

## Isaiah – Chapter 14:24-16:14

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### ASSYRIA, PHILISTIA, AND MOAB JUDGED

Isaiah 14:24-27 – The Lord of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, to break Assyria in My land, and I will trample him on My mountains. Then his yoke will be removed from them and his burden removed from their shoulder. “This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. “For the Lord of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”

#### HISTORICAL BACKDROP

In 14:28, we receive a date of the Oracle against Philistia, the year of King Ahaz’s death, around 715 BC. Standing in Jerusalem, seeing past the walls, will see nothing but enemies. Israel and Syria are defeated, but the Assyrian horde is far more deadly and more aggressive. The Egyptian Army is as strong as ever and threatening in from the south. Babylon is rising and would defeat Judah easily if they were to get passed Assyria.

This chapter continues in the context of the prophecy of complete and absolute judgment but with the promise that complete and absolute restoration and glory of Israel is the ultimate conclusion. The phrase “on that day” refers to the day of restoration, therefore this is about the eschatological hope not in the immediate context of judgment. This is about the future expectation and reality of salvation and glory. In order for the restoration to be complete, the enemies of Israel need to be destroyed.

#### CONTEXT

Chapter 13 through most of 14 provide an extensive judgment upon Babylon, however what we saw is that this is not about the current Babylon but about the perpetual obstinate rebellion and the eventual judgment of Babylon in the future during the day of the Lord.

In the following chapters we will see judgments against nations we know and nations we may not be as familiar with.

Chapters 14-16 show judgments against Assyria, Philistia, and Moab.

Chapter 17 is against Damascus which is Syria.

Chapter 18 is against Ethiopia, with 19 against Egypt, which has a reiteration in Chapter 20 for both Egypt and Ethiopia.

Chapter 21 returns to Babylon and the chapter concludes with judgments against Edom and Arabia.

Chapter 22 is an oracle about the Valley of Visions, which is mainly about Jerusalem.

Chapter 23 is a judgment against Tyre which is found in ancient Phoenicia in modern day Lebanon but is typically understood as a city state during the time of Isaiah.

Chapter 24 concludes this section with a proclamation against the whole earth.

## Isaiah – Chapter 14:24-16:14

---

### ASSYRIA, PHILISTIA, AND MOAB JUDGED

#### EXPOSITION

#### **The Oracle against Assyria (Isaiah 14:24-27)**

Assyria is the empire that arose in northern Mesopotamia with its capital at Nineveh. In the Biblical record it first appears as a rising power during the time of the divided kingdom. By Isaiah's day it had become the dominant military force in the world, known for its highly organized army, its use of terror as a weapon, and its policy of deporting conquered peoples. Scripture presents Assyria as the instrument God used to discipline the northern kingdom of Israel. In chapter 10 the Lord calls Assyria "the rod of My anger" and "the staff in whose hands is My indignation." The Assyrian king did not see himself as a servant of the Holy One of Israel. He boasted in his own wisdom and strength, claiming that the victories were his own doing.

The text here states plainly why judgment comes upon Assyria. The LORD of hosts has sworn that He will break Assyria in His own land and trample the oppressor on His own mountains. We will see that the invading army of Assyria will be defeated as it sieges against Jerusalem and not in open battle.

The yoke and burden that Assyria laid upon others will be lifted. This is presented as a historical event that will unfold: the empire that has terrified the region will itself be brought low by the sovereign hand of God. The language of the plan being "devised against the whole earth" and the stretched-out hand being "against all the nations" shows that Assyria's judgment fits into the larger pattern of God dealing with every proud and rebellious power that sets itself against Him. For the people of Judah hearing this oracle, the assurance is direct. The same God who has allowed Assyria to serve as a rod of discipline will not allow that rod to remain forever. What the LORD has planned will stand, and none can frustrate it.

#### **The Oracle against Philistia (Isaiah 14:28-32)**

The text now turns to Philistia. The Philistines were a people who settled along the southwestern coastal plain of Canaan. Their five main cities (Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath) formed a confederation that controlled the fertile land and the trade routes along the Mediterranean coast. The Biblical history records they appear as early as the time of the patriarchs and become a persistent threat during the period of the judges and the early monarchy. They are repeatedly described as oppressors of Israel. Samson fought against them. They captured the ark of the covenant. They were the enemies Saul and David faced in battle; Goliath was a Philistine (1 Samuel 17:4). Their location made them a constant border pressure on Judah's western flank, and they often allied with other nations when it served their interest against God's people. This was a nation that was perpetually a presence, but the Promised Land includes this area. Israel failed to expel this nation, and thus it was perpetually a thorn in their side.

## Isaiah – Chapter 14:24-16:14

---

### ASSYRIA, PHILISTIA, AND MOAB JUDGED

The oracle is dated to the year King Ahaz died. Ahaz had been a king who looked to Assyria for help rather than trusting the Lord. With the knowledge that Assyria was basically given the keys to Judah, Philistia was absolutely concerned for their own safety.

