

Isaiah 16:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

Analysis

"Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble." God sets specific timeframe: three years precisely measured "as years of an hireling" (contracted laborer counting exactly). This specificity demonstrates sovereign control over history's details. Moab's "glory" will be "contemned" (niklah—brought into contempt, despised). Their "great multitude" becomes "very small and feeble." This fulfilled as invasions progressively reduced Moab until they disappeared as distinct nation. Theologically, prideful glory inevitably faces humiliation; God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Historical Context

The three-year timeframe likely refers to Assyrian campaigns under Tiglath-Pileser III or Sargon II (730s-710s BCE). Hired laborers contracted for specific periods, carefully tracking time until freedom—thus "years of an hireling" means exactly three years. Moab suffered multiple invasions: Assyrian (732, 715 BCE), Babylonian (6th century), eventually disappearing by Persian period. Progressive reduction from "great multitude" to "small feeble remnant" occurred over centuries. By New Testament times, Moabites existed only as historical memory.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does the three-year timeframe teach about God's sovereign control over historical details?
2. How does Moab's glory becoming contempt illustrate the principle that God humbles the proud?
3. How do progressive judgments over time demonstrate both divine patience and certain justice?

Interlinear Text

וְעַתָּה ה	דָּבַר ר	יְהוָה	לֵאמֹר	בְּשָׁלֹשׁ ש	כְּשָׁנֵי י
H6258	hath spoken	But now the LORD	saying	Within three	as the years
	H1696	H3068	H559	H7969	H8141
כְּשָׁנֵי י	שֶׁכֶּר יִר	וְנִקְלָה	כְּבֹד וְ	מוֹאָב	בְּכָל ל
as the years	of an hireling	shall be contemned	and the glory	of Moab	
H8141	H7916	H7034	H3519	H4124	H3605
הַקָּהָמ וְ	הַגָּבֹר	וְשָׁאֵר ר	מְעַט	מְזֵעַר	לֹא
multitude	with all that great	and the remnant	shall be very	small	and feeble
H1995	H7227	H7605	H4592	H4213	H3808
כְּבִיר:					
H3524					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 23:9 (Glory): The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.

Isaiah 21:16 (Glory): For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail:

Jeremiah 48:42 (References Lord): And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD.

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