

Isaiah 14-15: The Dangers of Pride (Moab)

Translation and sermon by Nate Wilson for Christ the Redeemer Church, Oct 22, 2006

Isa 15:1 The burden of Moab.

Because Ar of Moab is laid waste in a night, Moab is undone;
because Kir of Moab is laid waste in a night, Moab is undone.

(2) He has gone up to the temple, and to Dibon, to the high places for weeping;
upon Nebo and upon Medeba Moab wails.

On every head is baldness; every beard is shorn;

(3) in his streets they wear sackcloth;
upon her housetops and in her squares everyone wails, melting down in tears.

(4) And Heshbon and Elealeh cry out; their voice is heard as far as Jahaz;
therefore the armed men of Moab shout, his soul trembles within him.

(5) My heart will cry out for Moab;
her fugitives will be as far as Zoar, a three-year-old heifer.

For from the ascent of Luhith they will go into it with weeping;
For on the road to Horonaim they will raise a cry of destruction;

(6) For the waters of Nimrim will become a desolation;
For the grass is withered, the vegetation fails, the greenery is no more.

(7) Therefore the abundance it made and their stores they will carry over the Brook of the Willows.

(8) For a cry has encompassed the border of Moab;
her wailing even to Eglaim; her wailing to Beer-elim.

(9) For the waters of Dibon are full of blood;
for I will set upon Dibon, adding on
a lion to the escapees of Moab and to the remnant of the ground.

(16:1) Send a lamb, ruler of the land,
from Petra, by way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion.

(2) Like fluttering birds, like a scattered nest,
will be the daughters of Moab from the crossings of the Arnon River.

(3) "Give counsel; make justice;
set your shade like night in the midst of daylight;
shelter the outcasts; do not reveal the fugitive;

(4) My outcasts will sojourn with you;
be a shelter, Moab, to him from the face of the destroyer.

For the oppressor has ceased, destruction has quit, and the trampler has vanished from the land,

(5) and a throne will be established in lovingkindness,
and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David
one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness."

(6) We have heard of the pomp of Moab—very puffed-up—his pride and his pretentiousness
his boasts are not true.

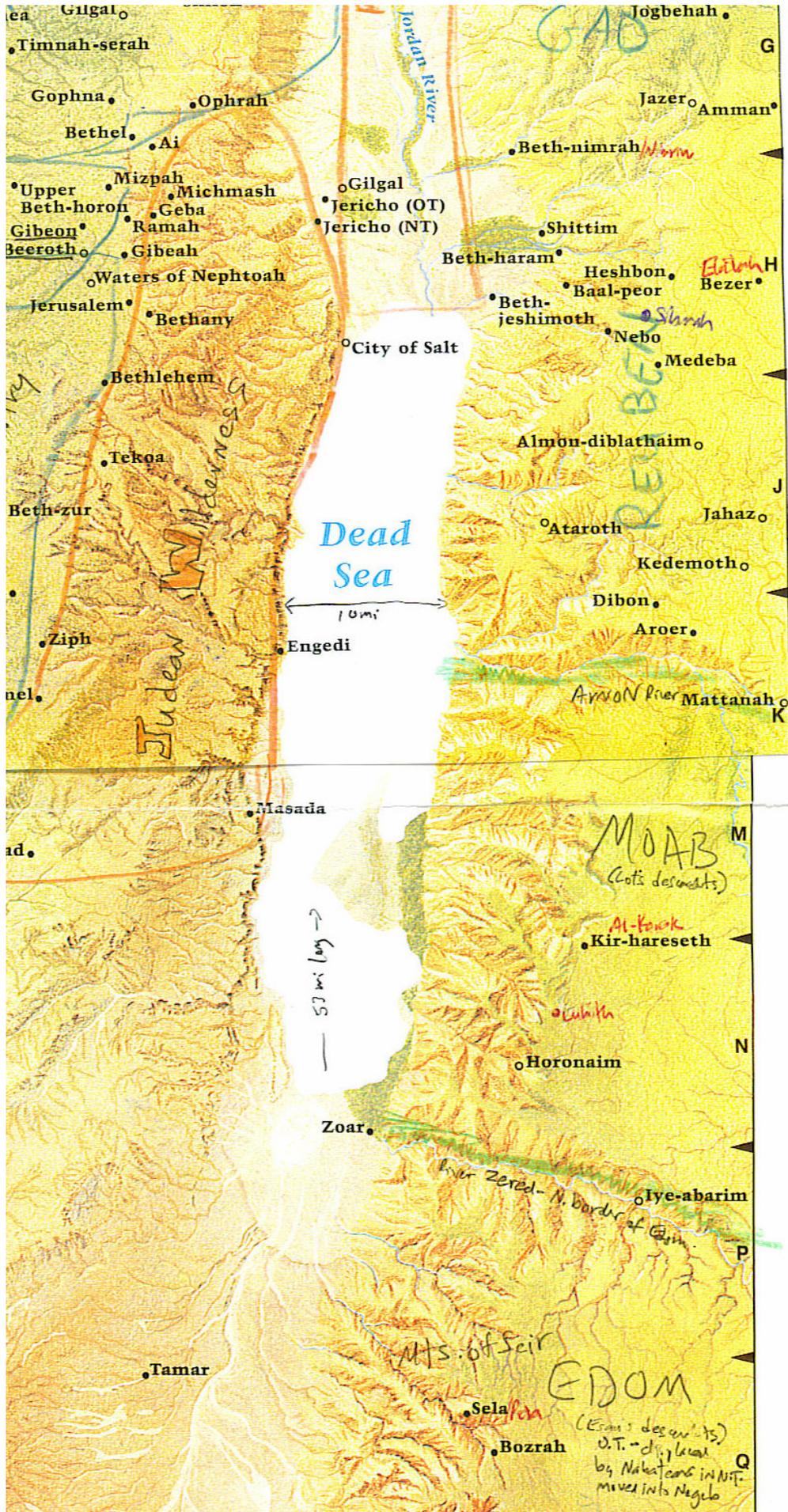
(7) Therefore Moab will wail for Moab, everyone will wail.
You will mourn, utterly stricken, for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth.

