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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Isaiah 15.

(2015)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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Isaiah 15.

Topics.

- An oracle concerning Moab (the burden of Moab, in KJV).
- The armed men of Moab raise a loud cry of destruction as they flee to Zoar.
- The abundance they have they carry away for the waters are full of blood.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth.

Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).
3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

An oracle concerning Moab. (The burden of Moab, in KJV).

Isaiah 15:1-3 -----¹Because Ar of Moab is laid waste in a night, Moab is undone; because Kir of Moab is laid waste in a night, Moab is undone. ²He has gone up to the temple, (Bajith in KJV) and to Dibon, to the high places to weep; over Nebo and over Medeba Moab wails. On every head is baldness; every beard is shorn; ³in the streets they wear sackcloth; on the housetops and in the squares everyone wails and melts in tears.

The oracle of Moab (burden of Moab in KJV): this oracle continues in the next chapter. Its focus is the future history of the destruction of the Moabites, the merciless and cold-hearted enemies of Israel. It is a grievous prophecy of the impending doom of Moab which began by the Assyrians and was completed by the Babylonian emperors.

Moab: was the child that the firstborn (the elder daughter) had to her father Lot. He became the father of the Moabites. The Moabites did not meet Israel with bread and water when Israel Came out of Egypt. They hired Balaam to curse Israel, but God only gave Balaam prophecies of blessing for Israel. Balaam still greedy for Balak's the king of the Moabites reward told him to encouraged the men of Israel to mix with the Moabite women so that they could enticed the men of Israel to worship their gods. Balak took Balaam's advice and encouraged the men of Israel to mix with the woman of Moab which they not only did, but also embraced their gods, which eventually brought God's judgment upon them. (The full story in found in Numbers chapter 22 and 23) (Deut. 23:3-6) (Joshua 24:9-10).

Ar: (v1) comes from the Hebrew word (*Ar*) it literally means a city as a place guarded by a watch, but in its widest sense can refer to a camp, a post, a town or a court. Here it refers to a chief city in Moab perhaps the metropolis of it (Num. 21:28) (Deut. 2:9) on the south of the river Arnon.

Kir: (v1) comes from the Hebrew word (*Qiyir*) it literally means a fortress (especially one surrounded with walls (as built in a trench). It is a place in Assian and also in Moab not far from Ar, towards the south.

Ar and Kir of Moab is laid waste in a night: (v1) during the night is the best time suited for a surprise hostile invasion. The fact that this destruction was to be done during the night when all are sleep (except perhaps a few watchmen) highlights the unexpectedness and suddenness of the attack and the calamity and terror that would have come upon the chief cities of Moab and their surrounding land.

Dibon (Dimon in KJV) (v2) comes from the Hebrew word (*Diybown*) it means to mope, pine and be in sorrow it is the name of three places in Palestine.

The high places: (v2) comes from the Hebrew word (*bamah*) it literally means elevation, to be high and to wave it refers to the usual places of sacrifice in the East.

Bajith: (v2) comes from the Hebrew word (*Bayith*) it can refer to a palace, a house, a family or a temple.). Here it is a place in Palestine adjacent to Mount Nebo not far from the northern shore of the Dead Sea (Deut. 34:1). Chemosh the idol of Moab was worshipped there.

Nebo: (v2) comes from the Hebrew word (*N^ebow*) it is the name of a Babylonian deity and a mountain in Moab and a place in Palestine

Medeba: (v2) comes from the Hebrew word (*Meyd^eba'*) it literally means water of quiet and can refer to a water course, a spring or a flood. It was a place in Palestine south of Heshbon, on a hill east of Jordan.

Baldness; shorn beards and sackcloth: (v2) are all signs of great grief and mourning. The Orientals regarded the beard with peculiar veneration. To cut one's beard off was one of the greatest marks of sorrow and mortification. (Jer. 48:37).

Everyone wails and melts in tears: (v3) Isaiah in this vision sees a time coming that will be so grievous upon the people of Ar, Kir, Nebo and Medeba of Moab, because these towns and their land will be brought to such ruin that the people will go up to their temple in Dibon and their high places of worship in deep grief, sorrow and mourning in contrast to going with joy as they normally would.

The Armed Men of Moab Raise a Loud Cry of Destruction as they flee to Zoar.

Isaiah 15:4-6 ----- ⁴And 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. ⁵My 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. ⁶For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withers away, the grass fails, there is no green thing.

