

ISAIAH 15 & 16

Introduction

Moab and Israel had times of cooperation, but many times of conflict. The bible first mentions contact with this fertile Canaanite land, later called Moab, in the story of Abraham and Lot and also as Joshua entered the Promised Land (Gen. 13, Gen. 19, Deut. 2:9, Josh. 13: 8-11). The evil King of Israel Jeroboam II invaded Moab and destroyed many cities mentioned in this chapter: Ar, Kir, Dibon, Medeba, Heshbon, Elealeh (2 Kings 14: 25-28). Moab was a thorn in the side of Judah and Israel. They persecuted Israel and Judah, they worshiped evil heathen gods, they would not pay tribute to the Land of Judea even after being conquered, nor would they give protection to the exiled Jews when they were attacked. They did however, want to hide under Israel's protection when threatened. At this time, Isaiah was encouraging Hezekiah not to allow the Moabites to take refuge in Judah. Three years after this revelation by Isaiah, the Assyrian King Sargon came into Moab and destroyed its people almost entirely. (See Jeremiah 48, Zephaniah 2: 8-10) It is interesting to note that while distant and troubling to Israel, the people of Moab had many cultural things (language for instance, relationship to Abraham) in common and were still loved of the Lord. He mourns for their destruction and many of the Covenant Curses apply to them and some of the Covenant Blessings. For instance, that a remnant of the Moabites would be left and that Moabites could intermarry with Israel (remember Ruth) and be part of the Covenant bloodline.





About Chemosh the God of Moab:

According to [Morris Jastrow, Jr.](#) and [George Aaron Barton](#) in the [Jewish Encyclopedia](#),^[7]

Was the national god of the Moabites. He became angry with his people and permitted them to become the vassals of Israel; his anger passed, he commanded Mesha to fight against Israel, and Moabite independence was reestablished (Moabite Stone, lines 5, 9, 14 et seq.). A king in the days of Sennacherib was called "Chemoshnadab" ("K. B." ii. 90 et seq. ; see Jehonadab). Chemosh was a god associated with the Semitic mother-goddess [Ashtar](#), whose name he bears (Moabite Stone, line 17; compare Barton, "Semitic Origins," iv.). Peake wrongly holds that Ashtar-Chemosh was a deity distinct from Chemosh, while Moore and Bähr (*Beiträge zur Semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, p. 14) regard "Ashtar" in this name as equivalent to "[Astarte](#)," who they believe was worshipped in the temple of Chemosh. "Ashtar" is more probably masculine here, as in South Arabia, and another name for Chemosh, the compound "[Ashtar-Chemosh](#)" being formed like "Yhwh-Elohim" or "Yhwh-Sebaoth." Whatever differences of conception may have attached to the god at different shrines, there is no adequate reason for doubting the substantial identity of the gods to whom these various names were applied. Hosea ix. 10 is proof that at some period (according to Wellhausen, at the time of the prophet himself) the impure cult of the Semitic goddess was practised at [Baal-peor](#) (compare Wellhausen, *Kleine Propheten*; Nowack's Commentary; and G. A. Smith, *Twelve Prophets*, ad loc.). Chemosh, therefore, was in general a deity of the same nature as [Baal](#). On critical occasions a [human sacrifice](#) was considered necessary to secure his favor (compare II Kings iii. 27), and when deliverance came, a sanctuary might be built to him (Moabite Stone, line 3). An ancient poem, twice quoted in the Old Testament (Num. xxi. 27-30; Jer. xlviii. 45, 46), regards the Moabites as the children of Chemosh, and also calls them "the people of Chemosh".

Chemosh, God of the Moabites



Ashtar, Goddess of the Moabites

ISAIAH 15

All Poetry

(Moab is always associated with pride in the Book of Isaiah. They are an arrogant kindred people. They are a religious people, although idol worshipping. They worship the god Chemosh and are sometimes known as "The People of Chemosh".)

Verse 1

The Burden of Moab:

(When) in (one) night Ar is laid waste,
Moab shall be brought to silence,

(When) in (one) night Kir is laid waste,
Moab shall be brought to silence.

(Ar is the capital city of Moab - Kir is the chief fortress city of Moab)

Verse 2

(They will go up) to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep,
Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba.

(Bajith - City in Moab with a famous temple where the God Chemosh was worshipped)

(Dibon - Travel city taken and rebuilt by the Tribe of Gad at one time, lost to Moab in the time of Isaiah, at one time the capital city of Moab, rich pastoral area)

(Nebo - City in Moab, Mt. Nebo is where Moses saw the Promised Land)

(Medeba - Ancient important city in Moab, mentioned as one of four cities taken by Israel anciently Num. 21:30, Heshbon, Dibon & Nophah being the others - given to Gad and Reuben as part of their inheritance, Josh. 13:8-9, lost to Moab in the time of Isaiah.)

(and) On all their heads shall be baldness,
Every beard shall be cut off.

Verse 3

A In their streets,
B They shall gird themselves with sackcloth.

A On the tops of their houses, and in their streets,
B Every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.

Verse 4

(And) Heshbon shall cry (as well as) Elealeh,
Their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz.

(All cities in Northern Moab)

(therefore) The armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out,
(Their) life shall be grievous unto (them).

Verse 5

My heart shall cry out for Moab:

(Its) fugitives shall flee unto Zoar,
Its fugitives shall flee (as far as Eglath Shelishiah).
(Zoar - 1 of 5 famous "Cities of the Plains" in Moab)

(The name Eglath Shelishiah means "An Heifer of three years old" – Translators used the literal translation of the place name here instead of using it properly as a place name. Eglath Shelishiah was one of three major cities in Moab "not yet broken to the yoke" or that had never been in bondage before.)

