

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Isaiah Chapter 16 — Moab's Pride and Its Coming Judgment

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Isaiah Chapter 16 continues the burden against Moab begun in Isaiah 15.

Chapter 15 showed us:

Cities destroyed.

People mourning.

Soldiers trembling.

Refugees fleeing.

Water drying up.

Wealth being carried away.

Isaiah weeping over Moab.

Chapter 16 reveals one of the deeper reasons behind Moab's coming downfall:

Pride.

Moab has:

Strength.

Agricultural prosperity.

Vineyards.

Cities.

Wealth.

Religious high places.

Yet none of these things can save the nation.

The chapter begins, however, with an opportunity for refuge.

Moab is pictured sending tribute toward:

Zion.

Its displaced people need:

Shelter.

Protection.

Mercy.

The appeal is:

“Hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitives.”

Then Isaiah suddenly looks beyond the immediate crisis to a righteous throne.

He declares:

“In mercy a throne will be established.”

A faithful ruler will sit upon:

David’s throne.

He will judge with:

Justice.

Righteousness.

Faithfulness.

This points beyond the failures of ordinary human government toward the promised Davidic King.

Against this righteous throne stands:

Moab’s pride.

Isaiah says:

“We have heard of Moab’s pride—how great is his arrogance!”

Moab’s problem is not simply military weakness.

Its deeper problem is spiritual arrogance.

Pride becomes:

Conceit.

Insolence.

Boasting.

But Isaiah says:

The boasting is empty.

Then the consequences become visible.

The people mourn.

The vineyards wither.

Harvest songs disappear.

Winepresses become silent.

Joy leaves the orchards.

And once again Isaiah expresses profound grief:

“My heart laments for Moab like a harp.”

This is not cold prophecy.

Isaiah speaks truth while grieving the ruin sin produces.

Yet Moab still turns toward its high places.

The nation prays at its shrine.

But Isaiah says:

“It will do her no good.”

False worship cannot provide true refuge.

Finally, God places a definite time upon Moab’s glory:

“Within three years.”

The nation’s:

Glory.

Population.

Strength.

Will be greatly reduced.

Only:

A small.

Weak.

Remnant.

Will remain.

The central truth of Isaiah 16 is:

Moab's pride, false security, material prosperity, and powerless religion cannot protect it from God's appointed judgment, while the righteous throne established in mercy points to the faithful Davidic King whose rule rests upon justice, righteousness, and truth.

I. MOAB IS CALLED TO SEND TRIBUTE TO ZION

Isaiah 16:1 — Lambs Sent to the Ruler

“Send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, from Sela, across the desert, to the mountain of the Daughter of Zion.”

Moab once possessed:

Flocks.

Resources.

Political strength.

Now the nation is pictured sending tribute toward:

Zion.

The lambs represent recognition of authority and submission.

Moab needs help.

The proud nation is being brought low.

Cross References

2 Kings 3:4

Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder who regularly paid the king of Israel a very large tribute consisting of lambs and the wool from many rams.

Jeremiah 48:28

The people of Moab are told to leave their cities and live among the rocks like a dove nesting along the sides of a ravine because destruction is approaching.

Psalms 60:8

God declares His sovereignty over surrounding nations, describing Moab as subject to His authority and Philistia as unable to resist His triumph.

Spiritual Principle

Pride eventually encounters circumstances that force it to recognize dependence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is better to bow willingly before God than to wait until circumstances force pride to its knees.

II. MOAB'S PEOPLE ARE LIKE BIRDS DRIVEN FROM THE NEST

Isaiah 16:2 — Refugees at the Arnon

“Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so the women of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon.”

The image is heartbreaking.

A bird driven from its nest is:

Disoriented.

Exposed.

Vulnerable.

Homeless.

That is how Isaiah pictures Moab's displaced people.

The Arnon becomes a place of:

Flight.

Crossing.

Uncertainty.

Cross References

Numbers 21:13

Israel camped beyond the Arnon River, which served as an important territorial boundary in the region near Moab.

Judges 11:18

During Israel's journey, the people traveled around Edom and Moab and camped beyond the Arnon rather than invading Moabite territory.

Jeremiah 48:18

The inhabitants of Moabite cities are told to come down from their place of honor and sit in humiliation because the destroyer is approaching.

