

ISAIAH, PART 1 (JUDGMENT – BUT HOPE)
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SERIES: Isaiah, Part 1 (Judgment – But Hope)

TITLE: Program 33 – A Prideful Nation’s Ruin

WEDNESDAY

OPEN

When you think of the Middle East, Beloved, you think of a people that are in turmoil. You think of weeping. You think of wailing. You think of death. You think of fear. That’s the Middle East. Why is all that true of that part of the world? It’s because they refuse to believe that the Lord has founded Zion, and because the afflicted of that land will not run to God Almighty.

PART ONE

The theme of this week is “The Sorrow of God” because of the sorrow, the needless sorrow of man. It’s the sorrow of a righteous God. And yet, we don’t realize that the sorrow that people are going through is a needless sorrow because all they need to do is run to the Lord and they can endure and joy will come in the morning. We forget that. The other thing we forget is this that weeping may endure for a night, but it may last forever. (See Psalms 30:5) If you don’t know where to run in the time of trouble, if you don’t know the One to turn to, if you don’t know and understand the One

that you are to bow to. And the One that you are to bow to is Almighty God, the Lord that has founded Zion, the Lord that has said that the afflicted can come there and they can find refuge in His name. Remember we're looking at Isaiah 14:28 all the way through Isaiah 18. We're making great progress, aren't we? We got through 28 through 30 of Isaiah 14. But today we move into Isaiah 15 and Isaiah 16 that deals with another country. It's another oracle. It is the oracle concerning Moab. And you are just starting to yawn, aren't you? You're starting to say, "O my goodness, Moab. Where on earth is Moab?" Well if you've read the Bible you know where Moab is. Moab—and if you'll look at your map, you can see where Moab is. You can see that it is to the east of the Dead Sea, to the east of the Jordan River. When you think of Moab you've got to think of Lot. Now who is Lot? Lot was the nephew of Abraham. And he was the one that settled in Sodom and Gomorrah. He was the one that was rescued when God looked at the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah and said He was going to destroy the land. And you remember He did destroy it. I mean it was terrible. And so there is just Lot left. There are just his daughters left. They think it's the end of everything and so what happens is they get their father drunk, then they sleep with their father and they each get pregnant by their father and they produce two children. Those children, one is Ben-ammi and the other one is Moab. (See Genesis 19:37-38) And they become the father of the Moabites and the father of the Ammonites, "A-m-m-o-n-i-t-e-s". Both of those, look at your map, are to the east of the Jordan River, east of the Jordan River, east of the Dead Sea. Now God is speaking to that country. He's speaking to the Moabites. Now when He speaks to them, you and I have to translate this into modern-day Jordan, modern-day Jordan. Now what I want us to do is, I want us to look at Isaiah chapter 15 and remember one of the things that we teach you to do when you study your Bible inductively is, observe the text, observe, observe, observe. Discover, "what does it say?" When you keep finding out "what does it say?" then you're going to be able to interpret it

and know “what does it mean?” Then you’re going to be able to apply that and say, “Okay, this was written centuries ago, millenniums ago, and this was written millenniums ago, but God has a precept for life for me in this study because He wrote these things so that you and I might have instruction about how to live in the end of the age, so that you and I might have encouragement, so you and I might have hope, so that we might persevere when life is difficult for us.” Well life is certainly difficult for Moab. One of the things that we told you in your study guide, if you got it, you mark every reference to “cry” or “wail” with a blue tear. Okay, and then you start off marking the beginning of the chapter because it starts a new oracle. Chapter 15, verse 1, **“The oracle concerning Moab. Surely in a night Ar of Moab is devastated and ruined; surely in a night Kir of Moab is [destroyed] and ruined. They have gone up to the temple and to Dibon, even to the high places to weep....”** So put the tear there, okay. Now this is Middle East. This is present-day Jordan that he’s talking about. It says, **“...Moab wails over Nebo and Medaba; everyone’s head is bald and every beard is cut off.”** In other words they are in mourning so they shave themselves because of that or it could be, and this happens also, that the enemy shaves them. It says, **“In their streets they have girded themselves with sackcloth....” (Isaiah 15:1-3)** In other words this is a black rough cloth that they have put on. It is a sign of mourning. When Jonah goes to Nineveh and he tells them Nineveh is going to be destroyed they put on sackcloth, okay. (See Jonah 3:5) So it’s a sign of mourning. So here the shaving, the sackcloth, is a sign of mourning. It says, **“...On their housetops and in their squares everyone is wailing, dissolved in tears.” (Isaiah 15:3)** And “dissolved” means they just can’t do a thing. They are just; I mean they’re on the floor because it’s so hard. They are afflicted so greatly. **“Heshbon and Elealeh also cry out, their voice is heard all the way to Jahaz; therefore...,”** now listen to this, **“...the armed men of Moab cry aloud....”** The armed men are the soldiers. Here they’re supposed to be the