Heshbon: (v4) comes from the Hebrew word (*Cheshbown*) it literally means to plot and plan by implication it carries the idea of intelligence and reason. It was a city of Moab twenty miles east of the Jordan until Sihon the king of the Amorites fought against the king of Moab and took all his land as far as the Arnon out of his hand (Num. 21:25-26). Israel later conquered Sihon the king of the Amorites and took possession of their land. They settled in in Heshbon and all the cities of the Amorites and in all their villages.

The land was assigned to the tribe of Reuben who rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh and Kiriathaim (Num. 32:37). Heshbon, was allotted to the Levites (Josh. 21:39-40). After Assyria carried away of the ten tribes it was recovered by the Moabites (Jer. 48:1-47). Jeremiah calls it, "the renown of Moab" (the praise of Moab in KJV) (Jer. 48:2). The town still survives under the same name.

Elealeh: (v4) comes from the Hebrew word (*'El'ale'*) from Hebrew ('el) and Hebrew ('alah) which literally means God is going up, but it also carries the idea of strength, power and might especially of the Almighty, but it can be used also of any deity, god or idol. Elealeh was a place east of the Jordan about a mile from Heshbon (Num. 32:37) that stands on the summit of a hill. It was a town of Reuben and of the Moabites at different times in history (Num. 21:25-26) (Num. 32:3) (Numbers 32:37).

Jahaz: (v40) (sometimes called Jahazah in KJV) (Josh. 13:18) comes from the Hebrew word (*Yahats*) it literally means to stamp (perhaps as a threshing-floor). It was a frontier town East of the Jordan at the utmost borders of the land of Moab (Num. 21:23), It was given to Reuben and was situated a short distance north of Ar, the capital of Moab. (Josh. 21:36). It was near Jahaz that Moses defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites.

The armed soldiers and warriors of Moab will not only be struck with bewilderment, panic, fear and terror, but also lose their spirit of courage and join in the lamentation of all the people of Moab. The people will cry out from a broken spirit and from the hopelessness of the armies of Moab to defend the nation. The statement, "their cry will be heard from city to city," expresses the utter despair, horror, grief and unexpected and sudden overthrow of the cities of Moab.

His soul trembles: (v4) (his life shall be grievous unto him in KJV) (v4) refer to the heart and life of the Moabites it carries the idea that the Moabites will long for death to free them from the dreadful calamities that will come upon them and that they are powerless to prevent.

The entire nation of Moab will be so overwhelmed with the dreadful calamities and horror that their life will be wearisome in that nothing but destruction and sorrow will surround them.

Zoar: (v5) comes from the Hebrew word (*Tso`ar*) it means little, to be a little one, to be small, figuratively it carries the idea of being ignoble and to be brought low. It was a small town East of the Jordan near to Sodom bordering upon Moab on the east side of the Dead Sea. It was the town the LORD favoured in that he did not overthrow it so that Lot and his family could escape to it for safety. (Gen. 19:20-22).

The voice of Moab in her is heard to Zoar carries the following ideas: -

- The sound of Moabites fleeing their burning cities will be heard even to the city of Zoar.
- The fugitives of Moab fleeing the invading enemy will cry along the path as they wander to Zoar.
- Those in the city of Zoar will hear the cry of the fugitives fleeing the cities of Moab.
- Those who escape from the cities of Moab will cry out to Zoar as they flee there for safety

His fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: (v5) based upon the following verses: -

- The LORD said to him (Abram), "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. (Gen. 15:9-10).
- The cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate. (Jer. 48:34).

The expression "His fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old," (v5) most likely presents the idea of a three year old heifer being most miserable as it is taken from its pastures of freedom to the altar of sacrifice likewise the fugitives of Moab will be most miserable as they flee their cities with weeping because of the destruction throughout their entire land. It seems to be an expression used to highlight the truth that the strength of the Moabites will be brought under the yoke of their enemies as the strength of a full grown heifer is brought under the yoke of man as it is lead to the slaughter and their extreme misery and loud cry of lamentation as they flee to Zoar. Moab had been like a wild heifer, but was about to be broken and brought under the yoke of chastisement.

The ascent (climb) of Luhith they go up weeping; on the road to Horonaim: (v5) the word Luhith comes from the Hebrew word (*Luwchiyth*) it literally means flooded. No city has been identified bearing this name, but it is evident enough that it was some elevated path in the extremity of Moab, but where, is not clearly ascertained.

The Moabites are pictured climbing as they go with weeping to find a place of safety which implies that it was a very high place, because of this some suppose it was a path or tack up a mountain or through the mountains between Areopolis and Zoar because this whole region is mountainous.

Horonaim: (v5) comes from the Hebrew word (*Choronayim*) it literally means, double cave-town. It was a town of Moab not far from Zoar (Jer 48:5). But since the region abounds to this day with caves used for dwellings the exact location of where it was situated is uncertain.