Spiritual Principle

War and judgment often turn settled people into displaced people.

Key Truth

Behind every map of national conflict are human beings searching for somewhere safe to stand.

III. THE FUGITIVES PLEAD FOR PROTECTION

Isaiah 16:3 — “Hide the Outcasts”

“Give counsel, render a decision. Make your shadow like night at high noon. Hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitives.”

This is an appeal for:

Wisdom.

Protection.

Compassion.

The image of making a shadow like night at noon communicates:

Deep shelter.

Complete concealment.

Protection from exposure.

The fugitives desperately need someone who will not betray them.

Cross References

Zephaniah 2:3

The humble are called to seek the Lord, pursue righteousness, and seek humility in the hope of finding shelter when the day of judgment arrives.

Psalms 27:5

In the day of trouble, God hides His servant in His shelter, keeps him secure in His dwelling, and places him beyond the reach of danger.

Psalms 17:8

The psalmist asks God to guard him as carefully as the pupil of the eye and hide him beneath the protective shadow of His wings.

Spiritual Principle

God values the protection of people who are exposed and vulnerable.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

True strength does not merely defend itself.

It creates shelter for those who cannot defend themselves.

IV. MOAB'S OUTCASTS SEEK SHELTER

Isaiah 16:4 — Refuge from the Destroyer

“Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you; be a shelter to them from the destroyer. For the oppressor is at an end, the destruction has ceased, and the one who tramples others is gone from the land.”

Isaiah again emphasizes:

Refuge.

The displaced need shelter from:

The destroyer.

The verse then looks toward a time when:

Oppression ends.

Destruction ceases.

The trampling conqueror disappears.

That prepares directly for the righteous throne of verse 5.

Cross References

Jeremiah 40:11

Judeans who had fled into surrounding nations heard that a remnant had been left in the land and began returning from the places where they had taken refuge.

Zephaniah 2:9

God announces that hostile lands will eventually become desolate and that the remnant of His people will possess what their enemies once controlled.

Jeremiah 48:47

Despite Moab's severe judgment, God declares that in the latter days He will restore Moab's fortunes, showing that judgment does not prevent God from retaining sovereign mercy.

Spiritual Principle

Oppression has an expiration date before God.

V. A THRONE IS ESTABLISHED IN MERCY

Isaiah 16:5 — The Faithful King from David's House

“In mercy a throne will be established; one will sit on it in faithfulness, in the tent of David, judging with justice and eager to do what is right.”

This verse shines like light in the middle of Moab's darkness.

Isaiah sees:

A throne.

Established in:

Mercy.

Occupied by:

A faithful ruler.

Connected with:

David.

Characterized by:

Justice.

Righteousness.

This reaches beyond ordinary political leadership.

It belongs to the great messianic hope already revealed in Isaiah 9 and Isaiah 11.

Cross References

2 Samuel 7:16

God promised David that his royal house, kingdom, and throne would be established according to God's covenant purpose.

Isaiah 9:7

The promised Son will rule upon David's throne, establishing and sustaining His kingdom through justice and righteousness forever, and the zeal of the Lord will accomplish it.

Luke 1:32

The angel told Mary that Jesus would be great, would be called the Son of the Most High, and would receive the throne associated with His ancestor David.

Spiritual Principle

God's ideal throne is established not merely by power but by mercy, faithfulness, justice, and righteousness.

Key Truth

The world does not ultimately need a stronger tyrant.

It needs the righteous King.

VI. MOAB'S GREAT PROBLEM IS PRIDE

Isaiah 16:6 — Arrogance and Empty Boasting

“We have heard of Moab's pride—how great is his arrogance!—his conceit, his pride, and his insolence. But his boasting is empty lies.”

Isaiah identifies the root.

Pride.

Arrogance.

Conceit.

Insolence.

Boasting.

Moab's outward crisis reveals an inward condition.

Pride says:

I am secure.

I am strong.

I do not need correction.

I will endure.

God says:

The boasting is empty.

Cross References

Jeremiah 48:29

Jeremiah also describes Moab as extremely proud, arrogant, haughty, and self-exalting.

Jeremiah 48:30

God says He knows Moab's angry boasting, but its claims are empty and its actions will not accomplish what pride imagines.