- (8) For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah;
the lords of the nations have struck down her branches,
they reached to Jazer and wandered to the desert;
her shoots spread abroad and passed over the sea.
- (9) Therefore I weep with the weeping of Jazer, the vine of Sibmah;
I drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh;
For over your harvest-time and your harvest-crop the shout has fallen off.
- (10) And joy and gladness are taken away from the fruitful field,
and in the vineyards it is not sung out, it is not shouted;
the treader will not tread out wine in the presses;
I have put an end to the shouting.
- (11) Therefore my inner parts moan like a lyre for Moab,
and my inmost self for Kir-hareseth.
- (12) And when Moab is seen - when he wearies himself on the high place,
and he comes to his sanctuary to pray,
he will not prevail.
- (13) This is the word that the LORD spoke concerning Moab in the past.
- (14) But now the LORD has spoken, saying,
"In three years,
like the years of a hired worker,
the glory of Moab will be brought into contempt,
in spite of all his great multitude,
and the remnant will be very few, not many."

Sermon:

- 1) Illustration of Humility and pride – vanity plates
 - a) When personalized license plates were introduced in Illinois, the Department of Motor Vehicles received over 1,000 requests for the number "1".
 - b) We all like to be #1 don't we? We like to think we're the best, that we do things the best way.
 - c) God hates pride "Pro 8:13 The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate." If we do not humble ourselves, God will humble us.
- 2) Orientation to of Moab –
 - a) History
 - i) Gen 19:37 Lot's descendents, knew of God's wrath against sin
 - ii) Num 22-24 Balak and Balaam knew the messiah was coming (Num 24:17-19)
 - iii) Judges 3 – Eglon and Ehud
 - iv) 100 yrs B4 Isaiah: 2 Kings 3 – Jehoram & Jehosaphat subeued Mesha
 - b) MAP: location of major cities, borders, and agricultural areas
 - i) Note flow of worship to high places to worship Chemosh
 - c) Moab's pride (16:6-12) – arrogance, boasting, food production, people, idol-worship – these are the wrong place to go.
 - i) Proud Words from Mesha's monument (carved in the 600's BC): "And in Karchoh I made this high place for Chemosh... because he has delivered me from all kings, and because he has made me look down on all my enemies... Omri was the king of Israel... but I looked down on him and on his house... And Chemosh said to me: "Go, take Nebo from Israel!" And I went in the night, and I fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, and I took it, and I killed its whole population, seven thousand male citizens and aliens, female citizens and aliens, and servant girls; for I had put it to the ban of Ishtar Chemosh. And from there, I took the vessels of YHWH, and I hauled them before the face of Chemosh."

