

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 The oracle concerning Moab.

Surely in a night Ar of Moab is devastated *and* ruined;Surely in a night Kir of Moab is devastated *and* ruined.2 They have gone up to the temple and *to* Dibon, *even* to the high places to weep.

Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba;

Everyone's head is bald *and* every beard is cut off.

3 In their streets they have girded themselves with sackcloth;

On their housetops and in their squares

Everyone is wailing, dissolved in tears.

4 Heshbon and Elealeh also cry out,

Their voice is heard all the way to Jahaz;

Therefore the armed men of Moab cry aloud;

His soul trembles within him.

5 My heart cries out for Moab;

His fugitives are as far as Zoar *and* Eglath-shelishiyah,

For they go up the ascent of Luhith weeping;

Surely on the road to Horonaim they raise a cry of distress over *their* ruin.

6 For the waters of Nimrim are desolate.

Surely the grass is withered, the tender grass died out,

There is no green thing.

7 Therefore the abundance *which* they have acquired and stored up

They carry off over the brook of Arabim.

8 For the cry of distress has gone around the territory of Moab,

Its wail *goes* as far as Eglaim and its wailing even to Beer-elim.

9 For the waters of Dimon are full of blood;

Surely I will bring added *woes* upon Dimon,

A lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon the remnant of the land.

A Moabite Request for Shelter in Judah16:1 Send the *tribute* lamb to the ruler of the land,

From Sela by way of the wilderness to the mountain of the daughter of Zion.

2 Then, like fleeing birds *or* scattered nestlings,

The daughters of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon.

3 "Give *us* advice, make a decision;

Cast your shadow like night at high noon;

Hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive.

4 "Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you;

Be a hiding place to them from the destroyer."

For the extortioner has come to an end, destruction has ceased,

Oppressors have completely *disappeared* from the land.

5 A throne will even be established in lovingkindness,

And a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David;

Moreover, he will seek justice

And be prompt in righteousness.

A Lament: Pride Will Cause the Devastation of Moab

6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, an excessive pride;

Even of his arrogance, pride, and fury;

His idle boasts are false.

7 Therefore Moab will wail; everyone of Moab will wail.

You will moan for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth

As those who are utterly stricken.

8 For the fields of Heshbon have withered, the vines of Sibmah *as well*;

The lords of the nations have trampled down its choice clusters

Which reached as far as Jazer *and* wandered to the deserts;
Its tendrils spread themselves out *and* passed over the sea.

- 9 Therefore I will weep bitterly for Jazer, for the vine of Sibmah;
I will drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh;
For the shouting over your summer fruits and your harvest has fallen away.
- 10 Gladness and joy are taken away from the fruitful field;
In the vineyards also there will be no cries of joy or jubilant shouting,
No treader treads out wine in the presses,
For I have made the shouting to cease.
- 11 Therefore my heart intones like a harp for Moab
And my inward feelings for Kir-hareseth.
- 12 So it will come about when Moab presents himself,
When he wearies himself upon *his* high place
And comes to his sanctuary to pray,
That he will not prevail.

Moab's Destruction Within Three Years

13 This is the word which the LORD spoke earlier concerning Moab.

14 But now the LORD speaks, saying, "Within three years, as a hired man would count them, the glory of Moab will be degraded along with all *his* great population, and *his* remnant will be very small *and* impotent."

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

Isaiah 17–18

Syria (Damascus) and Israel (Ephraim)

17:1 The oracle concerning Damascus.

"Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city
And will become a fallen ruin.

- 2 "The cities of Aroer are forsaken;
They will be for flocks to lie down in,
And there will be no one to frighten *them*.
- 3 "The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim,
And sovereignty from Damascus
And the remnant of Aram;
They will be like the glory of the sons of Israel,"
Declares the LORD of hosts.
- 4 Now in that day the glory of Jacob will fade,
And the fatness of his flesh will become lean.
- 5 It will be even like the reaper gathering the standing grain,
As his arm harvests the ears,
Or it will be like one gleaning ears of grain
In the valley of Rephaim.
- 6 Yet gleanings will be left in it like the shaking of an olive tree,
Two *or* three olives on the topmost bough,
Four *or* five on the branches of a fruitful tree,
Declares the LORD, the God of Israel.
- 7 In that day man will have regard for his Maker
And his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.
- 8 He will not have regard for the altars, the work of his hands,
Nor will he look to that which his fingers have made,
Even the Asherim and incense stands.
- 9 In that day their strong cities will be like forsaken places in the forest,
Or like branches which they abandoned before the sons of Israel;
And the land will be a desolation.
- 10 For you have forgotten the God of your salvation
And have not remembered the rock of your refuge.
Therefore you plant delightful plants

- And set them with vine slips of a strange *god*.
- 11 In the day that you plant *it* you carefully fence *it* in,
And in the morning you bring your seed to blossom;
But the harvest will *be* a heap
In a day of sickness and incurable pain.
- 12 Alas, the uproar of many peoples
Who roar like the roaring of the seas,
And the rumbling of nations
Who rush on like the rumbling of mighty waters!
- 13 The nations rumble on like the rumbling of many waters,
But He will rebuke them and they will flee far away,
And be chased like chaff in the mountains before the wind,
Or like whirling dust before a gale.
- 14 At evening time, behold, *there is* terror!
Before morning they are no more.
Such *will be* the portion of those who plunder us
And the lot of those who pillage us.