Zephaniah 2:10

Moab and its neighbors receive judgment because of their pride and because they mocked and exalted themselves against God's people.

Spiritual Principle

Pride makes claims reality cannot support.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Boasting is often the loudest shortly before reality exposes how weak the foundation truly is.

VII. MOAB WILL WAIL OVER ITS RUIN

Isaiah 16:7 — Kir Hareseth Mourned

“Therefore Moab will wail for Moab; everyone will mourn. They will grieve for the foundations of Kir Hareseth; they are ruined.”

Pride becomes:

Wailing.

Boasting becomes:

Mourning.

Confidence becomes:

Grief.

The very nation that exalted itself now mourns itself.

Cross References

Jeremiah 48:31

Jeremiah says he will mourn for Moab, cry out for the entire nation, and grieve for the people of Kir Hareseth.

Jeremiah 48:36

The prophet's heart mourns for Moab like the sorrowful sound of a flute because its accumulated wealth and prosperity have disappeared.

2 Kings 3:25

Israel's forces destroyed Moabite towns, stopped water sources, ruined productive land, and attacked Kir Hareseth until only its fortified defenses remained.

Spiritual Principle

Pride promises celebration but can end in lamentation.

VIII. MOAB'S PRODUCTIVE VINEYARDS WITHER

Isaiah 16:8 — The Vine of Sibmah Is Trampled

“The fields of Heshbon wither, and the vine of Sibmah languishes. The rulers of nations have trampled down its choicest vines, which once reached Jazer and spread toward the desert; their shoots spread out and crossed the sea.”

Moab had been known for:

Agricultural prosperity.

Vineyards.

Fruitfulness.

The vine had spread widely.

Now:

It withers.

Foreign rulers trample what once brought:

Prosperity.

Income.

Joy.

Cross References

Jeremiah 48:32

Jeremiah says he weeps for Sibmah's vine and mourns because destroyers have fallen upon Moab's summer fruit and grape harvest.

Numbers 32:3

Heshbon and surrounding cities are listed among important settlements east of the Jordan sought as pastureland because of the region's agricultural usefulness.

Numbers 32:38

Israelite tribes rebuilt several cities in the region and gave them new names after receiving territory east of the Jordan.

Spiritual Principle

Prosperity is a blessing, not an unbreakable guarantee.

IX. ISAIAH WEEPS OVER THE DESTROYED HARVEST

Isaiah 16:9 — Tears for Heshbon and Elealeh

“So I weep with Jazer for the vine of Sibmah; I drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh. No shouts of joy will be heard over your summer fruit or your harvest.”

Again Isaiah weeps.

Chapter 15:

“My heart cries out for Moab!”

Chapter 16:

“I drench you with my tears.”

The prophet’s sorrow continues.

The harvest once produced:

Celebration.

Now:

Silence.

Cross References

Jeremiah 48:32

Jeremiah weeps over the vine of Sibmah because the destroyer has ruined its fruit and harvest.

Joel 1:11

Farmers and vineyard workers are told to mourn because grain and vineyard crops have been devastated and the expected harvest has failed.

Lamentations 2:11

Jeremiah describes his eyes failing from tears and his inner being overwhelmed with grief because of the destruction experienced by his people.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual maturity should not make us indifferent to material and human suffering.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The prophet who speaks God's truth should still possess eyes capable of tears.

X. JOY DISAPPEARS FROM THE ORCHARDS

Isaiah 16:10 — The Winepresses Become Silent

“Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards; in the vineyards no one sings or shouts; no one treads out wine in the presses, for I have silenced the joyful shout.”

Harvest normally brings:

Singing.

Celebration.

Community.

Gladness.

Now:

Silence.

No harvest songs.

No winepress celebrations.

The agricultural life of Moab has collapsed.

Cross References

Jeremiah 48:33

Joy and gladness disappear from Moab's fruitful fields and vineyards, and the normal sounds of winepress celebration are silenced.

Joel 1:12

Vines and fruit trees wither, crops fail, and joy itself seems to dry up among the people.

Amos 5:11

Because the poor were oppressed, those who built expensive houses and planted desirable vineyards would not enjoy what they had produced.

