also confess that when we exercise patience and trust in the Lord, we invariably look back upon the results to confess, "Forgive me, Lord. Your timing is best." If only we would wait.



Judgment then Blessing on the Land of Whirring Winds (Ethiopia) (18:1-7)

18:6 They will be left together for mountain birds of prey,
And for the beasts of the earth;
And the birds of prey will spend the summer *feeding* on them,
And all the beasts of the earth will spend **harvest time** on them.

18:7 **At that time** a gift of homage will be brought to the **LORD of hosts**
From a people tall and smooth,
Even from a people feared far and wide,
A powerful and oppressive nation,
Whose land the rivers divide –
To the place of the name of the **LORD of hosts, even Mount Zion.**

BKC - Isa 18:7 - After the Assyrian defeat, the **Lord** would cause the people of Cush (cf. Isa_18:1-2) to take **gifts** to the Lord at **Mount Zion**, where His name dwelt (see ... Deu_12:5). Whether this occurred after the fall of Assyria is not known. Possibly Isaiah was speaking of the millennial kingdom when peoples from around the world will worship **the Lord** (cf. Zec_14:16) because of His gracious acts.

Fausset - Isa 18:6 birds ... beasts – transition from the image “sprigs,” “branches,” to the thing meant: the Assyrian soldiers and leaders shall be the prey of birds and beasts, the whole year through, “winter” and “summer,” so numerous shall be their carcasses. Horsley translates the Hebrew which is *singular*: “upon it,” not “upon them”; the “it” refers to God’s “dwelling-place” (Isa_18:4) in the Holy Land, which Antichrist (“the bird of prey” with the “beasts,” his rebel hosts) is to possess himself of, and where he is to perish.

Isa 18:7 present ... people scattered and peeled... - The repetition of epithets enhances the honor paid to Jehovah by so *mighty a nation*. The Ethiopians, wonder-struck at such an interposition of Jehovah in behalf of His people, shall send gifts to Jerusalem in His honor (Isa_16:1; Psa_68:31; 72:10). Thus translate: “a present ... from a people.” Or translate, as *English Version*; “the present” will mean “the people” of Ethiopia converted to God (Rom_15:16). Horsley takes the people converted to Jehovah, as the Jews in the latter days. **place of the name** – where Jehovah peculiarly manifests His glory; **Act_2:10 and 8:27 show how worshippers came up to Jerusalem from Egypt” and “Ethiopia.** Frumentius, an Egyptian, in the fourth century, converted Abyssinia to Christianity; and a Christian church, under an *abuna* or bishop, still flourishes there. **The full accomplishment is probably still future.**

McKenna - Isa 18:7 A Gift for God - God’s good timing for Judah and Jerusalem carries the promise of the day when “a present will be brought to the LORD of hosts” from the same tall, smooth-skinned, terrible, powerful, and dreaded Assyrians before whom Judah quaked in fear (Isa_18:7). Who said that Isaiah had no sense of humor? **In this prophecy he shows how ludicrous it is for Judah to fear the Assyrians and trust in a foolish alliance with Ethiopia for their protection. With a laugh, he foresees the time when Assyria will join the nations of the world streaming to Mount Zion where they will worship the LORD of hosts, honor His name, and learn of His ways** (compare Isa_18:7 with Isa_2:2-4).

With such great hope, one would think that the people of Judah would have heard Isaiah’s message and put their trust in the Lord. Unfortunately, the sad story is that King Hezekiah entered into the alliance with Ethiopia and brought down God’s wrath upon his people. Once again, Isaiah learned what God meant when He told him that His children would fail to understand or accept his message because of calloused hearts, dull ears, and blind eyes (Isa_6:10).



