

Isaiah 16:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

Analysis

The plea to "send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land" represents Moab's tribute offering to Judah, seeking political protection and refuge. The Hebrew kar (lamb) likely refers to the required tribute—Moab's economy centered on sheep-rearing (2 Kings 3:4 mentions Moab's king rendering 100,000 lambs annually). "From Sela to the wilderness unto the mount of the daughter of Zion" traces the tribute route from Petra (Edom/Moab border) through wilderness to Jerusalem. This reverses Moab's historical pride—seeking help from Israel/Judah whom they despised. The address to "ruler of the land" acknowledges Davidic sovereignty. Reformed covenant theology sees this as picture of nations ultimately needing to submit to the true King—prefiguring Christ's universal reign when every knee bows (Philippians 2:10-11).

Historical Context

Historically, Moab paid tribute to Israel during periods of Israelite strength (2 Kings 3:4). The Mesha Stele records Moab's rebellion against this arrangement. Sela (meaning "rock," later Greek Petra) served as a fortress city in Edomite territory, but Moabite refugees fled there seeking safety. The tribute route through wilderness to Jerusalem reflects the harsh geographical realities of the region. This prophecy's fulfillment came when various invasions forced Moabites to seek refuge in Judah, acknowledging the very sovereignty they previously rejected.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does Moab's plea to send tribute reveal about the humbling effect of divine judgment on national pride?
2. How does this historical tribute prefigure all nations' ultimate need to submit to Christ's kingship?
3. In what ways does crisis reveal the insufficiency of earthly powers and drive people to seek higher authority?

Interlinear Text

אַל מִדְבָּרְכָה מִסְלָל לְעֵז אֶל שְׁלָחוֹן כְּרָמֶשׁ
Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness H413
H7971 H3733 H4910 H776 H5554 H4057

רָם בָּתְן צִיּוֹן:
unto the mount of the daughter of Zion H6726
H2022 H1323

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 10:32 (Parallel theme): As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

2 Kings 3:4 (Parallel theme): And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

2 Kings 14:7 (Parallel theme): He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

2 Samuel 8:2 (Parallel theme): And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

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