Spiritual Principle

Prosperity without humility can disappear while the fields are still standing.

XI. ISAIAH'S INNER BEING LAMENTS FOR MOAB

Isaiah 16:11 — Sorrow Like the Sound of a Harp

“My heart laments for Moab like a harp; my soul grieves for Kir Hareseth.”

Isaiah's grief is not superficial.

His inner being trembles with sorrow.

The prophet does not enjoy announcing destruction.

This verse reminds us again:

Truth and compassion belong together.

Cross References

Jeremiah 48:36

Jeremiah's heart mourns like the sound of flutes for Moab and Kir Hareseth because their wealth has disappeared.

Jeremiah 4:19

Jeremiah cries out in deep internal anguish because he hears the sound of war and recognizes the devastation approaching his people.

Lamentations 1:20

The sufferer calls upon God to see deep distress, describing intense inner anguish caused by rebellion and judgment.

Spiritual Principle

A heart aligned with God should never become casual about destruction.

Key Truth

Judgment may be deserved and still be tragic.

XII. MOAB’S RELIGION CANNOT SAVE IT

Isaiah 16:12 — Prayer at the High Place Is Useless

“When Moab appears at her high place, when she goes to her shrine to pray, it will do her no good.”

This is a devastating statement.

Moab:

Worships.

Prays.

Visits religious places.

Yet:

There is no help.

Why?

Because worship directed toward false gods cannot produce true salvation.

Sincerity cannot turn an idol into God.

Cross References

Jeremiah 48:35

God promises to bring an end to Moab’s sacrifices and incense offered at its idolatrous high places.

1 Kings 18:29

The prophets of Baal continued crying out through the day, but there was no voice, no answer, and no response from the false god they served.

Jeremiah 2:28

God challenges His people to call upon the gods they made for themselves and see whether those idols can actually save them in the time of trouble.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer is only as powerful as the object to whom it is directed.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Religious activity cannot substitute for relationship with the living God.

XIII. THIS JUDGMENT WAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED

Isaiah 16:13 — God Had Spoken Before

“This is the word the Lord has already spoken about Moab.”

Moab’s judgment is not:

Impulsive.

Unexpected from God’s perspective.

Unannounced.

God had already spoken.

Warning came before fulfillment.

Cross References

Jeremiah 48:47

Even after announcing severe judgment, God also speaks of a future restoration of Moab’s fortunes according to His sovereign purpose.

Numbers 24:17

Balaam foretells the coming of a ruler from Jacob who will exercise dominion and strike Moab, showing that Moab had long appeared within biblical prophetic expectation.

Deuteronomy 2:9

God specifically told Israel not to attack Moab or seize its territory because He had given that land to the descendants of Lot.

Spiritual Principle

God’s judgment should never be separated from the warnings He graciously gives beforehand.

XIV. GOD SETS A THREE-YEAR LIMIT

Isaiah 16:14 — Moab’s Glory Brought Low

“But now the Lord says: ‘Within three years, as a hired worker counts years, Moab’s glory will be brought low and her large population will be despised. Only a small and weak remnant will remain.’”

The prophecy becomes specific.

Not:

Eventually.

Not:

Someday.

But:

“Within three years.”

The phrase:

“as a hired worker counts years”

suggests precision.

A hired worker carefully counts the length of service.

The judgment will not drift indefinitely.

Moab’s:

Glory.

Population.

Strength.

Will be reduced.

A remnant survives.

But it is:

Small.

Weak.

Cross References

Isaiah 21:16

Isaiah gives another precisely measured prophetic period, saying that within one year, counted as carefully as the term of a hired worker, the glory of Kedar will come to an end.

Jeremiah 48:15

Moab’s cities are invaded, its strongest young men go down into slaughter, and the King—the Lord of Heaven’s Armies—declares the judgment.

Jeremiah 48:42

Moab is brought down as a national power because the nation proudly exalted itself against the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

God determines the limits of national power.

Key Truth

Moab's calendar is ultimately in God's hands.

XV. EIGHT GREAT LESSONS FROM ISAIAH 16

1. God Cares About Refugees and Outcasts

The chapter calls for fugitives to be:

Hidden.

Protected.

Sheltered.

Principle:

Strength should become refuge for the vulnerable.