My heart cries out for Moab: (v5) (my heart shall cry out for Moab in KJV). This is expressive of deep compassion and an expression of pity that signifies Isaiah's great inward pain and anguish because of the calamities and suffering of others. It denotes the deep empathy that a holy man of God would have toward others even

when predicting the ills that should come upon them. Isaiah had seen in this vision the future evils to come upon the Moabites and their lamentations as though they were present and very real before his eyes and his own mind and seeing their pain he feels their grief's and declares them as though he is feeling their sorrow himself.

There is a lesson we can all learn from this: it should not be joy in the heart when proclaiming woes and judgment upon the wicked, but sorrow and grief over their impending suffering and doom. In the same way Isaiah mourned over the judgment he pronounced upon the Moabites ministers and preachers of the Gospel should feel the same deep and tender feeling of sympathy on account of the suffering of sinners. Isaiah was himself moved with pity for Moab, all true prophets filled with the Spirit of God when denouncing the wrath of God against sinners should do it with tender sorrow dwelling within their hearts and not with mocking, scorn and exultation.

They shall raise up a cry of destruction: (v5) a cry of destruction is a cry of great grief, sorrow and heartache it is the common cry of all who suffer great loss and will be the universal cry on earth in the Day of Judgment in all places where the wicked and those who deny God dwell.

Nimrim or Beth Nimrim: (v6) comes from the Hebrew word (*Nimriym*) it literally means clear waters. It was East of the Jordan a city of Reuben east of the Dead Sea (Num. 32:1-3) (Jer. 48:34) celebrated for its pure fountains and springs of water. The stream flows into the Jordan River giving fertility to that part of the country of Moab as it flows through the land. It is possible that the waters dried up through a great drought, but it is more likely that they failed by the common practice in times of war of an enemy diverting the waters, or damming them with stones and trees, etc. The waters of Nimrim are also mentioned as being made desolate in (Jer. 48:34). It is very likely they were a visible and eye catching system of reservoirs or channels of water used to irrigate the fields.

The grass is withered, the vegetation fails and the greenery is no more: (v6) the Moabite fields which are normally cultivated and fruitful will be made dry and barren and devoid of any farmer to cultivate the land so that the grass fails, the hay withers away and no green thing can be seen so the land yields nothing to support life.

The Abundance they Have they Carry Away for the Waters are Full of Blood.

Isaiah 15:7-9 ----- ⁷Therefore the abundance they have gained and what they have laid up they carry away over the Brook of the Willows. ⁸For a cry has gone around the land of Moab; her wailing reaches to Eglaim; her wailing reaches to Beer-elim. ⁹For the waters of Dibon are full of blood; for I will bring upon Dibon even more, a lion for those of Moab who escape, for the remnant of the land.

Here Isaiah repeats what he has previously said to magnify the horror of what is about to come upon the Moabites. This lamentation will not be limited to a few or a single town or city, but the calamity and terror will be common to every city and country of Moab even to the extremities of its land. Everything the Moabites had established their towns, homes, farms, orchards, water channels and reservoirs will all be brought to ruin.

Eglaim (v8) comes from the Hebrew word (*'Eglayim*) meaning a double pond it was a place in Moab

Beer-elim: (v8) comes from the Hebrew word (*B^e'er 'Eliym*) it literally means, well of heroes it was a place in the desert of Moab

Dibon (Dimon in KJV) (v9) comes from the Hebrew word (*Diybown*) it means to mope, pine and be in sorrow it is the name of three places in Palestine.

The cry is gone round about (v8) the extent of the cry of distress and lamentation encompassed the whole land of Moab and the calamity is emphasised by naming its farthest points there is no part of the land which is not filled with lamentation and distress.

The waters of Dibon are full of blood: (v9) means that the invading armies attack without mercy, the slaughter is so great that the flowing blood will stain the waters of the fountains, the streams, the rivers and brooks of the Moabites blood red.

A lion for those of Moab who escape: (v8) lions in Scripture are often used as symbols of fierce and mighty armies devouring their prey (Jer. 4:7) (Jer. 5:6) in this context they are most likely symbols of the Assyrian or other invaders and carry the idea that God will bring upon the Moabites who survive the first invasion even greater sorrow and grief.

Summing it up: Isaiah describes the woeful lamentations heard through the entire country of Moab, when it became a prey to the Assyrian army. All that made them a great nation and all their chief cities and all they had achieved was about to be brought to ruin in a very short period of time (within three years) (Isaiah 16:14). Those who deny God and live to get abundance of this world rarely consider how soon it can all be taken from them. This prophecy continues in the next chapter.

End.