
ISAIAH 16: 1 Send the lambs for the ruler of the land from Selah to the wilderness, to the mountain of the daughter of Zion.

The distress of Moab pathetically described by the son of the prince, or ruler of the land, being forced to flee for his life through the desert, that he may escape to Judea; and the young women, like young birds scared from their nest, wade helpless through the fords of Arnon, the boundary of their country, to seek protection in some foreign land, Isa 16:1, Isa 16:2. The prophet addresses Sion, exhorting her to show mercy to her enemies in their distress, that her throne may be established in righteousness, Isa 16:3-5. Exceeding great pride of Moab, Isa 16:6. The terrible calamities about to fall upon Moab farther described by the languishing of the vine, the ceasing of the vintage, the sound of the prophet's bowels quivering like a harp, etc., Isa 16:7-13. Awful nearness of the full accomplishment of the prophecy, Isa 16:14.

Verse 1

Send ye the lamb, etc. "I will send forth the son, etc." - Both the reading and meaning of this verse are still more doubtful than those of the preceding. The Septuagint and Syriac read אשלח eshlach, I will send, in the first person singular, future tense: the Vulgate and Talmud Babylon, read שלח shelach, send, singular imperative: some read שלחו shilchu, send ye forth, or shalechu, they send forth. The Syriac, for כר car, a lamb, reads בר bar, a son, which is confirmed by five MSS. of Kennicott and De Rossi. The two first verses describe the distress of Moab on the Assyrian invasion in which even the son of the prince of the country is represented as forced to flee for his life through the desert, that he may escape to Judea; and the young women are driven forth like young birds cast out of the nest, and endeavoring to wade through the fords of the river Arnon. Perhaps there is not so much difficulty in this verse as appears at first view. "Send the lamb to the ruler of the land," may receive light from 2Kgs 3:4, 2Kgs 3:5 : "And Mesha, king of Moab, was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs with their wool, and one hundred thousand rams: but when Ahab was dead, the king of Moab rebelled against Israel." Now the prophet exhorts them to begin paying the tribute as formerly, that their punishment might be averted or mitigated.

ISAIAH 16: 2 For it will be that as wandering birds, as a scattered nest, so will the daughters of Moab be at the fords of the Arnon.

ISAIAH 16: 3 Give counsel! Execute justice! Make your shade like the night in the midst of the noonday! Hide the outcasts! Don't betray the fugitive!

Verse 3

Take counsel "Impart counsel" - The Vulgate renders the verbs in the beginning of this verse in the singular number, So the Keri; and so likewise sixty-one MSS. of Kennicott's and De Rossi's have it, and nineteen editions, and the Syriac. The verbs throughout the verse are also in the feminine gender; agreeing with Zion, which I suppose to be understood.

ISAIAH 16: 4 Let my outcasts dwell with you! As for Moab, be a hiding place for him from the face of the destroyer. For the extortionist is brought to nothing. Destruction ceases. The oppressors are consumed out of the land.

Verse 4

Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab "Let the outcasts of Moab sojourn with thee, O Zion" - Setting the points aside, this is by much the most obvious construction of the Hebrew, as well as most agreeable to the context, and the design of the prophet. And it is confirmed by the Septuagint οἱ φυγάδες Μωαβ, and Syriac.

The oppressors "The oppressor" - Perhaps the Israelites, who in the time of Ahab invaded Judah, defeated his army, slaying one hundred and twenty thousand men, and brought the kingdom to the brink of destruction. Judah, being now in a more prosperous condition, is represented as able to receive and to protect the fugitive Moabites. And with those former times of distress the security and flourishing state of the kingdom under the government of Hezekiah is contrasted.

ISAIAH 16: 5 A throne will be established in loving kindness. One will sit on it in truth, in the tent of David, judging, seeking justice, and swift to do righteousness.

Verse 5

In mercy shall the throne be established - May not this refer to the throne of Hezekiah? Here we have the character of such a king as cannot fail to be a blessing to the people.

1. "He sitteth on the throne in truth" - He does not merely profess to be the father and protector of his people: but he is actually such.
 2. He is judging. He is not a man of war or blood, who wastes his subjects' lives and treasures in contentions with neighboring nations, in order to satisfy his ambition by the extension of his territory. On the contrary, his whole life is occupied in the distribution of justice.
 3. He seeketh judgment. He seeks out the poor distressed ones who cannot make their way to him, and avenges them on their oppressors.
 4. He hastens righteousness. He does not suffer any of the courts of justice to delay the determination of the causes brought before them: he so orders that the point in litigation be fairly, fully, and speedily heard; and then judgment pronounced. Delays in the execution of justice answer little end but the enriching of unprincipled lawyers.
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ISAIAH 16: 6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, that he is very proud; even of his arrogance, his pride, and his wrath. His boastings are nothing.

