

## **The Prophecy of Judgment Against Moab**

### **Scripture: Isaiah 15:1-9**

Facilitator: Alfreda Chandler

#### **I. Biblical and Historical Context**

Isaiah 15-16 is focusing on the prophecy against Moab, which is a pagan nation. This prophecy shows us that God has sovereignty over not just Israel but all nations and people. His Laws weren't for just one segment of people but they all. Israel was supposed to be an example to others on how to serve the True and Living God. Because of their proximity to Israel, there was opportunity to see and hear about God.

Who are the Moabites? They are primarily known as the descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew, through an incestuous relationship with his daughter following the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.19:36-38). Moab (Moabites) and Ben- Ammi (Ammonites) were the sons of Lot two daughters. Their father and grandfather were one of the same. Technically the Moabites were relatives of the Israelites, but they were not the children of the Promise. Historically, the Moabites inhabited the region in what is now modern-day Jordan. They often had a contentious relationship with the Israelites throughout the Old Testament. They are often depicted as enemies and occasionally as allies. Notably Balak the Moabite king hires Balaam the prophet to curse the Israelites as they traveled through the desert on their way to the Promised Land (Num,22-24). But instead, God caused Balaam to speak blessings over the Israelites. One of the most notable Moabites is Ruth. Her story is central in the Book of Ruth, and she is a revere figure of faithfulness and virtues. Through her marriage to Boaz, she became the great grandmother of King David, thus integrating the Moabite lineage into the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Moses reviewed the law and transferred leadership from himself to Joshua (Deut.26-33) and he died and was buried on the plains of Moab (Deut.34:1-4).

God still provided for them even though they were not the children of the Promise (Deut.2:9). They were among the people who would lead Israel astray to worship false gods and God had warned the

Israelites to not to associate with them (Deut.7:3-4; Num.25:1-3). Their influence remained a problem for generations, even Solomon was influenced by them when he intermarried (1Ki.11:1-3). The Moabites 'gods that they revered included Chemosh, Ashtar-Chemosh, Dedan and Ishtar. The idol worshipping presented a spiritual danger to Israel, which was seen when the Moabites enticed Hebrew men to participate in sacrificial feasts to their gods and sexual immorality that resulted in a plague that killed 2400 (Num.25:1-9). This strained the relations between the two nations.

In our lesson today Isaiah prophesies that God will judge Moab. Also, in Jerimiah 48, Ezk.25:8-11 also has a prophecy against Moab for their pride and hostility against Israel. Moab is often used as a symbol of pride and arrogance. This pride is attributed to their reliance on their own strength and resources, rather than trusting in the God of Heaven and Earth.

## **II. The Lesson: The Prophecy of Judgment Against Moab**

### **1. vv.1-4.**

Most of these sites were originally part of Israel territory when Moses and Joshua defeated Sihon, King of the Amorites. The north cities of the Arnon River once belonged to the tribe of Reuben. Throughout the years, however, the Moabites had persistently pushed the Israelites. The prophecy indicated the major cities will be taken by surprised in the night by the enemy. The inhabitants indulged themselves in a life of luxury and ease and enjoyed being secure in their environment. Subduing these cities will cut off passage to important routes and trade. The seizing of the land laid the whole country open to the enemies and made all the economy easy prey to the victorious army. There will be no time for preparation. As a country, the cities depended on each other, and one city could not say that they didn't need each other. If one falls all will be affected. Verse 2 indicates that "he" the king of Moab had gone up to Bajith (temple of Chemosh) along with the inhabitant of Dibon to worship and plead their case. There would be wailing tears all over the land. In their time of distress, they chose to seek the help of Chemosh and not the living

God and their Creator (Jer.48:46). They will be so distraught that they will pull out their hair and wear sackcloth.

**Gen.1:1.** In the beginning God Created the heavens and the earth.

Deut.10:14-17: God owns everything. **That makes Him Sovereign.**

Ex.20:3 You shall have no other gods before me.

