

## Isaiah's Prophecy to Judah—Book of Oracles: Moab (c. 715–711 BC)

Isaiah 15–16

**A Lament Over the Ruin of Moab**

15:1 An oracle of Moab:

Because Ar is devastated in a night, Moab is destroyed;  
because Kir of Moab is devastated in a night, it is destroyed.

- 2 It has gone up *to* the house,  
and Dibon *to* the high places  
for weeping over Nebo,  
and Moab wails over Medeba.  
Every head is bald,  
every beard *is* shaved.
- 3 They gird themselves *with* sackcloth in its streets;  
on its roofs and public squares everyone wails,  
going down in weeping.
- 4 And Heshbon and Elealeh cry out,  
their voice is heard as far as Jahaz;  
therefore the armed ones of Moab cry out;  
its soul quivers for him.
- 5 My heart cries out for Moab;  
its fugitives *flee* up to Zoar,  
to Eglath-shelishiyah.  
For *at* the ascent of Luhith it goes up it with weeping;  
for *on* the road of Horonaim they raise up a cry of destruction.
- 6 For the waters of Nimrim are wastelands;  
for *the* grass has withered,  
*the* vegetation has vanished,  
*there is* no greenness.
- 7 Therefore they carry *the* abundance it has made  
and their store of goods over the river of the poplars.
- 8 For *a* cry for help has encircled the territory of Moab,  
her wailing *is heard* as far as Eglaim,  
and her wailing *as far as* Beer Elim.
- 9 For the waters of Dimon are full *of* blood;  
but I will place added things upon Dimon:  
a lion for the survivors of Moab  
and for *the* remnant of *the* land.

**A Moabite Request for Shelter in Judah**

16:1 Send a ram *to the* ruler *of the* land,  
from Sela *across the* desert to the mountain of daughter Zion.

2 And this shall be:

like a bird fleeing *from* a thrust away nest  
shall be the daughters of Moab *at the* fords of Arnon.

- 3 "Bring counsel,  
make a decision;  
make your shade like the night  
in the middle of noonday.  
Hide *the* outcasts;  
you must not betray the fugitive.
- 4 Let my outcasts *of* Moab dwell as aliens among you;  
be a hiding place for them from *the* presence of *the* destroyer."  
When the oppressor is no more, destruction has stopped,  
*the* one who tramples has disappeared from the land,
- 5 then a throne shall be established in steadfast love,  
and one shall sit on it in faithfulness, in the tent of David,

judging and seeking justice  
and zealous for righteousness.

#### **A Lament: Pride Will Cause the Devastation of Moab**

- 6 We have heard *of* the pride of Moab—exceedingly proud—  
*of* his arrogance, pride, and insolence; his boasting is not true.
- 7 Therefore Moab wails;  
all of it wails for Moab,  
for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth you moan, utterly devastated.
- 8 For Heshbon withers the fields, the vine of Sibmah;  
rulers of nations have broken down her tendrils,  
they reached up to Jazer,  
they wandered *to the* desert;  
her shoots spread abroad,  
they crossed over *the* sea.
- 9 Therefore I weep with the weeping of Jazer *for* the vine of Sibmah.  
I drench you *with* my tears, Heshbon and Elealeh,  
for a jubilant shout has fallen over your summer fruit and harvest.
- 10 And joy and gladness are taken away from the fruitful land,  
and in the vineyards no one exults,  
no one shouts for joy;  
no treader treads wine in the presses;  
I have put to an end to *the* jubilant shout.
- 11 Therefore my heart moans like *a* harp for Moab  
and my inner parts for Kir-heres.

12 And this shall happen:

when Moab appears, when it is weary upon the high place  
and it comes to its sanctuary to pray, it will not prevail.

#### **Moab's Destruction Within Three Years**

- 13 This *was* the word that Yahweh spoke to Moab in the past.
- 14 But now Yahweh speaks, saying, "In three years, like *the* years of a hired worker, the glory of Moab will become contemptible,  
with all of the great multitude, and *the* remnant *will be* a few, small, not strong.

### **Isaiah's Prophecy to Judah—Book of Oracles: Damascus (c. 715–711 BC)**

Isaiah 17–18

#### **Syria (Damascus) and Israel (Ephraim)**

17:1 An oracle of Damascus:

"Look! Damascus *will* cease being a city  
and will become a heap of ruins.

2 The cities of Aroer will be deserted;  
they will be for the flocks,  
and they will lie down and no one will frighten *them*.