(Ascending the slopes) of Luhith, with weeping shall they go,
(Descending) (on the road to) Horonaim, they shall raise up a cry of
destruction.

Verse 6

For the Waters of Nimrim shall be desolate:

(Waters of Nimrim – Reservoir in Moab that allowed for irrigation)

(For) The hay is withered away,
The grass faileth,
There is no green thing.

Verse 7

(Therefore) The abundance they have gotten,
(and) The abundance which they have laid up, shall they carry
away to the (Valley) of the Willows.

(They shall carry what's left of their belongings across the border to Edom – to escape.)

Verse 8

For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab:

(and) The howling thereof (shall reach) unto Eglaim (City name – "Drops of the Sea"),
The howling thereof (shall reach) unto Beer-elim (City name – "Well of Water").

Verse 9

(For) (Although) the waters of Dimon (Dibon) shall be full of blood,
(for) (Yet) will I bring more (than this) upon Dimon (Dibon):

(and) I will bring lions upon (them) that escapeth of Moab,
I will bring lions upon the remnant of the land.

(The name "Dimon" seems to be the same place name "Dibon". The interchange of "m" and "b" being common. But, the change also identifies the place "Dibon" with "Dimon" which means "blood".)

(Not only will Moab have its rivers turn to blood because of the slain, but lions or wild beasts will come to devour those that remain in the land.)

ISAIAH 16

Verse 1-12 Poetry
Verses 13 & 14 - Prose

Verse 1 Send ye the (couriers) to the ruler of the land from Sela to the Wilderness.
Send ye the (couriers) unto the mount of the Daughter of Zion.

(Moab is so distressed on every side by the Assyrians that they send couriers to all the nations around them from Sela where they live to Israel asking for help from anyone who will shelter them.)

Verse 2 For it shall be, that as a wandering bird(s) cast out of the(ir) nest,
So the Daughters of Moab shall be (cast out) at the Fords of Arnon.

(Canyon of Arnon - Natural boundary between Moab and other countries - Difficult to Cross)

Verse 3 **Take counsel, execute judgement!:**

Make thy shadow in the midst of the noonday,
AS (though it were) night!

(and) Hide the outcasts,
Bewray (betray) not him that wandereth (refugees)!

Verse 4 Let mine (the) outcasts (of Moab) dwell with thee,
Be thou a covert (refuge) to them from the face of the spoiler (from aggressors)!

(For) (When) the extortioner is at an end,
(When) the spoiler ceaseth.

(and) (When) the oppressors (tyrants) are (no more),
(When) the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

Verse 5 (And) (Then) in mercy shall (a) throne be established,
(and) (A judge) shall sit upon it in truth in the Tabernacle of David.

(and) Judging (faithful) and seeking judgment,
Hast(en)ing righteousness.

(God is saying that if you were righteous, oppressors would cease. At times Moab has been the oppressor. This is especially true of Israel that has at times been oppressed by Moab and then at times has helped Moab. In the end the Lord's servant will be faithful and righteous - qualities of the Messiah as well and will finally judge righteously. Moab could be part of this blessed people too if they would return to the Lord.)

Verse 6

We have heard of the pride of Moab:

(and) (It) is very proud of (its) haughtiness,
(and) It is very proud of its pride (boasting),
(and) It is very proud of its wrath (outbursts of false propaganda).

But (its) lies shall not be so,
(For this shall the Moabites be made to lament).

Verse 7

(Therefore) Moab shall howl for Moab,
Every one shall (have cause to) howl (for Moab).

For the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn,
Surely the foundations are stricken.

(Kir-Hareseth – A fortress city of Moab)

Verse 8

(For) The fields of Heshbon languish,
(and) The vines of Sibmah languish; the lords of the heathen have
broken down the principal plants thereof.

(Heshbon – At one time the Capitol City of Sihon, King of the Amorites – Moses had a victory over this king and the land was at the junction of the inheritance given to Reuben and Gad. Later this land was overtaken by Moab.)

(Sibmah – A town in Reuben, in the territory of Moab, on the east of Jordan, known for its coolness, fragrance and vines.)

(Their runner vines) are come even unto Jazer.
(The vines trail) through the wilderness; (their) branches are stretched out
(and) are gone over the sea.

Verse 9

(Therefore) I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer (for) the vine(s) of Sibmah,
I will water thee with my tears.

O Heshbon, and Elealeh:

(for) (When) the shouting (cheering) for thy summer fruits (is stilled),
(and for) (When) the shouting (cheering) for thy harvest is fallen.

Verse 10

(And) (When) gladness is taken away,
(and) (When) joy is taken away out of the plentiful field.

(and) (When) in the (orchards) there shall be no singing,
(When) in the vineyards there shall be no shouting (cheers).

(When) the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses,
(When) I have made their vintage shouting (cheers) to cease.

Verse 11 (Wherefore) (Then) my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab,
(and) (Then) mine inward parts shall sound like an harp for Kir-haresh.

Verse 12 **And it shall come to pass:**

When it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place(s),
When it is seen that (they) shall come to (their) sanctuary to pray,

(but) (It) shall not prevail. (do any good)

(Although the Lord feels sorry for the Moabites, when they attempt to be righteous and pray, they will not receive an answer, because they are praying in pride and to a false god.)

Verse 13 **This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning Moab**
Verse 14 **(hitherto). But, now the Lord hath spoken saying:**

Within three years,
As the years of an hireling. (As the terms of a lease)

(and) The glory of Moab shall be condemned. (become ignominy)
(With) All that great multitude (populace); the remnant shall be very small
and feeble. (There shall be very few left, and those of no account.)

(Moab has been told these things before, but now, the Lord is giving a specific time line for them in which to repent and join the Lord's people or they will be destroyed and very few of their people will survive.)