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## Isaiah 16

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Isaiah 16.

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### Topics.

- Send the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to Zion.
- Like fleeing birds scattered from the nest, so are the Moabites at Arnon.
- Let Moab shelter among you until he who tramples has vanished.
- Moab is proud, full of arrogance and is not right therefore let Moab wail.
- The fruitful field are laid waste no songs are sung therefore I moan.
- God proclaims, "In three years the glory of Moab will be few and feeble.

**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.

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

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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.

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## ISAIAH 16:1

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### **Send the Lamb to the Ruler of the Land from Sela to Zion.**

- **Isaiah 16:1:** Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela, by way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion.

In the previous chapter Isaiah had a prophetic vision of the future woeful lamentations that will be heard throughout the entire country of Moab when it becomes a prey to their enemy (Assyria and Babylon). In the vision Isaiah saw that all that made the Moabites a great nation 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). This chapter is a continuation of this vision of the impending doom of Moab. In this chapter Isaiah gives the Moabites counsel what to do to prevent the threatened desolation that is about to come upon them. In these first words he advises them to send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela, by way of the desert to the mount of the daughter of Zion. There has been a variety of interpretations of this verse since there is a certain amount of difficulty in understanding the words, "send the lamb," and who the ruler of the land maybe.

### **Things we do know:**

- Isaiah is advising the Moabites to send a lamb to the ruler of the people to make peace and stay the doom he as seen in the prophetic vision of the previous chapter coming upon the Moabites.
- The lamb is to be sent from Sela through the desert to Mount Zion.
- Sela comes from the Hebrew word (*Ce/a`*) in Greek it is Petra meaning the same as Sela. It literally means a rock, especially a craggy rock and carries the idea of a fortress as a strong hold and figuratively to be lofty. It refers to the rock-city and capital of Idumæa in Arabia southeast of the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. It derived its name from the fact that it was situated in a vast hollow in a rocky mountain, and consisted almost entirely of dwellings hewn out of the rock. The country around it was a vast wilderness and open pasture land to which the Moabites had fled on the invasion from the west (Isa 15:7). It was celebrated for its flocks and at one time the capital of the Edomites (2 Kings 19:7)

**The word Lamb:** comes from the Hebrew word (*kar*) it carries the idea of plumpness and of a fat lamb it can refer to a pasture lamb (as in one that is harmless) or to a full-grown wild ram (as in one that charges rams or batters). Large numbers of lambs were used in the daily sacrifice in the temple, and in other sacrifices of Israel. These became food for the Levitical Priesthood and their families. It was part of the taxes the people of Israel paid to the Levitical Priesthood therefore it is not improbable that the tribute of the nation's in subject to Israel was often required to be paid in animals to be used for burnt-offering.

**Lambs in this context most likely refer to one of the following two:**

1. A captain or guardsman in the sense of a leader (of the flock) a life-guardsman since it was common practice during the era of the Old Testament for a king who was planning to send his armies to war against another kingdom to send a captain/leader to that kingdom and offer them terms of surrender or peace before he sent his armies against the nation he was planning to invade. Should this be so it would appear that Isaiah is warning the Moabites to send a leader to Zion to plead what they must do to make peace with Judah and prevent their kingdoms from being destroyed?
2. A lamb or lambs (using the singular for the plural) to be given as an act of submission to Judah and to be paid collectively as a tribute to the people of Israel and taken to Mount Zion. During David's reign he subdued the Moabites and they had covenanted to pay to the kings of Israel tributaries of lambs and wool to him.
  - David defeated Moab and he measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground. Two lines he measured to be put to death, and one full line to be spared. And the Moabites became servants to David and brought tribute. (2 Sam. 8:2).

The following verses show that in the days of Ahab, Mesha, the then king of Moab, had paid a tribute of sheep and lambs to the king of Israel.

- Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and he had to deliver to the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams. <sup>5</sup>But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. (2 Kings 3:4-5).

The Moabites, being conquered by David were to pay tribute of lambs and wool to him and to the following kings in his line the kings of Judah (the two tribes at Zion and Jerusalem), but when the kingdom was divided in Rehoboam's time, the tribute was paid to the kings of Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria), which continued until the death of Ahab king of Israel, when the Moabites rebelled, and refused to pay the tribute (2 Kings 3:5). Therefore it is not improbable to suppose that Isaiah is now calling on the Moabites to renew their covenant and pay the tribute of lambs and wool, not to the northern kingdom of Israel, which was on the point of extinction, but to the king of Judah David's lawful heir and the true ruler of the land. If they set their hearts against the word of Isaiah God and continued in their rebellion against the king of the land and refused to submit to Israel's rule God would bring Assyria and Babylon upon them as judgment. Isaiah is warning Moab to gain the favour and protection of Judah by paying what they covenant to pay to the king at Jerusalem on Mount Zion. Even though it is Assyria and Babylon that eventually bring the destruction that Isaiah in his vision saw coming upon Moab (in the previous chapter) and not Israel, it is Israel they have to do the right thing by. This is because it is God who they have to appease since He is not only the King of Israel, but the King of the whole earth as the following Scriptures show: -

- Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. <sup>11</sup>Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup>Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Ps. 2:10-12).

