

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THEME:

The Burden of Moab.

REMARKS:

This brief chapter records the third burden, actually, in view of the fact that Palestine (14:28-32) is the second.

It is difficult to see at first that this prophecy concerning a small nation in a faraway place in a distant day could have any bearing upon us today, how could the temporary distress of these obscure people convey a message to us? We have been through two world wars with all the attendant suffering and bloodshed.

We shall find here, as well as in every Scripture, that there is a message for us as “**all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable . . .**”

Moab was the nation which came from Lot through the incestuous relationship with his eldest daughter. The illegitimate son of this sordid affair was the father of the Moabites. These people became the inveterate and persistent enemies of the nation of Israel. Balak, their king, hired Balaam, the prophet, to curse them for he feared them when they passed through the land of Moab. The lovely story told in the book of Ruth concerns a maid of Moab. David sought refuge there for his parents from the hand of Saul.

Moab is representative of those who make a profession of being children of God, but actually they have no vital relationship with Him (see Hebrews 12:8). They finally become enemies of God's children and will seek to do them harm. Modern Moabites are described in II Timothy 3:1-5 and Jude 14-16.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (II Timothy 3:1-5).

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts: and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage (Jude 14-16).

Judgment came upon ancient Moab as it will upon modern Moabites. The destruction of Moab was sudden and devastating. It led to a long night of weeping, and no joy in the morning. It elicited the sympathy of the prophet, as it was frightful! This destruction was wrought first by Assyria and later by Babylon.

OUTLINE:

- 1. The SUDDEN DESTRUCTION of Moab and the Attendant Sorrow.** Verses 1-4
- 2. The SYMPATHY of the Prophet for Zoar—A Sad Spectacle.** Verses 5-9

COMMENT:

Verse 1—The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence;

This burden of Moab came suddenly, “**because [for] in the night.**” This expression is repeated twice to emphasize the suddenness of the storm which struck the nation. The storm came at night and their night of weeping never ended. At first they were numbed by the suddenness of it all, and there was silence. The silence was broken by an eternal howling and wailing.

“**Kir**” is “*Kerak*”—on a mountain peak about 10 miles from the southeast corner of the Dead Sea.

Verse 2—He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.

It is well to note the number of proper names given in this chapter which refer to geographical places. Dibon is where the Moabite stone was found.

Bajith means “*house*.” Here it evidently refers to the temple of Chemosh. In this time of trouble the people flock to the temple. During days of distress people seek for relief in religion and they crowd the temples and churches. This is merely the fleshly instinct of the old nature and is the conduct of those who are professors.

The Moabites turned to a heathen temple and pagan god. Modern man goes to a liberal church, while neither comes to the living God in genuine obedience. Religion is merely an escape mechanism from the tragedies and raw realities of life.

Verse 3—**In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.**

The impressive fact of this realism is the deep sorrow of the people as they survey the awful aspect of the total destruction of the nation. “**Weeping abundantly**” means to be “*drowned in tears.*”

There are no “**songs in the night**” here. Ancient Moabites and modern Moabites can only sing the blues. If there were any of God’s children here in “**much affliction,**” there would likewise be the “**joy of the Holy Ghost.**”

Verse 4—**And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.**

It is not necessary for us to locate the geographical positions of those cities. It simply means that all the great centers of Moabite culture were involved in this havoc which was wrought by the enemy.

Verse 5—**My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.**

Although Moab was the enemy of Israel, the prophet’s heart goes out in sympathy to Moab because of the terror that has come upon them. This reveals the heart of God, in spite of a people’s sin. God still loves, and will extend mercy. “**Zoar**” is the place where Lot took refuge at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:18-32). The Moabites will take refuge in Zoar as Lot did of old.

Verse 6—**For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.**

Verse 7—**Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.**

Verse 8—**For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.**

Verse 9—**For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.**

A detailed description is given here of the further ravaging of the land of Moab. It is likened to a flood that covers the land.

“It is very striking that at the first Lambeth Conference in 1867, the Anglican Bishops affirmed belief in the Second Coming. A statement they issued contained these words:

Brethren, beloved, with one voice we warn you; the time is short; the Lord cometh; watch and be sober . . . and the good Lord make you perfect and keep your bodies, souls and spirits until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In spite of world-symptoms overwhelmingly graver today, recent Lambeth Conferences have issued no such utterance.

~ end of chapter 15 ~

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