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Mo'ab is Destroyed in a Single Night

15: 1-9

Mo'ab is destroyed in a single night DIG: What do you imagine Isaiah foresees happening to these places that accounts for such wailing and mourning? What do you imagine the scene was like for these refugees fleeing the warfare in Mo'ab? What do they look like? What are they carrying? What are they feeling?

REFLECT: What part of your world suffers most because of political chaos and war? When you hear of the oppression and suffering that people experience due to these situations, what do you feel? How do you think God responds to such misery? Do you have a light touch on the things of this world? How so?

Chapters 15 and **16** are the second **oracle** against a neighboring nation. This **oracle** concerned **Mo'ab**, and was a term used to describe the region on the east side of the Dead Sea, extending from the Arnon River, which drains into the Dead Sea about twenty miles south of the sea's north shore, to the Zered River at the southern end of the sea where the territory of Edom began (**Numbers 21:10-13**). On the east, the border would have been less well defined, merely extending to the edge of the land capable of being farmed productively. The total territory would have been about thirty miles long and thirty miles wide, shockingly small when one thinks of a nation.

Judah's relationship with **Mo'ab** was always somewhat ambiguous (compared with Edom, where the hostility on both sides never seemed to stop). There was not only a close kinship between the two nations geographically (**Genesis 19:37; Deuteronomy 2:9**), but also because of their language. The relative ease of immigration and migration described in the book of **Ruth** also points toward a rather close relationship. This may account for what seems to be genuine cries of grief that appear in these chapters.

On the other hand, both **Judah** and **Mo'ab** claimed the territory of Ammon. That

land was given to Reuben and Gad (**Numbers 32:1-5** and **33-38**). This was a continuous source of conflict between them (**Numbers 21:24-30; Judges 3:12-30, 11:22-26; First Samuel 14:47; Second Kings 3:4-27**), which finally gave way to a deep-seated hostility. That being said, the words describing the fate of **Mo'ab** are much different than those of Babylonia, Assyria or the Philistia. There is a much greater sympathy for **the Moabites**, whereas a sort of grim satisfaction greeted the downfall of the others.



The **oracle** begins with a lament over a sudden disaster that will fall upon **Mo'ab** and reduce it to a nation of refugees. **Ar in Mo'ab is ruined, destroyed in a single night**, suddenly, unexpectedly! **Kir in Mo'ab is ruined, destroyed in a night (15:1)! Isaiah** describes the destruction of the capital and the fortress. The city of **Ar** was the capital, and the city of **Kir** was the chief fortress. **They** both fall in one night; **their** destruction is swift and sudden. This should be obvious to all. There is no security in this world (**Amos 6:1-3** and **Isaiah 5:26-30**).

After the destruction of the capital and the chief fortress, there is lament that will take hold of the whole land. **Dibon goes up to its temple, to its high places to weep (15:2a)**. **Dibon** is located four miles north of the Amon River and was given to the tribe of Gad at one time (**Numbers 32:34**). There is weeping in the **high places**, or idolatry-centered cities like **Dibon**. It was King Mesha's native city and a high place of **the Moabite** god Chemosh was located there. These **high places** were shrines originally built on hilltops and usually associated with pagan worship. The reason for the wailing seems to be that Chemosh had been unable to deliver his people (**Jeremiah 48:35**).

Mo'ab wails over Nebo and Medeba. Every head is shaved and every beard cut off. There was also wailing over the loss of key cities like **Nebo** and **Medeba**. **In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the roofs and in the public squares they all wail, prostrate with weeping. Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz. Therefore the armed men of Mo'ab cry out, and their hearts are faint (15:2b-4).** Heshbon and Elealeh were situated about two miles from one another and the wailing in one city could be heard in the other. **Isaiah** seems to have a greater sympathy for the fate of the Moabites than the downfall of the others mentioned in the oracles against the nations.

The four results are given. The **first** result is the devastation of the land. **My heart cries out over Mo'ab; her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishiyah. They go up the way to Luhith, weeping as they go; on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction. The waters of Nimrim are dried up and the grass is withered; the vegetation is gone and nothing green is left (15:5-6).**

Secondly, Mo'ab's wealth is carried away. **So the wealth they have acquired and stored up, they carry away over the Ravine of the Poplars (15:7).**

Thirdly, the cries of the fugitives fill the land from end to end and border to border. **Their outcry echoes along the border of Mo'ab; their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim, their lamentation as far as Beer Elim (15:8).**

Fourthly, the destruction is total and the horror complete. **Dimon's waters are full of blood, but I will bring still more upon Dimon - a lion upon the fugitives of Mo'ab and upon those who remain in the land (15:9).** There was nowhere to go. Running away would not give the fugitives any more security than staying behind. On the one hand, to try to escape across the wilderness might help them escape from the Assyrian army, but on the other hand it might deliver them to wild animals. There was only **Magor-Missabib** (see the commentary on **Jeremiah**, **to see link click [Da - Jeremiah and Pash'chur](#)**), or *terror on every side*.