The God of the whole earth.

- Your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. (Isaiah 54:5).

The God of all the kingdoms of the earth.

- LORD God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. (Isaiah 37:16).

The idea is that Moab is to send the lambs to Zion for sacrifice to God who is the ruler and God of the whole earth. At this time Sela appears to have been in the possession of the Moabites and would therefore be in the remotest part of their territory so the words, "Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela, by way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion," (v1) may carry one of the following three ideas. Send the tribute of lambs and wool you covenanted to pay to Zion: -

1. From even the remotest part of your land.
2. Through the wilderness of Sela, because it was the only safe way to travel because of the enemies spoken of in the previous chapter that are surrounding the cities of Moab with the intention of invading them.
3. From the region of Sela, because it was favourable pastureland for keeping flocks and therefore may have had more than enough lambs to pay the debt.

Sela maybe mentioned for one of these three reasons or for all three or for some other reason which was then evident to Isaiah and the people of Moab, but is now unknown to us. Whichever it maybe the core message of Isaiah can be summed up in the following colloquial words, "People of Moab look at your miserable and desperate condition you have tried all other ways, and even sought to your idols for help (Isaiah 16:2), but all in vain; now seek to the God of Israel, who alone can help you; do the right thing by His people, before He brings His judgment upon you and destroys you."

**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).

**By way of the desert:** (v1) refers to wilderness surrounding Sela.

**The daughter of Zion:** (v1) the word daughter is a term often applied to a beautiful city or town. In Scripture Jerusalem is pictured as the mother city and the lesser towns on Mount Zion (the hill Jerusalem sits on) are referred to as her daughters. This principal of submitting and giving to the ruler of the land what is owed to him maybe applied to all people of all generations in that to stay the hand of God's judgment coming upon the earth, the Gospel calls all to submit to Christ the true King and Ruler of the earth and willingly give to him ourselves as a living sacrifice to honour and praise his name.

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## ISAIAH 16:2

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**Like Fleeing Birds Scattered, so are the Moabites at Arnon.**

- **Isaiah 16:2:** Like fleeing birds, like a scattered nest, so are the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.

**Daughters of Moab:** (v2) the word daughter is a term often applied to a beautiful city or town. In the language of personification, the capital city of Moab would be seen as the mother of Moab while the lessor cities would be pictured as her daughters.

**Arnon:** (v2) comes from the Hebrew word (*'Arnown*) it refers to creak or stream (that emits a noisome sound). Figuratively it means to shout, cry or sing aloud (usually for joy and triumph). It literally refers to a river east of the Jordan that formed the border of the land of Moab and its territory. Isaiah in this vision that the LORD is giving him vividly sees in picture form within his mind that the people of Moab will be scattered like fleeing birds in flight from their prey to the remotest parts of their land (i.e., even the borders) if they do not renew their covenant and pay the tribute of lambs and wool to the ruler of the land being at that time the king on the throne of Jerusalem on Mount Zion.

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## ISAIAH 16:3-5

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### **Let Moab Shelter among You until He who Tramples has Vanished.**

- **Isaiah 16:3-5:** Give counsel; grant justice; make your shade like night at the height of noon; shelter the outcasts; do not reveal the fugitive; <sup>4</sup>let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you; shelter to them from the destroyer. When the oppressor is no more and destruction has ceased, and he who tramples underfoot has vanished from the land. <sup>5</sup>then a throne will be established in steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness."

Remember this is a prophetic vision Isaiah is seeing concerning the future of Moab. Isaiah sees that the Moabites do not heed his warning to renew their covenant and pay the tribute of lambs and wool to the king of the land ruling from Mount Zion and therefore God brings an oppressor (Assyria and Babylon) into their land to lay it waste (spoken of in the previous chapter). Now Isaiah shifts his focus from Moab and speaks to the people of Israel telling them to act justly toward the Moabites who survive the onslaught of their enemy. When they see Moabite fugitives or they come into their midst they are to give them shelter and hide them from the enemy who armies have trampled their people under their feet and destroyed their cities.