2. The Righteous King Rules in Mercy

A throne is established in:

Mercy.

Faithfulness.

Justice.

Righteousness.

Principle:

God's ideal rule combines authority with moral goodness.

3. Pride Is Spiritually Destructive

Moab's deepest problem is:

Arrogance.

Principle:

Pride makes people trust what cannot save them.

4. Prosperity Is Temporary

Moab's vineyards wither.

Principle:

Material abundance should produce gratitude, not arrogance.

5. Compassion Belongs Beside Judgment

Isaiah weeps.

Principle:

God's truth should never make God's servant emotionally cruel.

6. False Religion Cannot Save

Moab prays.

Nothing happens.

Principle:

Religious sincerity cannot give life to a false god.

7. God's Word Is Certain

The Lord had spoken.

Then He gives:

A timetable.

Principle:

Divine warnings are not empty threats.

8. God Places Limits upon Nations

Within three years:

Moab's glory falls.

Principle:

No nation controls the length of its own greatness.

XVI. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT CHRIST

Verse 5 presents:

A throne.

A Davidic ruler.

Mercy.

Faithfulness.

Justice.

Righteousness.

These themes fit the larger messianic expectation of Isaiah.

Isaiah 9 described:

The Son whose government has no end.

Isaiah 11 described:

The Branch from Jesse.

Isaiah 16 again places hope in:

A righteous ruler from David's line.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

In a world of proud rulers, God points repeatedly toward the righteous King.

XVII. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT MERCY

The throne is established:

“In mercy.”

This is extraordinary.

God's kingdom is not founded upon:

Cruelty.

Exploitation.

Selfish domination.

Spiritual Principle

God never has to choose between being powerful and being merciful.

XVIII. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT JUSTICE

The King:

Judges with justice.

Is eager to do:

What is right.

Justice is not an inconvenience to His reign.

It defines His reign.

Key Truth

Perfect government requires righteous character.

XIX. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT PRIDE

Isaiah piles up words:

Pride.

Arrogance.

Conceit.

Insolence.

Boasting.

This is deliberate.

Pride had saturated Moab's identity.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Pride becomes especially dangerous when it stops being an action and becomes an atmosphere.

XX. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT BOASTING

Moab makes impressive claims.

God calls them:

Empty.

The tragedy of boasting is that it tries to create reality through words.

But words cannot hold up a collapsing foundation.

Spiritual Principle

Confidence is only as strong as the truth beneath it.

XXI. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT PROSPERITY

Moab had:

Fields.

Vines.

Summer fruit.

Harvests.

Winepresses.

These are good gifts.

But gifts cannot become gods.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Enjoy prosperity gratefully, but never ask prosperity to guarantee tomorrow.

XXII. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT WORSHIP

Moab worships.

Moab prays.

Yet:

Nothing changes.

This shows that worship is not automatically acceptable simply because it is sincere.

Spiritual Principle

True worship must be directed toward the true God.

XXIII. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT COMPASSION

Isaiah says:

I weep.

My tears drench you.

My heart laments.

My soul grieves.

The prophet is emotionally involved in the message.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The preacher who never grieves over judgment may not fully understand the weight of what he is preaching.

XXIV. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S WORD

God had:

Already spoken.

Now:

He speaks again.

He adds:

A precise time.

Spiritual Principle

God's patience between warning and fulfillment should be used for humility, not presumption.

XXV. WHAT ISAIAH 16 TEACHES ABOUT REMNANTS

Moab will not remain in its former greatness.

Only:

A small.

Weak.

Remnant.

Will survive.

Key Truth

God can reduce great populations and powerful institutions to a remnant when pride persists.

XXVI. THE THRONE AND THE HIGH PLACE

Isaiah 16 presents two very different religious centers.

One:

A throne established in mercy.

The other:

A false high place where prayer accomplishes nothing.

One points toward:

God's righteous King.

The other toward:

Humanly manufactured religion.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is not merely whether you worship.

The question is:

Whom do you worship?

XXVII. THE OUTCASTS OF MOAB

The chapter begins with displaced people.

Their vulnerability matters.

Isaiah does not reduce Moab to:

An enemy nation.

He sees:

Women.

Fugitives.

Outcasts.

Refugees.