3 And *the* fortified city will disappear from Ephraim,  
and *the* kingdom from Damascus;  
and the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the children of Israel,"

declares Yahweh of hosts.

4 "And this shall happen:

On that day, the glory of Jacob will be brought low,  
and the fat of his flesh will become lean.

- 5 And it shall be as when a reaper gathers standing grain  
and he reaps grain *with* his arm,  
and it shall be like one who gathers ears of grain

in the valley of Rephaim.

6 And gleanings will be left over in it, as when an olive tree is beaten,

two *or* three ripe olive berries in *the* top of a branch,  
four *or* five on its fruitful branches,”

declares Yahweh, the God of Israel.

7 On that day, mankind will look to its maker,  
and its eyes will look to the holy one of Israel;

8 it will not look to the altars,  
the work of its hands,  
and it will not see what its fingers made  
and the poles of Asherah worship and the incense altars.

9 On that day, its fortified cities will be like the abandonment of the wooded place and the summit, which they deserted because of the children of Israel; and there will be desolation.

10 For you have forgotten the God of your salvation,  
and you have not remembered the rock of your refuge;  
therefore you plant plants of pleasantness,  
and you plant a vine of a foreigner.

11 On your planting day you make *them* grow,  
and in the morning *of* your sowing you bring *them* into bloom,  
*yet* the harvest will flee in a day *of* sickness and incurable pain.

12 Ah! *The* noise of many peoples, they make a noise like *the* noise of *the* seas!  
And *the* roar of nations, they roar like *the* roar of mighty waters!

13 *The* nations roar like *the* roar of many waters,  
but he will rebuke him, and he will flee far away.  
And they are chased like chaff of *the* mountains before *the* wind  
and like tumbleweed before *the* storm.

14 At *the* time of evening, and look, terror!  
Before morning he is no more.  
This *is* the fate of those who plunder us  
and *the* lot of those who plunder us.

#### **Nubia/Ethiopia (Cush)**

18:1 Ah! land *of* *the* whirring of wings,  
which *is* beyond the rivers of Cush,  
2 that sends messengers by the sea  
and in vessels of papyrus on *the* surface of *the* waters!  
Go, swift messengers, to a tall and smooth nation,  
to a people feared near and far,  
a mighty, mighty and trampling nation,  
whose land rivers divide.

3 All *you* inhabitants of *the* world  
and dwellers of *the* earth,  
when a signal is raised on the mountains, you must look,  
and when a trumpet is blown, you must listen!

4 For Yahweh said this to me:

“I will be quiet,  
and I will look from my dwelling place  
like clear heat because of light,  
like a cloud of dew in *the* heat of harvest.”

5 For before *the* harvest, when the blossom is complete  
and a blossom becomes ripening fruit,  
and one cuts off the shoots with pruning hooks,

- and one removes, tears away the tendrils.
- 6 They shall all be left for birds of prey of *the* mountains  
and for the animals of the earth.  
And the birds of prey will pass the summer on it,  
and every animal of the earth will winter on it.
- 7 At that time, a gift will be brought to Yahweh of hosts  
*from* a tall and smooth people,  
and from a people feared near and far,  
a mighty, mighty and trampling nation,  
whose land *the* rivers divide,  
to the place of the name of Yahweh of hosts,  
the mountain of Zion.

## Isaiah's Prophecy to Judah—Book of Oracles: Egypt (c. 715–711 BC)

### Isaiah 19

#### God Will Defeat Egypt and Her Gods

1 An oracle of Egypt:

- Look! Yahweh *is* riding on a swift cloud  
and *is* coming *to* Egypt.  
And the idols of Egypt will tremble in front of him,  
and the heart of Egypt melts in his inner parts.
- 2 “And I will stir up Egyptians against Egyptians,  
and each one will fight against his brother  
and each one against his neighbor,  
city against city, kingdom against kingdom.
- 3 And the spirit of the Egyptians will be disturbed in his midst,  
and I will confuse his plans,  
and they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead,  
and the ghosts and the spiritists.
- 4 And I will hand over the Egyptians into *the* hand of a hard master,  
and a powerful king will rule over them,”  
declares the Lord Yahweh of hosts.
- 5 And *the* waters will be dried up from the sea,  
and *the* river will be parched and dry.
- 6 And *the* rivers will become foul-smelling;  
the branches of the Nile of Egypt will become little and dry up;  
reed and rush will wither.
- 7 Bare places by *the* Nile will be dried up,  
by the edge of *the* Nile and all the sown land of *the* Nile;  
it will be driven about, and it will be no more.
- 8 And the fishers will mourn,  
and all of those who cast fishhooks in the Nile will lament,  
and those who spread out fishing nets on *the* surface of *the* water will languish.
- 9 And *the* workers of combed flax will be ashamed,  
and those who weave white linen.
- 10 And her weavers will be crushed;  
all *the* hired workers *will be* grieved of heart.
- 11 Surely the princes of Zoan *are* foolish;  
the wise of the counselors of Pharaoh *give* senseless counsel.  
How can you say to Pharaoh,  
“I myself *am* a son of sages,  
a descendant of ancient kings”?
- 12 Where *are* your sages then?  
Now, let them tell you,  
and let them know what Yahweh of hosts has planned against Egypt.
- 13 The princes of Zoan have become foolish;  
the princes of Memphis are deceived;