The text tells Philistia not to rejoice because “the rod that struck you is broken.” Some source of pressure on them has been removed, yet the warning is clear: a more dangerous threat is coming. The imagery of the serpent’s root producing a viper and then a flying serpent pictures an escalating judgment. The smoke from the north and the disciplined ranks describe a real military advance that will continue to move against them. The command to wail and the statement that the LORD will destroy their root with famine show that the judgment is thorough.

Yet the oracle ends with the answer that is to be given to any messengers who inquire: “the LORD has founded Zion, and the afflicted of His people will take refuge in her.” While Philistia faces ongoing upheaval because of its pattern of opposition to God’s people, Zion stands as the place of refuge the Holy One has established. Here we have the ultimate reason for the continuing pressure on Philistia: they have been struck, yet their response and their ongoing posture toward God’s people keep them in the path of further judgment.

This prophecy was fulfilled through the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests of the 8th–6th centuries BC:

- Assyrian kings (Sargon II, Sennacherib) campaigned against and subdued Philistine cities (Gath, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gaza).
- The climax came under Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon. In 604/603 BC, after a Philistine revolt, Babylonian forces destroyed key cities (especially Ashkelon and Ekron), exiled populations, and effectively ended Philistine independence.
- Archaeological and historical records confirm the destruction and the loss of distinct Philistine identity. The people were assimilated into the Babylonian empire and later periods. By the Persian and Hellenistic eras, there was no longer a Philistine nation or distinct ethnic/political entity, only the regional name “Palestine” (derived from Philistia) remained.

The Philistines, who had been a persistent threat to Israel from the time of the judges through the monarchy, were gone as a people in any organized sense. This matches the prophecy’s language of destroying the “root” and slaying the “remnant.”

### **The Oracle against Moab (Isaiah 15:1–16:14)**

This is the longest of the three oracles and carries a tone of lament rather than triumph. The text presents Moab’s coming desolation in vivid detail.

The cities of Moab fall suddenly. The people go up to the high places to weep. In Dibon they weep on the housetops. Sackcloth and baldness mark the mourning. Heshbon and Elealeh cry

## Isaiah – Chapter 14:24-16:14

---

### ASSYRIA, PHILISTIA, AND MOAB JUDGED

out, and the sound reaches Jahaz. The prophet records, “My heart cries out for Moab.” The waters of Nimrim are desolate, the vegetation withers, and the cry of distress spreads as far as Eglaim and Beer-elim. The waters of Dimon are full of blood.

Moab is the people descended from the son born to Lot and his older daughter after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:30-38). They settled on the plateau east of the Dead Sea, a region with fertile land and strategic location along trade routes. In Biblical History their interactions with Israel begin early. Balak, king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse Israel as they approached the land (Numbers 22–24). During the time of the judges, Moab oppressed Israel for eighteen years until Ehud delivered them (Judges 3). David later subdued Moab and received tribute from them (2 Samuel 8:2). Yet Moab repeatedly showed hostility, rejoicing in Israel’s calamities and allying against Judah when opportunity arose.

The text itself names the reason for the judgment that is coming. In chapter 16 the prophet states, “We have heard of the pride of Moab, an excessive pride; Even of his arrogance, pride, and fury; His idle boasts are false.” Moab rebelled against the Lord, believing its armies, its vineyards, its high places, and its position would withstand any foreign invader. The historical pattern of opposition to God and the desire to take what God has given to Israel reaches the point of appointed destruction. The cities are laid waste, the fields wither, the vineyards are trampled, and gladness and singing cease. The text even gives a specific timeframe: “Within three years, as a hired man would count them, the glory of Moab will be degraded along with all his great population, and his remnant will be very small and impotent.” This is presented as a historical outworking that will unfold in the experience of Moab.

Yet in the Isaiah 16 the text presents a way of escape. God gives counsel to Moab to send tribute to the ruler in Zion and to allow the outcasts of Moab to find shelter there. Then the text presents the establishment of a throne in lovingkindness, with a judge who sits in faithfulness in the tent of David and who seeks justice and is prompt in righteousness. This is the same hope we have traced through the Book of Immanuel, the coming King from David’s line whose rule brings refuge. Even while pronouncing judgment on Moab’s pride, the prophecy presents the possibility of shelter under this righteous throne.

We do not know the exact year Isaiah delivered this oracle, so it is difficult to verify the “three years” with calendar precision. However, the broader historical picture strongly aligns with Assyrian military activity in the late 8th century BC (during the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and especially Sargon II).

- Moab had a long history of conflict with Israel/Judah and was often a vassal or tribute-paying state under Assyrian domination.

## Isaiah – Chapter 14:24-16:14

---

### ASSYRIA, PHILISTIA, AND MOAB JUDGED

- Assyrian records (annals and tribute lists) mention Moabite kings paying tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III and later to Sennacherib. Moab appears in contexts of regional coalitions or submission during Assyrian campaigns in the Levant and Transjordan.
- Significant pressure and reduction of Moabite power occurred during Sargon II's campaigns (around 711 BC and surrounding years), when he dealt with revolts and asserted control over Philistia and neighboring regions that included Moabite involvement or effects.