Spiritual Principle

Compassion looks beyond categories and sees people.

XXVIII. MAKE YOUR SHADOW LIKE NIGHT

This is one of the chapter's beautiful pictures of refuge.

At high noon:

The sun is intense.

A deep shadow provides:

Relief.

Cover.

Safety.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God's people should become a shade for those burning under the heat of suffering.

XXIX. THE THRONE ESTABLISHED IN MERCY

Human kingdoms often establish thrones through:

War.

Conquest.

Force.

Isaiah points toward one established in:

Mercy.

Spiritual Principle

Christ's authority and Christ's compassion never compete with one another.

XXX. MOAB'S GREAT PRIDE

Why does Isaiah emphasize pride so strongly?

Because pride destroys:

Teachable hearts.

Dependence.

Repentance.

Gratitude.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Pride closes the door through which correction is trying to enter.

XXXI. WHEN THE VINEYARD STOPS SINGING

Agricultural harvests normally filled communities with celebration.

Now:

Silence.

The lack of singing shows:

Loss has reached everyday life.

Spiritual Principle

Sin can eventually silence joys people assumed would always remain.

XXXII. THE PROPHET'S TEARS

Isaiah does not stand above Moab saying:

“You deserve this.”

He says:

I weep.

That does not mean judgment is unjust.

It means:

Compassion remains alive.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is possible to agree with God's judgment and still grieve deeply over the destruction sin produces.

XXXIII. THE USELESS SHRINE

Moab reaches its high place.

Prays.

Waits.

No help comes.

Why?

The god being addressed cannot save.

Spiritual Principle

A powerless object of faith produces powerless faith regardless of sincerity.

XXXIV. THE THREE-YEAR CLOCK

Moab's people may think:

Life will continue.

God says:

Three years.

This creates urgency.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never assume God's silence means you have unlimited time.

XXXV. FROM GLORY TO WEAKNESS

Verse 14 provides a dramatic contrast.

Before:

Glory.

Large population.

National strength.

After:

Small remnant.

Weakness.

Spiritual Principle

Human greatness can shrink much faster than it was built.

XXXVI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does Moab send toward Zion?

Lambs as tribute.

Question 2

How are Moab's displaced women described?

Like birds driven from their nest.

Question 3

What protection is requested for Moab's fugitives?

They are to be hidden, sheltered, and not betrayed.

Question 4

What kind of throne does Isaiah describe?

A throne established in mercy and occupied faithfully in David's line.

Question 5

How will the ruler on that throne govern?

With justice, faithfulness, and eagerness to do what is right.

Question 6

What is Moab's central spiritual problem?

Pride.

Question 7

How does Isaiah describe that pride?

As arrogance, conceit, insolence, and empty boasting.

Question 8

What happens to Moab's agricultural prosperity?

Its fields and vineyards wither and are trampled.

Question 9

How does Isaiah respond to Moab's suffering?

He weeps and says his heart and soul grieve for Moab.

Question 10

What disappears from the vineyards?

Joyful singing, celebration, and the sounds associated with the winepress.

Question 11

Can Moab's religious high places save the nation?

No.

Its prayers there accomplish nothing.

Question 12

Had God warned Moab previously?

Yes.

Isaiah says this was the Word the Lord had already spoken.

Question 13

What new detail does God give in verse 14?

Moab's glory will be brought low within three years.

Question 14

What will remain after the judgment?

Only a small and weak remnant.

XXXVII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Isaiah 16 asks several searching questions.

Am I Providing Refuge for the Vulnerable?

When people are:

Displaced.

Afraid.

Hurting.

Exposed.

Do I create:

Safety?

Or additional difficulty?

Is Pride Hiding Somewhere in My Heart?

Do I resist:

Correction?

Advice?

Repentance?

Dependence?

What Am I Boasting About?

Education?

Money?

Ministry?

Career?

Possessions?

Influence?

Appearance?

Ability?

Have I Confused Prosperity with Security?

Would my faith remain if the vineyard stopped producing?

Do I Grieve Over the Consequences of Sin?

Or have I become emotionally hard?

Is My Worship Directed Toward the Living God?

Am I relying upon:

Religious activity?

Tradition?

Ritual?

Instead of God Himself?