Isa 18:1-3 - The prophecy commences with *hoi*, which never signifies *heus*, but always *vae* (woe). Here, however, it differs from Isa_17:12, and is an **expression of compassion** (cf., Isa_55:1; Zec_2:10) rather than of anger; for the fact that the mighty Ethiopia is oppressed by the still mightier Asshur, is a humiliation which Jehovah has prepared for the former. Isa_18:1, 2: "Woe to the land of the whirring of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Cush, that sends ambassadors into the sea and in boats of papyrus over the face of the waters." The land of Cush commences, according to Eze_29:10 (cf., Isa_30:6), where Upper Egypt ends. The *Sevēneh* (Aswāh), mentioned by Ezekiel, is the boundary-point at which the Nile enters *Mizraim* proper, and which is still a depot for goods coming from the south down the Nile. The *naharē-Cush* (rivers of Cush) are chiefly those that surround the Cushite *Seba* (Gen_10:7). This is the name given to the present Sennār, the Merotic island which is enclosed between the White and Blue Nile (the *Astapos* of Ptolemy, or the present *Bahr el-Abyad*, and the *Astaboras* of Ptolemy, or the present *Bahr el-Azrak*). According to the latest researches, more especially those of Speke, the White Nile, which takes its rise in the Lake of Nyanza, is the chief source of the Nile. The latter, and the Blue Nile, whose confluence (*makran*) with it takes place in lat. 15° 25', are fed by many larger or smaller tributary streams (as well as mountain torrents); the Blue Nile even more than the Nile proper. And this abundance of water in the land to the south of *Sevēneh*, and still farther south beyond *Seba* (or *Meroē*), might very well have been known to the prophet as a general fact. The land "beyond the rivers of Cush" is the land bounded by the sources of the Nile, i.e., (including Ethiopia itself in the stricter sense of the word) the south land under Ethiopian rule that lay still deeper in the heart of the country, the land of its African auxiliary tribes, whose names (which probably include the later Nubians and Abyssinians), as given in 2Ch_12:3; Nah_3:9; Eze_30:5; Jer_46:9, suppose a minuteness of information which has not yet been attained by modern research. To this Ethiopia, which is designated by its farthest limits (compare Zep_3:10, where Wolff, in his book of Judith, erroneously supposes Media to be intended as the Asiatic Cush), the prophets give the strange name of *eret tziltzal cenāp*. This has been interpreted as meaning "the land of the wings of an army with clashing arms" by Gesenius and others; but *cenāphaim* does not occur in this sense, like *agappim* in Ezekiel. Others render it "the land of the noise of waves" (Umbreit); but *cenāphaim* cannot be used of waters except in such a connection as Isa_8:8. Moreover, *tziltzal* is not a fitting onomatopoeic word either for the clashing of arms or the noise of waves. Others, again, render it "the land of the double shadow" (Grotius, Vitringa, Knobel, and others); but, however appropriate this epithet might be to Ethiopia as a tropical land, it is very hazardous to take the word in a sense which is not sustained by the usage of the language; and the same objection may be brought against Luzzatto's "land of the far-shadowing defence." Shelling has also suggested another objection - namely, that the shadow thrown even in tropical lands is not a double one, falling northwards and southwards at the same time, and therefore that it cannot be figuratively described as double-winged. *Tziltzal cenāphaim* is the buzzing of the wings of insects, with which Egypt and Ethiopia swarmed on account of the climate and the abundance of water: *צִלְצַל*, constr. *צִלְצַל*, *tinnitus*, *stridor*, a primary meaning from which the other three meanings of the word-cymbal, harpoon (a whirring dart), and grasshopper... are derived.

In Isa_7:18 the forces of Egypt are called "the fly from the end of the rivers of Egypt." Here Egypt and Ethiopia are called the land of the whirring of wings, inasmuch as the prophet had in his mind, under the designation of swarms of insects, the motley swarms of different people included in this great kingdom that were so fabulously strange to an Asiatic. Within this great kingdom messengers were now passing to and fro upon its great waters in boats of papyrus.... In such vessels as these, and with Egyptian tackle, they went as far as the remote island of Taprobane. The boats were made to clap together (*pilcatiles*), so as to be carried past the cataracts (Parthey on *Plutarch. de Iside*, pp. 198-9). And it is to these messengers in their paper boats that the appeal of the prophet is addressed.