Verse 6

We have heard of the pride of Moab "We have heard the pride of Moab" - For גא ge, read הגא geah; two MSS., one ancient, and Jer 48:29. Zephaniah, Zep 2:8-10, in his prophecy against Moab, the subject of which is the same with that of Jeremiah in his forty-eighth chapter, (see the note on Isa 15:1 (note)), enlarges much on the pride of Moab, and their insolent behavior towards the Jews: - "I have heard the reproach of Moab;

And the revilings of the sons of Ammon:

Who have reproached my people;

And have magnified themselves against their borders.

Therefore, as I live, saith Jehovah God of hosts, the God of Israel:

Surely Moab shall be as Sodom,

And the sons of Ammon as Gomorrah:

A possession of nettles, and pits of salt,

And a desolation for ever.

The residue of my people shall spoil them,

And the remnant of my nation shall dispossess them:

This shall they have for their pride;

Because they have raised a reproach, and have magnified themselves

Against the people of Jehovah God of hosts."

ISAIAH 16: 7 Therefore Moab will wail for Moab. Everyone will wail. You will mourn for the raisin cakes of Kir Hareseth, utterly stricken.

Verse 7

For the foundations of Kir-hareseth "For the men of Kirhares" - A palpable mistake in this place is happily corrected by the parallel text of Jer 48:31, where, instead of אשישי ashishey, foundations or flagons, we read אנשי anshey, men. In the same place of Jeremiah, and in Jer 48:36, and here in Isa 16:11, the name of the city is Kirhares, not Kirhareseth.

ISAIAH 16: 8 For the fields of Heshbon languish with the vine of Sibmah. The lords of the nations have broken down its choice branches, which reached even to Jazer, which wandered into the wilderness. Its shoots were spread abroad. They passed over the sea.

Verse 8

Languish "Are put to shame" - Here the text of Jeremiah leaves us much at a loss, in a place that seems to be greatly corrupted. The Septuagint join the two last words of this verse with the

beginning of the following. Their rendering is: και ουκ εντραπηση, τα πεδια Εσεβων. For אַח they must have read אַל al; otherwise, how came they by the negative, which seems not to belong to this place? Neither is it easy to make sense of the rest without a small alteration, by reading, instead of εντραπηση τα, εντρα π η σ ε τ α λ . In a word, the Arabic version taken from the Septuagint, plainly authorizes this reading of the Septuagint, and without the negative; and it is fully confirmed by MSS. Pachom. and 1. D. II., which have both of them εντραπησεται πεδια Εσεβων, without the negative; which makes an excellent sense, and, I think, gives us the true reading of the Hebrew text; נַכְלָמוּ שְׂדֵמוֹת חֶשְׁבוֹן אַךְ אַכְנִיחֵמוּ שְׂדֵמוֹת חֶשְׁבוֹן. They frequently render the verb נַכְלָמוּ nichlam by εντρεπομαι. And נַכְלָמוּ nichlemu answers perfectly well to אַמְלַל umlal, the parallel word in the next line. The MSS. vary in expressing the word נַכְלָמוּ nechaim, which gives no tolerable sense in this place; one reads נֹכְחִים nochaim; two others בְּכֹחִים bechaim; in another the כּ caph is upon a rasure of two letters; and the Vulgate instead of it reads מֵכוֹתָם mecotham, plagas suas. - L.

For the men of Kirhares ye shall make a moan. For the fields of Heshbon are put to shame. This is Bp. Lowth's sense of the passage.

Her branches are stretched out "Her branches extended themselves" - For נִטְשָׁה nitteshu, a MS. has נִגְשָׁה niggeshu; which may perhaps be right. Compare Jer 48:32, which has in this part of the sentence the synonymous word נָגַעוּ nagau.

The meaning of this verse is, that the wines of Sibmah and Heshbon were greatly celebrated, and in high repute with all the great men and princes of that and the neighboring countries; who indulged themselves even to intemperance in the use of them. So that their vines were so much in request as not only to be propagated all over the country of Moab to the sea of Sodom, but to have scions of them sent even beyond the sea into foreign countries. הִלְמוּ halemu, knocked down, demolished; that is overpowered, intoxicated. The drunkards of Ephraim are called by the prophet, Isa 28:1, יַיִן הַלֹּמֵי הַלְּוִמֵי יִין halumey yayin, drinkers of wine. See Schultens on Pro 23:25. Gratius, speaking of the Mareotic wine, says of it,

Pharios quae fregit noxia reges. Cyneg. 312.