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Isaiah then proceeds to proclaim a prophetic message of hope saying that a day will come when those who oppress and pervert justice are destroyed from the land and a throne will be established in steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David (the throne of Jerusalem) one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness. This can apply to any future king of Israel that does what is right before the people and before God, because when justice and protection for everyone reigns supreme in the land, then a throne of love is established amongst the people, but its ultimate prophetic fulfilment refers to the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns in glory as King of King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power.

The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:



- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## ISAIAH 16:6-9

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### **Moab is Proud, Arrogant and Not Right, therefore Let Moab Wail.**

- **Isaiah 16:6-9:** We have heard of the pride of Moab—how proud he is!—of his arrogance, his pride, and his insolence; in his idle boasting he is not right. <sup>7</sup>Therefore let Moab wail for Moab, let everyone wail. Mourn, utterly stricken, for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth. <sup>8</sup>For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the lords of the nations have struck down its branches (Moabs), which reached to Jazer and strayed to the desert; its shoots spread abroad and passed over the sea. <sup>9</sup>Therefore I weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sibmah; I drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh; for over your summer fruit and your harvest the shout has ceased. Kir-hareseth, Heshbon, Sibmah, Jazer, Sibmah and Elealeh were all cities and towns of Moab. It is interesting to note that the various names of these cities combined carry the following meanings:
  - To be a sweet fragrance, intelligent, able to reason, helpful and protect.
  - To be as a strong fortress, to plot and plan and embraces the idea of God going up.

Which highlights the truth that it matters not how magnificent a city is, how brilliant and intelligent its rulers are or how mighty its armies and weapons of war maybe, if the rulers and the people of such a city are wicked, corrupt and deny God they are storing up His wrath and judgment against themselves. In these verses Moab is pictured as a mighty tree with many branches (its nations) and a vine with many shoots (its cities) that had spread across the land, but now in this prophetic vision of Isaiah he sees the branches being cut off and the shoots of the vine destroyed, because of the prideful boasting and arrogance of Moab.

**I weep and drench you with my tears:** (v9) Isaiah weeps with great sorrow as he sees in this vision the terror and horror that is about to come upon the land and people of Moab. This is the manifestation of the true heart of a prophet, no minister or preacher proclaiming God's judgment

and wrath to come upon sinners should proclaim such ills with an attitude of mockery and scorn. The following Scripture shows that even God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked:

- Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? (Ezekiel 18:23).
- I (the LORD) have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live. (Ezek. 18:32).
- As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezekiel 33:11).

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## ISAIAH 16:10-11

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### **Fruitful Field are Laid Waste No Songs are Sung therefore I Moan.**

- **Isaiah 16:10-11:** And joy and gladness are taken away from the fruitful field, and in the vineyards no songs are sung, no cheers are raised; no treader treads out wine in the presses; I have put an end to the shouting. <sup>11</sup>Therefore my inner parts moan like a lyre for Moab, and my inmost self for Kir-hareseth.

In three years (v14) the glory of Moab will be brought into contempt, their cities will be destroyed and only a few will remain. The LORD is pictured as drenching Moab with His tears and His inner most parts moaning for Moab's people. When a king takes his armies to war, wives, children, strangers foreigners etc., remain home, but if the king is defeated these innocent people are slaughtered or taken prisoners and the woman often raped, this is why the LORD mourns over the destruction of any nation that is afflicted with war, innocent people suffer, because of the king's pride, greed and lust for power.

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## ISAIAH 16:12-14

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### **In Three Years, the Glory of Moab will Be Few and Feeble.**

- **Isaiah 16:12-14:** And when Moab presents himself, when he wearies himself on the high place, when he comes to his sanctuary to pray, he will not prevail. <sup>13</sup>This is the word that the LORD spoke concerning Moab in the past. <sup>14</sup>But now the LORD has spoken, saying, "In three years, like the years of a hired worker, the glory of Moab will be brought into contempt, in spite of all his great multitude, and those who remain will be very few and feeble."

The statement, "When the Moabites present themselves on their high places and in their sanctuary to pray, they will not prevail," implies that there were times when they did pray at these places and their prayers did prevail. This is not because the gods they believed in answered their prayers since there are no other gods, but the one true God the God of creation and source of all life, but because it was in God's will that their prayer would be answered and fulfilling such prayers fulfilled His plans and purposes.

Added to this God does allow soothsayers, clairvoyants and false prophets to touch on some truths to test His people if they will follow Him and His word or follow the clairvoyants, soothsayers and false prophets who teach contrary to God's word and proclaim another Gospel.

### **This is the word that the LORD spoke concerning Moab in the past:**

(v13) Moses is seeing in the present moment in this vision in his mind that the LORD is giving to him concerning the pitiful future events that are about to fall upon the Moabites and proclaiming it in amazing detail to warn them to turn from their evil ways before God's judgment comes upon them within the next three years and only a few sorrowful and feeble survivors remain.



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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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