Am I Ignoring a Warning Because Judgment Has Not Yet Come?

What has God already told me that I need to obey?

Do I Remember That My Time Is in God's Hands?

Am I living with spiritual urgency?

XXXVIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Pride Builds Its Own Throne, but Only God Can Establish a Throne That Lasts”

Moab has:

Pride.

Boasting.

Prosperity.

But Isaiah points toward a different throne:

One established in:

Mercy.

Faithfulness.

Justice.

Righteousness.

Principle:

Human pride tries to make itself great; God’s King is truly great because righteousness defines His rule.

XXXIX. WHEN PRIDE REFUSES REFUGE

Moab needs:

Shelter.

Protection.

Help.

Yet Moab is known for:

Pride.

That tension matters.

Pride says:

I need no one.

Reality says:

I need refuge.

Spiritual Principle

One of pride's greatest lies is convincing us that dependence is weakness.

XL. THE DAVIDIC KING

Isaiah has already shown us:

Isaiah 9:

The Son upon David's throne.

Isaiah 11:

The Branch from Jesse.

Isaiah 16:

The ruler in David's tent.

This forms a developing picture.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Isaiah continually redirects hope from failing nations toward God's promised King.

XLI. MERCY AND JUSTICE TOGETHER

Verse 5 joins:

Mercy.

Faithfulness.

Justice.

Righteousness.

Human beings sometimes separate these.

God's King does not.

Spiritual Principle

Perfect mercy is never unjust, and perfect justice is never morally cruel.

XLII. THE EMPTINESS OF BOASTING

Moab's boasting cannot prevent:

Loss.

Mourning.

Destruction.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Words about how strong we are cannot make us stronger than reality.

XLIII. WHEN PROSPERITY DISAPPEARS

The vineyards once crossed wide areas.

They looked permanent.

Then foreign powers trampled them.

Spiritual Principle

Prosperity should lead to thanksgiving while it lasts, not presumption that it must always continue.

XLIV. NO HARVEST SONG

Joy disappears.

The silence itself becomes part of judgment.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not wait until the song is gone before thanking God for the harvest.

XLV. MY HEART LAMENTS

Isaiah's grief continues from Chapter 15.

This is not emotional weakness.

It is spiritual tenderness.

Spiritual Principle

A soft heart can preach hard truth.

XLVI. PRAYER THAT CANNOT SAVE

Moab prays.

But prayer directed toward falsehood cannot create truth.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Faith is not powerful because it is faith.

Faith is powerful only when placed in the One who is truly able to save.

XLVII. GOD HAS ALREADY SPOKEN

Verse 13 reminds us:

The warning is not new.

God gave opportunity.

Spiritual Principle

Repeated warning is evidence of patience, but it also increases responsibility.

XLVIII. WITHIN THREE YEARS

God brings the prophecy close.

The clock is running.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Whenever God gives time before judgment, treat the time as mercy.

XLIX. THE SMALL AND WEAK REMNANT

Moab's pride was:

Large.

Its surviving remnant will be:

Small.

Moab believed itself:

Strong.

The remnant will be:

Weak.

Spiritual Principle

Pride often ends by confronting the exact weakness it refused to admit.

L. SEVEN CONTRASTS IN ISAIAH 16

1. Pride and Refuge

Moab boasts.

Yet its refugees need shelter.

2. False Thrones and the Davidic Throne

Human power fails.

The righteous throne stands.

3. Boasting and Mourning

Pride speaks loudly.

Judgment produces wailing.

4. Prosperous Vineyards and Withered Fields

Abundance becomes loss.

5. Harvest Singing and Silence

Joy disappears from the winepress.

6. False Worship and True Sovereignty

Moab's shrine cannot help.

The Lord's Word stands.

7. Great Glory and a Weak Remnant

Moab's greatness shrinks under judgment.

Key Truth

Everything Moab trusted proves temporary, while God's Word and righteous rule remain.

LI. FINAL APPLICATION

Isaiah Chapter 16 continues the sorrow of Isaiah 15, but now Isaiah reveals the heart beneath Moab's problem:

Pride.

Moab needs:

Refuge.

Yet Moab is proud.

Moab needs:

Mercy.

Yet Moab boasts.

Moab needs:

God.