brave ones, the tough ones, and here they are crying, not just tears coming down their face, they are wailing. They are crying aloud. **“...His soul trembles within him.” (Isaiah 15:4)** Now I have a grandson and he’s in the military and I am so proud of him, and he is studying so hard and he absolutely loves it. But he told me about men in boot camp and how they would get so frightened and so afraid and so intimidated that they would stand there and just wet their pants because they were just so shaken. Well these people, these soldiers are shaken. It says, **“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.” (Isaiah 15:4)** Have you got the picture? Now listen, **“My heart cries out for Moab....” (Isaiah 15:5)** My heart? My—who? Well Isaiah is speaking, but as you read on you see God saying that **“[He is going to] bring added woes upon Dimon....” (Isaiah 15:9)** It is God whose heart is wailing. God is looking at the sorrow of men. God is looking at the pain of men. You look at all these suicide bombers, you look at at at the remains of what has happened. You see bodies mutilated and parts of bodies all over and you weep. You weep. They’re weeping. But God weeps. Listen, the sorrow of a righteous God is sorrow over the sin of men. Why is this going on? Because they haven’t turned to God. Now watch what it says. **“My heart cries out for Moab; his fugitives are as far as Zoar and Egleth...,”** and I cannot pronounce the rest of it, **“for they go up the ascent of Luhith weeping; surely on the road to Horonaim they raise a cry of distress [for] their ruin. For the waters of Nimrim are desolate. Surely the grass is withered, the tender grass died out, there is no green thing. Therefore the abundance which they have acquired and stored up they carry off...the brook of Arabim.” (Isaiah 15:5-7)** Now listen, have you ever seen pictures of refugees as they leave countries? Have you seen them with their suitcases that have fallen open and their treasures? Have you seen them pushing baby buggies loaded with their treasures? They’re refugees. They’re fleeing. If

you follow this geographically and you look at Moab, the enemy is coming down from the North and they go from one city to the other city and the refugees are going out. The grass is trampled. The waters where they used to go and get their waters are deserted. It is all being abandoned because they're fleeing from the enemy. And as they flee they are weeping. If only they had turned to God. If only they had believed God. You say, "But how do they know about Him?" They know about Him because these are the ancestors of Lot who was the nephew of Abraham. And when God made the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12, He said to Abraham, **"...In you all the families of the earth will be blessed."** (Genesis 12:3) What is he saying there? What does he mean? We'll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