ISAIAH 16: 9 Therefore I will weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sibmah. I will water you with my tears, Heshbon, and Elealeh: for on your summer fruits and on your harvest the battle shout has fallen.

Verse 9

With the weeping "As with the weeping" - For בִּבְכִי bibechi, a MS. reads בְּכִי bechi. In Jer 48:32, it is מִבְּכִי mibbechi. The Septuagint read כִּבְכִי kibeki, as with weeping, which I follow.

For thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen "And upon thy vintage the destroyer hath fallen" - נָפַל וְעַל קִצִּירֶךָ הַיָּדָד naphal. In these few words there are two great mistakes, which the text of Jer 48:32 rectifies. For קִצִּירֶךָ ketsirech, it has בְּצִירֶךָ betsirech; and for הַיָּדָד heidad, שְׂדֵד shoded; both which corrections the Chaldee in this place confirms. As to the first, "Hesebon and Eleale, and

The flowery dale of Sibmah, clad with vines," were never celebrated for their harvests; it was the vintage that suffered by the irruption of the enemy; and so read the Septuagint and Syriac. הַיָּדָד heidad is the noisy acclamation of the treaders of the grapes. And see what sense this makes in the

literal rendering of the Vulgate: super messem tuam vox calcantium irruit, "upon thy harvest the voice of the treaders rushes." The reading in Jer 48:32 is certainly right, נפל שדד נפל shoded naphal, "the destroyer hath fallen." The shout of the treaders does not come in till the next verse; in which the text of Isaiah in its turn mends that of Jer 48:33, where instead of the first הידד heidad, "the shout," we ought undoubtedly to read, as here, הדרך haddorech, "the treader."

ISAIAH 16: 10 Gladness is taken away, and joy out of the fruitful field; and in the vineyards there will be no singing, neither joyful noise. Nobody will tread out wine in the presses. I have made the shouting stop.

Verse 10

Neither shall there be shouting "An end is put to the shouting" - The Septuagint read השבת hisbeth, passive, and in the third person; rightly, for God is not the speaker in this place. The rendering of the Septuagint is πεπαυται γαρ κελευσμα, "the cry ceaseth;" which last word, necessary to the rendering of the Hebrew and to the sense, is supplied by MSS. Pachom. and 1. D. II., having been lost out of the other copies.

ISAIAH 16: 11 Therefore my heart sounds like a harp for Moab, and my inward parts for Kir Heres.

ISAIAH 16: 12 It will happen that when Moab presents himself, when he wearies himself on the high place, and comes to his sanctuary to pray, that he will not prevail.

Verse 12

When it is seen that Moab, etc. "When Moab shall see," etc. - For נראה nirah, a MS. reads ראה raah, and so the Syriac and Chaldee. "Perhaps כי נראה ki nirah is only a various reading of כי נראה ki nilah." Secker. A very probable conjecture.

ISAIAH 16: 13 This is the word that the LORD spoke concerning Moab in time past.

ISAIAH 16: 14 But now the LORD has spoken, saying, "Within three years, as a worker bound by contract would count them, the glory of Moab shall be brought into contempt, with all his great multitude; and the remnant will be very small and feeble."

Verse 14

Within three years - בשלש beshalish כשלוש keshalish, according, or in or about three years, is the reading of nine of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., and two ancient editions.

But the present reading may well stand: "Now, the Lord hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of a hireling." It seems as if this prophecy had been delivered before, without any time specified for its fulfillment; but now the time is determined" in three years, as the years of a hireling" - for, as a hireling counts even to a single day, and will not abide with his employer an hour beyond

the time agreed on; so, in three years, even to a day, from the delivery of this prophecy, shall destruction come upon Moab. This is the import of the present text; but if we take כשליש keshalish, AS in three years, or in about three years' time, the prophecy is not so definite.

These three years, says Calmet, are mentioned from the death of Ahaz, see Isa 14:28, and end the third year of Hezekiah, three years before the taking of Samaria by Shalmaneser. This conqueror did not ruin Moab so completely as not to leave a man in the land; the final desolation of Moab was reserved for Nebuchadnezzar, five years after the taking of Jerusalem.

Feeble "And without strength" - An ancient MS., with the Septuagint, reads אלולו velo, "and not."