He sends them home; and what they are to say to their own people is generalized into an announcement to the whole earth. "Go, swift messengers, to the people stretched out and polished, to the terrible people far away on the other side, to the nation of command upon command and treading down, whose land rivers cut through. All ye possessors of the globe and inhabitants of the earth, when a banner rises on the mountains, look ye; and when they blow the trumpets, hearken!" We learn from what follows to what it is that the attention of Ethiopia and all the nations of the earth is directed: it is the destruction of Asshur by Jehovah. They are to attend, when they observe the two signals, the banner and the trumpet-blast; these are decisive moments. Because Jehovah was about to deliver the world from the conquering might of Assyria, against which the Ethiopian kingdom was now summoning all the means of self-defence, the prophet sends the messengers home. Their own people, to which he sends them home, are elaborately described. They are *memusshāk*, stretched out, i.e., very tall (Ixx εἶνος μετεωρον), just as the Sabaeans are said to have been in Isa_45:14. They are also *mōrāt* = *memorāt* (Ges. §52, Anm. 6), smoothed, *politus*, i.e., either not disfigured by an ugly growth of hair, or else, without any reference to depilation, but rather with reference to the bronze colour of their skin, smooth and shining with healthy freshness.... They are still further described, with reference to the wide extent of their kingdom, which reached to the remotest south, as "the terrible nation וְהַלְאָה וְהַיָּמִינִי," i.e., from this point, where the prophet meets with the messengers, farther and farther off.... We may see from Isa_28:10, 13, what *kāv*..., a measuring or levelling line, signifies, when used by the prophet with the reduplication which he employs here: it is a people of "command upon command," - that is to say, a commanding nation;... "A people of treading down"..., i.e., one which subdues and tramples down wherever it appears. These are all distinctive predicates - a nation of imposing grandeur, a ruling and conquering nation. The last predicate extols its fertile land. אָרָא we take not in the sense of diripere, or as equivalent to *bāzaz*, like מָאָס, to melt, equivalent to *masas*, but in the sense of *findere*, i.e., as equivalent to אָרָא, like אָמָא, to sip = גָּמַע. For it is no praise to say that a land is scoured out, or washed away, by rivers... But why this strange elaboration instead of the simple name? There is a divine irony in the fact that a nation so great and glorious, and (though not without reason, considering its natural gifts) so full of self-consciousness, should be thrown into such violent agitation in the prospect of the danger that threatened it, and should be making such strenuous exertions to avert that danger, when Jehovah the God of Israel was about to destroy the threatening power itself in a night, and consequently all the care and trouble of Ethiopia were utterly needless.

Isa 18:4-6 - The prophet knows for certain that the messengers may be home and announce this act of Jehovah to their own people and to all the world. "For thus hath Jehovah spoken to me: I will be still, and will observe upon my throne during clear weather in sunshine, during a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. For before the harvest, when the blossom falls off, and the fruit becomes the ripening grape: then will He cut off the branches with pruning-hooks; and the tendrils He removes, breaks off. They are left altogether to the birds of prey on the mountains, and to the cattle of the land; and the birds of prey summer thereon, and all the cattle of the land will winter thereon." The prophecy explains itself here, as is very frequently the case, especially with Isaiah; for the literal words of v. 6 show us unquestionably what it is that Jehovah will allow to develop itself so prosperously under favourable circumstances, and without any interposition on His part, until He suddenly and violently puts an end to the whole, must as it is approaching perfect maturity. It is the might of Assyria. Jehovah quietly looks on from the heavenly seat of His glorious presence, without disturbing the course of the thing intended. This quietness, however, is not negligence, but, as the hortative expressions show, a well-considered resolution. The two *Caphs* in v. 4 are not comparative, but indicate the time. He remains quiet whilst there is clear weather with sunshine (עָלִי indicating continuance, as in Jer_8:18; 1Sa_14:32), and whilst there is a dew-cloud in the midst of that warmth, which is so favourable for the harvest, by causing the plants that have been thoroughly heated in the day and refreshed at night by the dew, to shoot up and ripen with rapidity and luxuriance. The plant thought of, as v. 5 clearly shows, is the vine. By *liphne katzir* (before the harvest) we are either to understand the period just before the wheat-harvest, which coincides with the flowering of the grape; or, since Isaiah uses *katzir* for *bāzri* in Isa_16:9, the time at the close of the summer, immediately preceding the vintage. Here again the *Caph* indicates the time. When the blossoming is over, so that the flower fades away, and the fruit that has set becomes a ripening grape (*boser*, as in Job_15:33, not in the sense of *labruscum*, but of *omphax*; and *gaimal*, *maturescere*, as in Num_17:8, *maturare*), He cuts off the branches (*zalzalim*, from *zilzēl*, to swing to and fro; compare the Arabic *dāliye*, a vine-branch, from *dala*, to hang long and loose) upon which the nearly ripened grapes are hanging, and removes or nips off... the tendrils (*netishoth*, as in Jer_5:10, from *nādash*, to stretch far out; *niphāl*, to twist about a long way, Isa_16:8, compare Jer_48:32); an intentional asyndeton with a pictorial sound. The words of Jehovah concerning Himself have here passed imperceptibly into words of the prophet concerning Jehovah. The ripening grapes, as Isa_18:6 now explains, are the Assyrians, who were not far from the summit of their power; the fruit-branches that are cut off and nipped in pieces are their corpses, which are now through both summer and winter the food of swarms of summer birds, as well as of beasts of prey that remain the whole winter through. This is the act of divine judgment, to which the approaching exaltation of the banner, and the approaching blast of trumpets, is to call the attention of the people of Ethiopia.

Keil & Delitzsch

Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

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