We see this “within three years” judgment as fulfilled through Assyrian conquest and subjugation in the late 8th century, which significantly diminished Moab as a regional power. Moab continued to exist afterward as a vassal state but was no longer the proud, independent kingdom it once was.

The final and more total desolation of Moab came later, under the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar devastated Moab around 582 BC (roughly five years after the fall of Jerusalem).

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

These three oracles stand together as a clear declaration that the Holy One of Israel rules over the nations that surround His people. Assyria, the empire that acted with arrogant cruelty, will be broken in God's own land. Philistia, the coastal confederation that has repeatedly opposed God's people, is warned that relief from one pressure does not end the judgment. Moab, the people descended from Lot whose pride and hostility are documented throughout Scripture, will see its glory degraded and its cities laid waste. Yet in the middle of Moab's oracle the text presents the establishment of a throne in lovingkindness in the tent of David, a ruler who seeks justice and is prompt in righteousness. This is the King whose reign brings refuge.

For Judah the message is steady. The nations that have oppressed or threatened them are not beyond the reach of God's hand. The same LORD who has stretched out His hand in judgment on His people will stretch it out against their enemies, and His plan stands. Zion remains the place of refuge because the Lord has founded it. The historical judgments on these nations demonstrate the pattern that continues until the day of the LORD brings final justice to all.

Why present these prophecies to Judah? There are two reasons. As established, this was to comfort Israel that God will keep his promises and deliver the restored nation to Israel and with that comes the destruction of the enemies of God and His chosen nation. The second is that Israel was to be the light to the world. These oracles were not intended to be kept only for Israel but to have emissaries go to these kings and present the judgment of God so that the LORD will be glorified as the one true and only God.

## Isaiah – Chapter 14:24-16:14

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### ASSYRIA, PHILISTIA, AND MOAB JUDGED

#### TYING THE THREADS TOGETHER

The Messianic Hope is presented directly in 16:5. The throne established in lovingkindness, the judge who sits in faithfulness in the tent of David and seeks justice with prompt righteousness. This is the Child born to us, the Son given to us, whose government will rest on His shoulders and whose kingdom will have no end. The King who provides a hiding place is the same whose zeal will accomplish the everlasting rule.

The Motif of the City continues. Zion is founded as the secure refuge for the afflicted of God's people. While the proud territories of Assyria, Philistia, and Moab are brought low, the city the Lord has chosen stands as the place where outcasts may find shelter under the righteous rule of the coming King.

The Holy One of Israel stands at the center. His holiness requires judgment on the rebellion, wickedness, and oppression of the nations. His faithfulness guarantees that His plan for His people and for the throne of David will not be thwarted or delayed. What He has intended will stand, and none can turn back His stretched-out hand.

#### CONCLUSION

These oracles show us God dealing with real nations whose identities, locations, and histories with His people are recorded in Scripture. Assyria is broken because of its arrogant cruelty. Philistia faces continued pressure because of its pattern of opposition. Moab's pride brings desolation to its cities and fields. Yet even here the promise of the Davidic throne remains. There is a refuge for those who will come under the rule of the King who establishes justice in lovingkindness.

We live in the time between these historical outworkings and the full day of the LORD when every nation will be brought to account. Until then, we reflect upon His judgments, and we look forward to His salvation in the Messianic Kingdom as we ponder the righteousness and lovingkindness of the LORD. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

# The Prophetic Mosaic: Unveiling the Glory of the LORD (Chapters 1–23)



**PART I: THE INDICTMENT AND THE VISION**  
(Chapters 1–6)

**THE COVENANT LAMBSUIT**  
God argues a legal trial against Judah, calling Gehaz and earth as witnesses to their rebellion, anxiety, warlike, and social injustice.

**THE VISION OF THE HOLY KING**  
In Chapter 6, Isaiah sees the Lord "lofty and exalted" and is cleansed by a coal from the altar, establishing the theme: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of Hosts."

**THE WILD GRAPE VINEYARD**  
Chapter 6 uses the parable of a vineyard that produced "wild grapes" to justify the coming judgment of the "removal of the hedge."

**THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL**  
Announces the Sign-Spoken to the King: God presents a sign to the king named "Immanuel," providing a sign of over-coming darkness and far from the days of the past.

**PART II: THE BOOK OF IMMANUEL**  
(Chapters 7–12)

**THE FOURFOLD NAME OF THE CHILD**  
The promised King is identified as the wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, whose government will have no end.

**THE BRANCH AND THE ROOT OF JESSE**  
Chapter 11 describes a "shoot" sprouting from a dead stump, representing the Messiah empowered by the Holy Spirit to restore Israel and gather the remnant.

**THE BURDEN OF BABYLON**  
Isaiah prophesies the fall of the "city of the proud" — the imperial splendor of Babylon — and predicts its total, eternal devastation.

**THE ROD VS. THE SUIVERSON**  
Assyria is revealed as the "rod of God's anger," and for discipline can be used for destruction because of its own arrogant pride.

**ORACLES OF UNIVERSAL JUDGMENT**  
Specific prophecies are "revealed" for Philistia, Moab, and Damascus, proving Isaiah's every border.

**PART III: SOVEREIGNTY OF THE NATIONS**