We always hope that war and all of its carnage will never come upon us. And yet, Moab is told that they are to weep and they are to wail. Why? Because the waters of Dimon are going to be filled with blood. The enemy is going to judge Moab. And God has a word for Moab. This is an **"...oracle concerning Moab,"** (Isaiah 15:1) telling Moab what to do. Now and for the first time in the book of Isaiah, you find just over and over and over again references to weeping and to wailing. And he's talking about this terrible destruction that is going to come. It starts in the north and it just drives the people south until they come to the river of Dimon and it is flowing with blood. It's a horrible thing. It's something that we hope that we will never experience. Now Moab, as we saw in the first segment of the program is the land of present-day Jordan. And so as you and I look at the Scriptures we've got to see hey, God is telling us the future of countries, the future of people groups who refuse to believe in Him, the future of people groups that do believe in Him. And as we read this, you and I are to sit up and you and I are to take notice. So let's go back to verse 8 where I left you in Isaiah chapter 15. It says, **"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. For the waters of Dimon are full of blood; surely I will bring added woes upon Dimon a lion [from] the fugitives of Moab and upon the remnant of the land,” (Isaiah 15:8-9) the people that are left, the people that are not killed, those whose blood is not filling this water. And then in chapter 16, and it is one oracle and it goes all the way through the end of chapter 16. It says, **“Send the tribute lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela by the way of the wilderness to the mountain of the daughter of Zion.” (Isaiah 16:1)** He says, “I want you to bring a tribute to the mountain of the daughter of Zion.” In other words, “I want you to acknowledge God. I want you to humble yourself. I want you to get across that Jordan. And they said that there were times when the Dead Sea would in a sense, evaporate in a certain area during a certain time so that they could cross directly over that spot in the Dead Sea and come across that Jordan and find themselves right in the land of Israel and make their ways up through that Judean wilderness to Zion, that they could see the city that is set on a hill. And he’s saying, “Come to the daughter of Zion.” It says, **“Then, like fleeing birds or scattered nestlings, the daughters of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon [the Arnon River]. Give us advice, make a decision; cast your shadow like night at high noon; hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive. Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you....” (Isaiah 16:2-4)** Stay with you— who? Stay with you in Israel. **“...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. A throne will...be established...,”** and he’s pointing again to the future. He’s pointing again to Zion. Listen, **“A throne will...be established in lovingkindness...,” (Isaiah 16:4-5)** in “hesed”, “h-e-s-e-d” that famous Hebrew word that has to do with the lovingkindness of the Lord, and many times connected with the fact that He has made a covenant. **“...A judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David; moreover, he will seek**

justice and be prompt in righteousness.” (Isaiah 16:5) What is he saying? He’s saying, “Go to Zion,” the same thing that he said to the Philistines. Now we looked at Zion, but I want to look at a couple more passages. And I want you to go to Psalms 9 and verses 11 through 20. We won’t read all of them, but Psalms 9, verse 11 through 20. It says, **“Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; declare among the peoples His deeds. For He who requires blood...,”** that’s why He’s judging them, **“...remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.”** He says, **“Be gracious to me, O LORD; see my affliction from those who hate me, You who lift...up from the gates of death, that I may tell...all Your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in Your salvation.”** (Psalms 9:11-14) And once again He’s saying, “Come to Zion.” Look at Psalms 48. In Psalms 48 in verses 1 through 3 and you might want to write this down. It says, **“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King. God, in her palaces, has made Himself known as a stronghold.”** (Psalms 48:1-3) Do you realize that the war and the conflict in the Middle East would cease if they would recognize what God says about Israel, if they would come to God? If they would come to Zion they would not suffer like this. All of this, and we’ll talk about it in our next program, all of this is because of the rebellion of man, because of the refusal to believe in God Almighty. Look at verse 8. It says, **“As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God...,”** now listen, **“...God will establish her forever.”** (Psalm 48:8) God is going to establish Jerusalem. It is going to belong to Israel because it belongs to God and God has given it to them and that’s where all the nations of the earth will come. Read Isaiah 2 again. We read it at the beginning of this week. And just know that this is the future. Look at Zechariah chapter 8, which is the second to last book in the Old Testament, and listen to what he says here in Zechariah

chapter 8, in verses 1 to 8. It says in verse 2, **“Thus says the Lord..., ‘I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.’” (Zechariah 8:2)** Moab and the Philistines are receiving the wrath of God because they do not believe in Him, but the invitation is open to come. **“Thus says the Lord, ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.’” (Zechariah 8:3)** What is He telling Moab to do, the daughters of Moab? Bring a tribute lamb to Zion. Come to the One where you’re going to find lovingkindness, where you’re going to find justice, where you’re going to find righteousness. It says in verse 6, **“Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘...[Is it] too difficult in the sight of the remnant of [the] people [of] those days, will it...be too difficult in My sight...?’”** He says, **“...I am going to save My people from the land of the east [that’s Moab and other lands] and from the land of the west [that’s the Philistines]; and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and [in] righteousness.” (Zechariah 8:6-8)** The answer to the Middle East is to come to Zion, to believe what God says. You say, “That’s unreasonable.” Well, it’s not going to happen until He shows up in great judgment and great wrath. But it’s not unreasonable and so He’s calling a remnant out of all those nations to come and to believe in Him now.