Hos.7:13b-14 – Destruction of them, because they rebelled against me! I long to redeem them but they speak about me falsely. They do not cry out to me from their hearts but wail on their beds.

Prayers to the true God should be their focus because they have heard of the God of Israel. It is not of any comfort when everyone is in the boat called “woe”. Even their armies, though well armed, shrieked in fear. We see that God can bring even the mightiest of men to their knees. The Moabites shall be so overwhelmed with grief that life itself shall be a burden.

## 2. **vv.5-9.**

The prophet, himself was filled with grief because of the judgement he had to speak about to Israel about their enemy. Once proud and secure, Moab has now been reduced to a band of homeless refugees carrying away with them a few personal belongings. Verse 2 describes them as a flock of birds, scattered from their nests. They were running for their lives to the Armon River but there was no escape for them. All the wealth that they have acquired will be taken away. The waters of Dimon means blood in Hebrew and is said the water had a reddish color- like blood. But with the Judgment, the blood of the people shall flow into the river because of the slaughter of many. Even in the time of judgment, God will be compassion to the remnants as we will see in chapter 16. It is not God’s wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

2 Pt. 3:9

### **A. Why is Moab Important to Us?**

There are several prophecies in Scripture concerning judgments coming upon Moab in God’s appointed time. The prophets declared

God's hand of discipline against them to humble their pride. Isaiah 15-16 and Ezekiel 25:8-11 speaks of Moab coming desolation; Ezekiel 25:8-11 speaks of them being conquered by foreign nations because of their reproach against Israel. In Zephaniah 2:8-11 the pronouncement of judgment for reviling and threaten God's people. Moab destiny was in God's hands to discipline them for their sin and their role in history to an end. They looked down on Israel as being inferior despite their blood relationship. Their arrogance led to social injustice, oppression of neighbors, and celebrating rather than mourning the calamity of others (Is.16:6; Zep.2:8-10). The prophets proclaimed that God opposed the pride of Moab. Pride blinds people to their own sin and prompts persecution of others, instead of loving God and neighbors (Mk.12:30-31). Through humbling Moab, the Lord is teaching us that pride breeds quarrels, destroys unity and will be brought down by His justice (Pro.13:10).

We as believers must guard against prideful hearts by repenting of arrogance and welcoming God's discipline for sins that flow from unchecked conceit. Though they were judged for their pride and hostility, the Moabites were still recipients of God's mercy, as he didn't allow the Israelites to destroy them completely in some of the battles. But they were completely destroyed according to Jer.48; Amos 2.

### **B. Lessons from Moab**

- No persons or nations stands outside of God's sovereign oversight
- Pride blinds us to our own need for God's mercy. Rom.16:17-18
- God hates idolatry and opposes spiritual corruption of His people. I Co.6:9-10; Rev.22:15
- Salvation reaches beyond culture boundaries to all who believe. Rev.7:9-10; John 8:12; Ps. 67:2-3; 1Tim.2:4
- Nations who oppose God's people will face His judgment. Lev.26. Ps.33:12a says, Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord... In verse 13 it says "From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind and verse 15: he who forms hearts of all, considers everything they do.

### **III. Conclusion**

Moab is a model for us for how not to respond to a faithful God who seeks the salvation of all nations. Moab leaves a legacy that continues to shape biblical interpretation and application today. From their immoral origins through cycles of conflict with Israel to the coming judgment pronounced by the prophets, Moab illustrates the corrupt fallen nature of humanity in contrast with God's standards of justice and righteousness. God's plans through Israel stand as warning against rejecting His Word. God will not punish His chosen people and let everyone else go free. Judgment begins with the house of God first (1Pt.4:17). It is he who created the heavens and the earth. He is the Creator and has the right to do as he pleases and when He pleases. WE are reminded to guard against pride and arrogance. Always putting our trust in God alone. Additionally, we are urged to reject idolatry and instead worship the One True God. The story of Ruth that the Moabites should have grasped was that redemption is possible for anyone regardless of their origins or past. It serves as a reminder of God's grace and mercy is extended to all who chose to seek Him.