- ii) We should rather boast in the Lord, make Him your pride and joy. (Jer 9:23) Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."
- 3) The judgment (16:13-14) and its fulfillment
 - a) God hates pride "Pro 8:13 The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate."
 - b) Balaam prophesied judgment against Moab in Num 24, so Isaiah prophecies in 16:14 its downfall within 3 years as a hired man counts them – exact, no more no less
 - c) Edom's humiliation and evacuation of country (step through ch 15) – expressions of grief – either do this voluntarily or you will be forced to do it.
 - d) Assyria then Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar=Lion)
 - e) But there will be a remnant and they will be humbled
 - i) Contrast boastful Mesha stele with pilgrimage mosaic of Medeba
- 4) What can we learn from this:
 - a) Pride blinds us to danger
 - i) Moab on the high places (15:2), believes lies (16:6)
 - ii) King of the jungle illustration: A big, mean lion met a monkey in the jungle. The lion pounced on the poor monkey and said, "Who is king of the jungle?" The frightened monkey replied, "You are, O mighty lion." So the lion let him go. The next animal the lion met was a zebra. He pounced on it and roared, "Who is king of the jungle?" "You are, O mighty lion." So the lion let him go. The lion next met an elephant and asked the same question. The elephant grabbed the lion, twirled him around and threw him 50 feet. The lion picked himself up and huffed, "Just because you don't know the answer is no reason to get so rough."
 - iii) (1Co 10:12) Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.
 - b) Pride keeps us from doing God's will from loving Him and loving others
 - i) Asking for help from the right place 16:1-5 – either flee to God's throne of righteousness voluntarily or you will be humbled before it involuntarily (Phil 4)
 - ii) Moab would not harbor God's refugees (16:4)
 - c) Pride keeps us from receiving God's blessings
 - i) Water, fruitful fields and raisin cakes no more for Moab
 - ii) Organ keeper and Felix Mendellson: He was an old organist of the celebrated Freiburg Cathedral, but now that his fingers had lost their skill, he was made custodian of the great organ. One day a visitor came to the cathedral and asked to play the organ, but the custodian refused. "No one but myself and the present organist has ever touched the keys," the custodian objected. But the visitor pleaded until he was given permission to play a few notes. He slipped into the seat and touched first one note and then another. Then, running his fingers over the keys, he filled the whole cathedral with such beautiful music that the organist was entranced. When the visitor finished, the old custodian came to him and asked his name. And the visitor replied, "My name is Felix Mendelssohn." And until the end of his life, the old organist would exclaim over and over, "To think I almost missed hearing Mendelssohn play on my organ!"
 - d) But remember: God has compassion in the midst of judgment
 - i) 15:5; 16:9 – I will weep!
 - ii) He did with Ninevah
 - iii) So there is hope if you have been proud. Humble yourself – cry out for help to God, receive His blessings, and find delight in doing His will!





The Stela of Mesha, created 100 years before Isaiah, discovered by a German missionary in 1868 in Dhiban, the ancient Moabite capital <http://www.livius.org/mo-mt/moab/mesha.html>

Translation of the Stela of Mesha written ~853 BC

I am Mesha, the son of Kemoš-yatti, the king of Moab, from Dibon. My father was king over Moab for thirty years, and I was king after my father.

And in Karchoh I made this high place for Kemoš [...] because he has delivered me from all kings, and because he has made me look down on all my enemies.

Omri was the king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab for many days, for Kemoš was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him, and he said -he too- "I will oppress Moab!" In my days he did so, but I looked down on him and on his house, and Israel has gone to ruin, yes, it has gone to ruin for ever!

Omri had taken possession of the whole land of Medeba and he lived there in his days and half the days of his son, forty years, but Kemoš restored it in my days. And I built Baal Meon, and I made in it a water reservoir, and I built Kiriathaim.

And the men of Gad lived in the land of Ataroth from ancient times, and the king of Israel built Ataroth for himself, and I fought against the city, and I captured, and I killed all the people from the city as a sacrifice for Kemoš and for Moab, and I brought back the fire-hearth of his Uncle from there, and I hauled it before the face of Kemoš in Kerioth, and I made the men of Sharon live there, as well as the men of Maharith.

And Kemoš said to me: "Go, take Nebo from Israel!" And I went in the night, and I fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, and I took it, and I killed its whole population, seven thousand male citizens and aliens, female citizens and aliens, and servant girls; for I had put it to the ban of Aštar Kemoš. And from there, I took the vessels of YHWH, and I hauled them before the face of Kemoš.

And the king of Israel had built Jahaz, and he stayed there during his campaigns against me, and Kemoš drove him away before my face, and I took two hundred men from Moab, all its division, and I led it up to Jahaz. And I have taken it in order to add it to Dibon.

I have built Karchoh, the wall of the woods and the wall of the citadel, and I have built its gates, and I have built its towers, and I have built the house of the king, and I have made the double reservoir for the spring, in the innermost of the city. Now, there was no cistern in the innermost of the city, in Karchoh, and I said to all the people: "Make, each one of you, a cistern in his house." And I cut out the moat for Karchoh by means of prisoners from Israel.

I have built Aroer, and I made the military road in the Arnon. I have built Beth Bamoth, for it had been destroyed. I have built Bezer, for it lay in ruins.

And the men of Dibon stood in battle-order, for all Dibon, they were in subjection. And I am the king over hundreds in the towns which I have added to the land.

And I have built the House of Medeba and the House of Diblathaim, and the House of Baal Meon, and I brought there [...] the flocks of the land.

And Horonaim, there lived [...]. And Kemoš said to me: "Go down, fight against Horonaim!" I went down [...] and Kemoš restored it in my days. And [...] from there [...]

<http://www.livius.org/mo-mt/moab/mesha.html>



Urn tomb façade in Petra/Sela Photo by Dana (last name withheld for security reasons)

The Medhaba Mosaic

5th century AD

<http://198.62.75.1/www1/ofm/mad/index.html>

