

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Isaiah Chapter 15 - 17

3/5/14

Chapter 15 Study Notes

A Prophecy Against Moab - Verses 1-9

A prophecy against Moab: Ar in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! Kir in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! ² Dibon goes up to its temple to its high places to weep; Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba. Every head is shaved and every beard cut off. ³ In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the roofs and in the public squares they all wail, prostrate with weeping. ⁴ Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz. Therefore the armed men of Moab cry out, and their hearts are faint. ⁵ My heart cries out over Moab; her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishiyah. They go up the hill to Luhith, weeping as they go; on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction. ⁶ The waters of Nimrim are dried up and the grass is withered; the vegetation is gone and nothing green is left. ⁷ So the wealth they have acquired and stored up they carry away over the Ravine of the Poplars. ⁸ Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab; their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim, their lamentation as far as Beer Elim. ⁹ The waters of Dimon^[a] are full of blood, but I will bring still more upon Dimon a lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon those who remain in the land.

ISAIAH 15:1

Moab was east of the Dead Sea. The Moabites were descendants of Lot through his incestuous relationship with his older daughter (Genesis 19:31-37). Moab had always been Israel's enemy. They oppressed Israel and invaded their land (Judges 3:12-14), fought against Saul (1 Samuel 14:47) and against David (2 Samuel 8:2, 11, 12). Moab would be punished for treating Israel harshly.

Chapter 16 Study Notes

Verses 1-14

Send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, from Sela, across the desert, to the mount of Daughter Zion. ² Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so are the women of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. ³ "Make up your mind," Moab says. "Render a decision. Make your shadow like night—at high noon. Hide the fugitives, do not betray the refugees. ⁴ Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you; be their shelter from the destroyer." The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land. ⁵ In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it—one from the house^[a] of David—one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness. ⁶ We have heard of Moab's pride—how great is her arrogance! of her conceit, her pride and her insolence; but her boasts are empty. ⁷ Therefore the Moabites wail, they wail together for Moab. Lament and grieve for the raisin cakes of Kir Hareseth. ⁸ The fields of Heshbon wither, the vines of Sibmah also. The rulers of the nations have trampled down the choicest vines, which once reached Jazer and spread toward the desert. Their shoots spread out and went as far as the sea. ⁹ So I weep, as Jazer weeps, for the vines of Sibmah. Heshbon and Elealeh, I drench you with tears! The shouts of joy over your ripened fruit and over your harvests have been stilled.

¹⁰ Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards; no one sings or shouts in the vineyards; no one treads out wine at the presses, for I have put an end to the shouting. ¹¹ My heart laments for Moab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth. ¹² When Moab appears at her high place, she only wears herself out; when she goes to her shrine to pray, it is to no avail. ¹³ This is the word the LORD has already spoken concerning Moab. ¹⁴ But now the LORD says: "Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them, Moab's splendor and all her many people will be despised, and her survivors will be very few and feeble."

ISAIAH 16:1

Attacked by the Assyrians, Moabite refugees would flee to Sela, which lay in the country of Edom to the south. Desperate Moabites, seeking Judah's protection, would send a tribute of lambs to Jerusalem. Jerusalem would be a safe refuge for a while. Isaiah advised Judah to accept these refugees as a sign of compassion during the enemy's time of devastation.

ISAIAH 16:10

The treading out of grapes (squeezing the juice from grapes by mashing them with bare feet) was the climax of the harvest season, a time of great joy in the vineyards. But the joy of harvest would soon be ended because the people in their pride ignored God and rebelled against him.

ISAIAH 16:12

When the people of Moab experienced God's wrath, they sought their own idols and gods. Nothing happened, however, because there was no one there to save them. We may seek our own ways of escaping daily troubles—work, friends, pleasure, or even some man-made religious idea. But our only hope lies in God, the only one who can hear and help us.

ISAIAH 16:13, 14

Tiglath-pileser III invaded Moab in 732 B.C.; Sennacherib invaded Moab the same year that he invaded Judah, 701 B.C. The earlier event occurred three years after Isaiah's prediction, marking Isaiah as a true prophet. In these events, the people of Israel saw prophecy fulfilled before their very eyes.

Chapter 17 Study Notes

A Prophecy Against Damascus - Verses 1-14

A prophecy against Damascus: "See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. ² The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid. ³ The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and royal power from Damascus; the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites," declares the LORD Almighty. ⁴ "In that day the glory of Jacob will fade; the fat of his body will waste away. ⁵ It will be as when reapers harvest the standing grain, gathering the grain in their arms—as when someone gleanes heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim. ⁶ Yet some gleanings will remain, as when an olive tree is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches, four or five on the fruitful boughs," declares the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁷ In that day people will look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel. ⁸ They will not look to the altars, the work of their hands, and they will have no regard for the Asherah poles and the incense altars their fingers have made. ⁹ In that day their strong cities, which they left because of the Israelites, will be like places abandoned to thickets and undergrowth. And all will be desolation. ¹⁰ You have forgotten God your Savior; you have not remembered the Rock, your fortress.

Therefore, though you set out the finest plants and plant imported vines, ¹¹ though on the day you set them out, you make them grow, and on the morning when you plant them, you bring them to bud, yet the harvest will be as nothing in the day of disease and incurable pain. ¹² Woe to the many nations that rage—they rage like the raging sea! Woe to the peoples who roar— they roar like the roaring of great waters! ¹³ Although the peoples roar like the roar of surging waters, when he rebukes them they flee far away, driven before the wind like chaff on the hills, like tumbleweed before a gale. ¹⁴ In the evening, sudden terror! Before the morning, they are gone! This is the portion of those who loot us, the lot of those who plunder us.

ISAIAH 17:1

The northern kingdom and Aram made an alliance to fight against Assyria. But Tiglath-pileser III captured Damascus, the capital of Aram, in 732 B.C. and annexed the northern kingdom to the Assyrian Empire. Ahaz, king of Judah, paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III (2 Kings 16:1-14).

ISAIAH 17:7-11

God's message to Damascus was that it would be completely destroyed. The Arameans had turned from the God who could save them, depending instead on their idols and their own strength. No matter how successful they were, God's judgment was sure. Often we depend on the trappings of success (expensive cars, pastimes, clothes, homes) to give us fulfillment. But God says we will reap grief and pain if we have depended on temporal things to give us eternal security. If we don't want the same treatment Damascus received, we must turn from these false allurements and trust in God.

ISAIAH 17:8

The Asherah poles were images of Asherah, a Canaanite goddess who was the female consort of Baal. Queen Jezebel may have brought the worship of Asherah into the northern kingdom. The cult encouraged immoral sexual practices and attracted many people. The Bible warns against worshipping Asherah poles (Deuteronomy 12:3; 16:21), and Manasseh was condemned for putting up an Asherah pole in the Temple (2 Kings 21:7). Unlike these pagan gods, our God does not try to attract the greatest number of people but instead seeks the greatest good for all people.