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My Heart Laments for Mo'ab Like a Harp

16: 7-14

My heart laments for Mo'ab like a harp DIG: From God's perspective, what is the reason for Mo'ab's destruction? What does it tell you about God that He, through Isaiah, weeps because of their destruction even as He ordains it to occur? Why was it futile for the Moabites to go to their high place or shrine in Dibon where they worshiped the god Chemosh (see 44:17-20)? Since Judah would be tempted to look to Mo'ab as an ally against Assyria, what would God desire them to learn from this prophecy?

REFLECT: What is one of the false gods you once trusted in (sports, TV, family, job, technology, intellect)? How did that god serve only to wear you out? How does that god look to you now? Have these changes been merely cosmetic, or are they deep and significant?

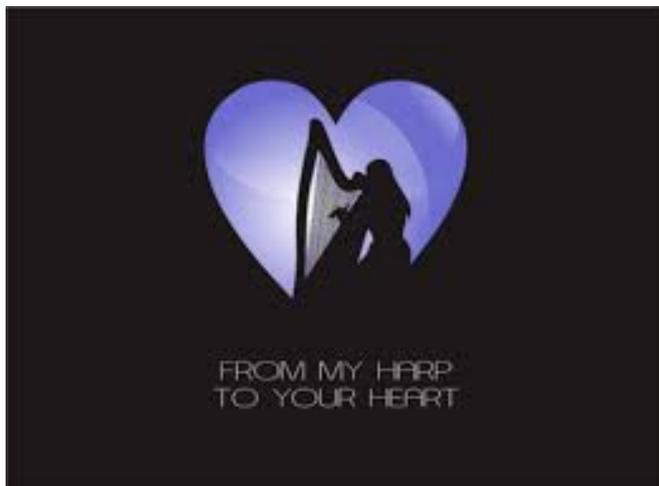
The thrust of the oracle is to discourage any who would be tempted to join with proud **Mo'ab** for mutual security. There would be no security with **her!** **She** would be reduced to abject poverty and will **herself** be forced to rely on **Judah's** only hope: **The Messiah (16:5).**

Therefore, because of her pride, the Moabites wail; they will wail together for Mo'ab. Lament and grieve for the men of Kir Hareseth. All of the wealth and abundance of **Mo'ab** was stripped away in a single night. **The fields of Heshbon wither, the vines of Sibmah also. The rulers of the nations have trampled down the choicest vines, which once reached Jazer and spread toward the desert. Their shoots spread out and went as far as the sea (16:7-8).** This included **their vineyards.** **They** were famous for **their vineyards** which were the source of **Mo'ab's** pride, but this was about to be destroyed. The invading army and the drought that would accompany it would wipe out **her** chances for survival.

The prospect of **Mo'ab's** sudden destruction reduces **Isaiah** to **tears.** **So, I weep, as Jazer weeps, for the vines of Sibmah; O Heshbon, O Elealeh, I drench**

you with tears! Just as **Jeremiah** wept over the destruction of those **he** denounced, so **Isaiah weeps** here. This also speaks to the compassion of **God**, for **Isaiah** normally identified **himself** with **ADONAI**. Just because **he** was the messenger of judgment, it did not mean **he** was happy about it, especially with a people so close to **the Israelites**. **The shouts of joy over your ripened fruit and over your harvests have been stilled (16:9)**. Therefore, the **God** who has quieted **the shouts of joy** was also the **God** who **weeps** for those in despair.

Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards; no one sings or shouts in the vineyards: no one treads out wine at the presses, for I have put an end to the shouting (16:10). It was a common custom among the Egyptians to sing at their work. The Hebrews did the same and were especially jubilant at the time of grape gathering. They plucked off grapes with **shouts of joy**, and carried them to the winepress. Accompanied with musical instruments, they soothed the labor of treading the grapes by singing. (**Judges 9:27; Jeremiah 25:30 and 48:33**).⁵²



Isaiah is affected by **Mo'ab's** wailing and **his** heart is distraught by **her** distress when **he** says: **My heart** cries out, literally, *my bowels moan*, **for Mo'ab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth (16:11)**. **Isaiah** knew what it was like to have **his** stomach churn over shock, anxiety or grief. Yet, despite **Mo'ab's** pain, **she** would rather present **herself** to **her** own gods rather than seek the protection of Judah. **When Mo'ab appears at her high place, she only wears herself out; when she goes to her shrine to pray, it is to no avail (16:12)**. But the gods of **Mo'ab** would utterly fail. In prostrating **herself** to them **she only wears herself out**. **Mo'ab** will go to **her** own place of safety rather to the place of safety

in Zion. As a result, **she** will not succeed. **Mo'ab's** religious ritual of sacrificing **at her high place** and praying at **her shrine** would not help ease **God's** judgment. It never does.

Mo'ab had already suffered greatly. Now the prophet announced that there would be further destruction. While **Isaiah** initially prophesied about the destruction of **Mo'ab**, **God** did not tell **him** how long it would take before its fulfillment. But then came a second revelation where **God** spoke to **Isaiah** about the timing of the destruction of **Mo'ab**. **This is the word the LORD has already spoken concerning Mo'ab** in times past **(16:13)**.

Isaiah says that the prophecy that **he** had given earlier was incomplete. **But now the LORD** says: **Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them, Mo'ab's spender and all her many people will be despised (16:14a). As a hireling does not work a moment longer than the set time, so the fall of Mo'ab will not be deferred for a moment longer than the three-year period mentioned.** *The emphasis here is on the exactness of timing.* The vineyards, which were the pride of **Mo'ab**, will be brought into contempt **within three years**. The remnant, or **survivors, will be very few and feeble (16:14b)**. Even this will be better than Babylon, which will be totally destroyed. No remnant will survive from Babylon. But as other prophets make clear, there will be a land of **Mo'ab** in the Millennial Kingdom, that will come from this small remnant of **survivors**.