Nubia/Ethiopia (Cush)

- 18:1 Alas, oh land of whirring wings
Which lies beyond the rivers of Cush,
- 2 Which sends envoys by the sea,
Even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters.
Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth,
To a people feared far and wide,
A powerful and oppressive nation
Whose land the rivers divide.
- 3 All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth,
As soon as a standard is raised on the mountains, you will see *it*,
And as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear *it*.
- 4 For thus the LORD has told me,

“I will look from My dwelling place quietly
Like dazzling heat in the sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.”
- 5 For before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms
And the flower becomes a ripening grape,
Then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives
And remove *and* cut away the spreading branches.
- 6 They will be left together for mountain birds of prey,
And for the beasts of the earth;
And the birds of prey will spend the summer *feeding* on them,
And all the beasts of the earth will spend harvest time on them.
- 7 At that time a gift of homage will be brought to the LORD of hosts
From a people tall and smooth,
Even from a people feared far and wide,
A powerful and oppressive nation,
Whose land the rivers divide—
To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, *even* Mount Zion.

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

Isaiah 19

God Will Defeat Egypt and Her Gods

1 The oracle concerning Egypt.

Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt;

- The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence,
And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.
- 2 “So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians;
And they will each fight against his brother and each against his neighbor,
City against city *and* kingdom against kingdom.
- 3 “Then the spirit of the Egyptians will be demoralized within them;
And I will confound their strategy,
So that they will resort to idols and ghosts of the dead
And to mediums and spiritists.
- 4 “Moreover, I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel master,
And a mighty king will rule over them,” declares the Lord GOD of hosts.
- 5 The waters from the sea will dry up,
And the river will be parched and dry.
- 6 The canals will emit a stench,
The streams of Egypt will thin out and dry up;
The reeds and rushes will rot away.
- 7 The bulrushes by the Nile, by the edge of the Nile
And all the sown fields by the Nile
Will become dry, be driven away, and be no more.
- 8 And the fishermen will lament,
And all those who cast a line into the Nile will mourn,
And those who spread nets on the waters will pine away.
- 9 Moreover, the manufacturers of linen made from combed flax
And the weavers of white cloth will be utterly dejected.
- 10 And the pillars *of Egypt* will be crushed;
All the hired laborers will be grieved in soul.
- 11 The princes of Zoan are mere fools;
The advice of Pharaoh’s wisest advisers has become stupid.
How can you *men* say to Pharaoh,
“I am a son of the wise, a son of ancient kings “?”
- 12 Well then, where are your wise men?
Please let them tell you,
And let them understand what the LORD of hosts
Has purposed against Egypt.
- 13 The princes of Zoan have acted foolishly,
The princes of Memphis are deluded;
Those who are the cornerstone of her tribes
Have led Egypt astray.
- 14 The LORD has mixed within her a spirit of distortion;
They have led Egypt astray in all that it does,
As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.
- 15 There will be no work for Egypt
Which *its* head or tail, *its* palm branch or bulrush, may do.

Egypt Will Worship God in the Millennium

- 16 In that day the Egyptians will become like women, and they will tremble and be in dread because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He is going to wave over them.
- 17 The land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt; everyone to whom it is mentioned will be in dread of it, because of the purpose of the LORD of hosts which He is purposing against them.
- 18 In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will be speaking the language of Canaan and swearing *allegiance* to the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction.
- 19 In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD near its border.
- 20 It will become a sign and a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Champion, and He will deliver them.
- 21 Thus the LORD will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to the LORD and perform it.
- 22 The LORD will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the LORD, and He will respond to them and will heal them.
- 23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria,

and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.

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

25 whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”

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

Isaiah 20

1 In the year that the commander came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him and he fought against Ashdod and captured it,

2 at that time the LORD spoke through Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go and loosen the sackcloth from your hips and take your shoes off your feet.” And he did so, going naked and barefoot.

3 And the LORD said, “Even as My servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot three years as a sign and token against Egypt and Cush, 4 so the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush, young and old, naked and barefoot with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

5 “Then they will be dismayed and ashamed because of Cush their hope and Egypt their boast.

6 “So the inhabitants of this coastland will say in that day, ‘Behold, such is our hope, where we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and we, 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.”¹ 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).

¹ 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.