



Isaiah 16

A Plea for Mercy ~ Moab's Demise

Chapters 15 and 16 are really one prophecy. Chapter 15 explains why God is judging Moab and Chapter 16 has two parts: Moab's cry to Israel for shelter and the devastation he will encounter as God's judgement is released.

The fact that Moab is crying out for shelter only shows the closeness of the relationship they had with God's people. Even under God's hand of judgement, Moab turns to Israel for support. To no avail. Moab will be defeated and Israel will prevail.

It's easy to "Monday morning quarterback" when it comes to our opinions about the way the Lord chooses to move on behalf of His people. More than anything, God wants us to love Him and trust Him. One of the ways he builds our trust is by moving in a way we don't expect and seeing how we respond.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 65:1 Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela, by way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion. ² Like fleeing birds, like a scattered nest, so are the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon ³ "Give counsel; grant justice; make your shade like night at the height of noon; shelter the outcasts; do not reveal the fugitive ⁴ let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you; be a 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 ⁵ 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.</p> <p>⁶ 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. ⁷ Therefore let Moab wait for Moab, let everyone wail. Mourn, utterly stricken, for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth.</p>	<p>a 16:1 Or possibly a place in Edom (2 Kings 14:7) called Sela, which means "rock or cliff."</p> <p>b 16:1 Or "Send a lamb of the lord of the land." This would have been a gift of tribute sent to secure Judah's protection.</p> <p>c 16:3 Or "Make your shade like night at noon."</p> <p>d 16:4 Or "destruction."</p> <p>e 16:5 Or "a throne," a metonymy for a king or government being established.</p> <p>f 16:7 Or "over the raisin cakes (delicacies) of Kir-Hareseth (wall of earthen potsherd)" or "You shall care for those who dwell in Seth" (LXX).</p>	<p>Isaiah 16:1 Send a flock of lambs from the rock a of the desert as a gift to the leaders in Jerusalem, b to the mountain of the Daughter of Zion ² At the banks of the River Arnon, the women of Moab are like newly hatched, fluttering birds. ³ They say, "Make a decision! Give us shelter. c Hide the fugitives. Don't betray them! ⁴ Allow the Moabite fugitives to stay with you. Be a shelter for them from the destroyer!" One day the oppressor will be no more. The destroyer d will come to an end, and the tyrant will vanish from the land. ⁵ Then a government of unfailing love e will be established, with a faithful king in the tabernacle of David, passionate for justice and swift to do what is right.</p> <p>⁶ We have heard about Moab's pride. How haughty he is — filled with arrogance and insolence, with nothing more than empty boasts ⁷ So now Moab will wail; everyone will wail over the ruin of their country. Lament and grieve for the foundations of Kir-Hareseth. f</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>⁸ For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the lords of the nations have struck down its branches, which reached to Jazer and strayed to the desert; its shoots spread abroad and passed over the sea. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Therefore my inner parts moan like a lyre for Moab, and my inmost self for Kir-hareseth.</p> <p>¹² And when Moab presents himself, when he wears himself on the high place, when he comes to his sanctuary to pray, he will not prevail. ¹³ This is the word that the LORD spoke concerning Moab in the past. ¹⁴ 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.</p>	<p>g 16:8 “The lords of the nations have broken down its vines.”</p> <p>h 16:8 Modern Sumia, a suburb of Heshbon.</p> <p>i 16:8 Moab’s spreading, creeping vines of Heshbon (“stronghold”) become a metaphor for the tentacles of “pride that spread throughout the heart of man.</p> <p>j 16:9 Elealeh is a city and means a mighty one (God) ascends.” See Num. 32:37.</p> <p>k 16:11 Even for pride-filled Moab, God’s heart was moved with compassion.</p> <p>l 16:11 Or “for Kir-Hareseth (walls of earthen potsherds).”</p> <p>m 16:14 Or “in three years as the years (counted by) of a hireling.</p>	<p>⁸ All the lush fields of Heshbon are dried up. The vineyards of Sibmah have struck down g the lords of nations, whose vines reached northward to Jazer h and spread to the desert. Their shoots spread out and extend across the Dead Sea. i ⁹ So I weep along with Jazer over the vines of Sibmah. I drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh, j for the shouts of joy over the harvest of fruit and grain have ceased. ¹⁰ Joyful celebrations are stilled in the orchards; in the vineyards, no one sings or shouts, and no one treads out wine in the presses. I have silenced your gleeful shouts. ¹¹ Like harp strings, my heartstrings throb for Moab, k and my inner being sighs for your broken walls, Kir-Hareseth. l</p> <p>¹² When Moab comes to their high places to plead with all their might and enter their temples to pray, it will have no effect. ¹³ This was the word the Lord Yahweh spoke in the past about Moab, ¹⁴ but now the Lord Yahweh says, “In exactly three years, m the splendor of Moab and its huge population will shrink to nothing; only a small and feeble remnant will remain.</p>