the leaders of her tribes have led Egypt astray.

- 14 Yahweh has mixed a spirit of confusion into her midst,  
and they have caused Egypt to stagger in all of its doings,  
as when a drunkard staggers in his vomit.
- 15 And there will be nothing for Egypt to do,  
head or tail, palm branch or reed.

#### **Egypt Will Worship God in the Millennium**

16 On that day, Egypt will be like women, and will tremble and be afraid before the waving hand of Yahweh of hosts that he *is* waving against it.

17 And the land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt, everyone *to* whom one mentions it will be afraid in himself because of the plan of Yahweh of hosts that he *is* planning against him.

18 On that day, there will be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan and swear an oath to Yahweh of hosts. One will be called “City of the Sun.”

19 On that day, there will be an altar for Yahweh *in* the middle of the land of Egypt, and a stone pillar for Yahweh at her border.

20 And it will be a sign and a witness to Yahweh of hosts in the land of Egypt; when they cry out to Yahweh because of oppressors, he will send them a savior and a defender, and he will deliver them.

21 And Yahweh will make himself known to Egypt, and Egypt will know Yahweh on that day, and they will worship *with* sacrifice and offering, and they will make vows to Yahweh, and they will fulfill *them*.

22 And Yahweh will strike Egypt, striking and healing; and they will return to Yahweh, and he will respond to their prayer, and he will heal them.

23 On that day, there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and Egypt will worship together with Assyria.

24 On that day, Israel will be *the* third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth,

25 whom Yahweh of hosts blessed, saying, “May Egypt my people be blessed, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and my inheritance, Israel.”

### **Isaiah’s Prophecy to Judah—Book of Oracles: Egypt/Cush (c. 711 BC)**

#### Isaiah 20

1 In *the* year the commander-in-chief came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and he took it,

2 at that time, Yahweh had spoken by the hand of Isaiah son of Amoz, saying,

“Go and loosen the sackcloth from your loins,  
and take off your sandals from your feet,”

and he had done so, walking naked and barefoot.

3 Then Yahweh said, “Just as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years *as* a sign and a portent against Egypt and Cush,

4 so shall the king of Assyria lead the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush, young and old, naked and barefoot, with bared buttocks, the shame of Egypt.

- 5 And they shall be dismayed,  
and they shall be ashamed  
because of Cush, their hope,  
and because of Egypt, their pride.

6 And *the* inhabitant *of* the coastland will say this on that day: ‘Look! This *is* our hope *to* whom we fled for help, to be delivered from the king of Assyria, and how shall we escape?’”

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### **Chronological Notes**

- 1) Smith comments on the setting of Isaiah 17–18: “Since the oracle seems to be related to two different events, one has two choices in hypothesizing a setting. (a) The interpreter can date this prophecy within a few years of 701 BC and view the prophet as quoting an earlier prophecy about the Syro-Ephraimite War as an historical illustration teaching principles that were still valid in 701 BC. (b) One can place this prophecy during the Syro-Ephraimite War and understand 17:12–14 as a warning to Ahaz that he should not trust Assyria, because eventually God will destroy that nation sometime in the future. The first option fits best in this context.”<sup>1</sup> I concur with Smith’s assessment that this prophecy is being referenced again in a new setting, and I have chosen to date this prophecy c. 715-711 since Isaiah 14:28 is dated to 716t BC and Isaiah 20 is dated to 711 BC (this is in keeping with my current approach of presenting Isaiah in its canonical order).

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<sup>1</sup> Gary V. Smith, “Isaiah 1–39,” *New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN 2007), p. 340. See also Keil (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, “Isaiah,” *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 7, p. 220) and Watts (John D. W. Watts, “Isaiah 1–33,” *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 234). Watts dates the prophecy to 716–714 BC.