Yet Moab goes to its own high places.

That is the tragedy of pride.

Pride can make a person desperately needy while still refusing to admit the need.

Isaiah therefore gives us a warning.

Do not let pride prevent you from receiving:

Help.

Correction.

Mercy.

Forgiveness.

Wisdom.

Salvation.

The chapter also gives us a beautiful picture of the kind of King humanity needs.

A throne established in:

Mercy.

A King characterized by:

Faithfulness.

Justice.

Righteousness.

This is very different from the proud kingdoms Isaiah has been describing.

Babylon boasts.

Assyria boasts.

Moab boasts.

But God points toward:

David's promised King.

Jesus Christ.

His throne does not need arrogance.

His authority does not depend upon oppression.

His greatness does not require false boasting.

He is righteous.

Isaiah also teaches us again how to respond to the suffering of others.

He says:

“I weep.”

And:

“My heart laments.”

That should challenge us.

Do not celebrate when prideful people fall.

Take warning from their fall.

Grieve the destruction.

Pray for repentance.

Maintain compassion.

The chapter also asks us what we are trusting.

Moab trusted:

Agriculture.

Vineyards.

Harvests.

Wealth.

National glory.

False religion.

But vineyards can wither.

Harvest songs can stop.

Money can disappear.

National strength can shrink.

Religious shrines can fail.

Only God remains.

Finally:

The Lord places a time upon Moab's glory.

Within three years:

Everything changes.

That should remind us:

Time belongs to God.

We do not own tomorrow.

Therefore:

Humble yourself today.

Repent today.

Obey today.

Give thanks today.

Seek God today.

Do not wait until:

The vineyard withers.

The songs stop.

The glory fades.

And the strength disappears.

The throne that lasts is not the throne built by pride.

It is the throne established:

In mercy.

In faithfulness.

In justice.

In righteousness.

So reject Moab's pride.

And trust the King from David's line.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that Your throne is established in righteousness.

Thank You that You are:

Merciful.

Faithful.

Just.

Holy.

Forgive us for pride.

Forgive us when we become:

Arrogant.

Self-sufficient.

Boastful.

Unteachable.

Forgive us when we act as though our:

Strength.

Money.

Success.

Possessions.

Abilities.

Can secure our future.

Teach us humility.

Help us admit when we need:

Help.

Mercy.

Correction.

Refuge.

Father, make us people who protect the vulnerable.

Give us compassion for:

Refugees.

Outcasts.

Those fleeing danger.

Those who have lost homes.

Those who feel exposed and afraid.

May we never betray people who desperately need shelter.

Make us:

A shadow in the heat.

A refuge in the storm.

A compassionate presence in suffering.

Father, thank You for Jesus Christ, the promised King from David's line.

Thank You that His throne is characterized by:

Mercy.

Faithfulness.

Justice.

Righteousness.

Teach us to live under His rule.

Father, protect our hearts from becoming cold toward those suffering the consequences of sin.

Give us the heart of Isaiah.

Give us tears.

Give us compassion.

Help us speak truth while loving people.

Thank You for every harvest.

Every meal.

Every possession.

Every good day.

Every ordinary blessing.

Keep us from assuming they must always remain.

And Father, protect us from false religion.

Keep us from trusting in rituals without You.

Teach us to worship You:

The living God.

The true God.

The saving God.

When You warn us:

Help us listen.

When You correct us:

Help us repent.

When You give us time:

Help us recognize it as mercy.

May our confidence rest not in:

Moab's glory.

Human pride.

Material prosperity.

But in You alone.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

“In mercy a throne will be established; one will sit on it in faithfulness, in the tent of David, judging with justice and eager to do what is right.” — Isaiah 16:5

Central Truth

Moab's pride, material prosperity, national glory, and false religion cannot save it from God's appointed judgment, while the throne established in mercy points toward the faithful Davidic King whose righteous rule brings the justice, truth, and security human pride can never provide.

Isaiah 16 in One Sentence

Isaiah calls for protection of Moab's displaced people, points toward the righteous Davidic King whose throne is established in mercy, exposes Moab's arrogance and empty boasting, mourns the destruction of its prosperous vineyards, declares the futility of its false worship, and announces that within three years its glory will be reduced to a small and weak remnant.