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY ~ John A. Martin

- Protection for Israel (16:1-5)

- **16:1-5.** In the midst of the devastation coming on Moab, protection was to be found in Israel. The Moabites had now fled all the way south to strongholds in Edom such as Sela, about 50 miles south of Moab’s southern border. If they really wanted to be safe they should have joined themselves to Jerusalem (the Daughter of Zion; cf. 1:8), sending lambs on ahead as tribute. Isaiah could suggest this because he had already prophesied that Jerusalem would be spared from destruction by Assyria (10:24-34). Frustrated like ... birds ... the women of Moab were begging for protection and help (16:2-4a). But, as God promised, eventually the destroyer—also called the oppressor and the aggressor—would himself be destroyed (cf. 14:4-5). God in His love (“loyalty”) will see that the One from the house of David, the Messiah, will sit on David’s throne (2 Sam. 7:16) and judge the world fairly (in justice and righteousness, a frequent topic in Isaiah’s book; cf. Isa. 9:7; 11:4; 28:6; 32:16; 33:5; 42:1, 3-4; 51:5). Only through Judah could this be accomplished; the forces of Moab were obviously inadequate.

- **The pride of Moab** (16:6-12)

- **16:6-12.** Isaiah exposed the pride and conceit of Moab (cf. Assyria's pride, 13:11). The people of Moab should have realized their impotence before the Assyrians and turned to God through their neighbor Israel, but they refused to do so. Because of their pride, confident that [Vol. 1, p. 1064] they did not need God, the fruitfulness and productivity of their land would be stopped (16:7-10). Several words indicated that the fruit to be lost was grapes: raisin cakes (a delicacy; cf. 1 Chron. 12:40; Hosea 3:1) of Kir Hareseth (cf. Isa. 16:11), another city in Moab, possibly the same as Kir (15:1), vines of Sibmah (16:8-9), choicest vines. ... vineyards (vv. 8, 10), wine ... presses. Harvests (v. 9) and orchards (v. 10) suggest other fruits too. (On Heshbon and Elealeh in v. 9 see 15:4.) The invading army and the drought which would accompany it would wipe out Moab's chances for survival. Isaiah felt deeply for Moab (16:11; cf. 15:5); his heart responded to her calamities as the strings of a harp respond when played. Moab's religious ritual of sacrificing at her high place and praying at her shrine would not help alleviate God's judgment (16:12).

- **The destruction of Moab** (16:13-14)

- **16:13-14.** Moab had already suffered greatly. Now the prophet announced that there would be further destruction within three years. And it would be precisely that period of time, just as a servant ... would count the years till his servitude would end. This is similar to chapter 7 in which Isaiah told Ahaz that the Aram-Israel alliance would break up in a few years. Possibly this oracle against Moab was written about the same time, picturing Tiglath-Pileser's coming invasion of Moab in 732 (after he invaded Aram). Or perhaps Isaiah was saying that Moab would be attacked in three years (701) by Sennacherib, in the year he invaded Judah. Isaiah's contemporaries could have watched current events to see if the LORD really was prophesying through him. When they saw that his words came true, they could be assured that his message of salvation for Judah (16:5) would also come true.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In verse 5, Isaiah describes King David's rule as "a government of unfailing love." What evidence do you see that this was true? What is revealed in the book of Revelation about Jesus' government that follows this same line of thinking?
2. If you were the leader of "a government of unfailing love," what principles of leadership would you set in place that would reflect this description?
3. If Jesus builds our trust in Him by testing our hearts when His leadership tests us, what can we do to prepare ourselves to yield to His leadership, no matter how weird things may get?

4. This is a difficult question, but what are some things Jesus might do as the leader of His church that would challenge you, personally? What are the challenges you face today that you think might be coming as a result of His leadership in and through His church?

5. How do you know if you trust Jesus? How would trust manifest in your relationship with him? In 1 John 4:20-21, it says... "If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers." Is the same true of trust? Could our lack of trust of other people be reflective of a lack of trust for God?