

Saturday, September 14

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Isaiah 15:1 - 18:7

15 **1** This message came to me concerning Moab: In one night the town of Ar will be leveled, and the city of Kir will be destroyed. **2** Your people will go to their temple in Dibon to mourn. They will go to their sacred shrines to weep. They will wail for the fate of Nebo and Medeba, shaving their heads in sorrow and cutting off their beards. **3** They will wear burlap as they wander the streets. From every home and public square will come the sound of wailing. **4** The people of Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out; their voices will be heard as far away as Jahaz! The bravest warriors of Moab will cry out in utter terror. They will be helpless with fear. **5** My heart weeps for Moab. Its people flee to Zoar and Eglath-shelishiyah. Weeping, they climb the road to Luhith. Their cries of distress can be heard all along the road to Horonaim. **6** Even the waters of Nimrim are dried up! The grassy banks are scorched. The tender plants are gone; nothing green remains. **7** The people grab their possessions and carry them across the Ravine of Willows. **8** A cry of distress echoes through the land of Moab from one end to the other— from Eglaim to Beer-elim. **9** The stream near Dibon runs red with blood, but I am still not finished with Dibon! Lions will hunt down the survivors— both those who try to escape and those who remain behind.

16 **1** Send lambs from Sela as tribute to the ruler of the land. Send them through the desert to the mountain of beautiful Zion. **2** The women of Moab are left like homeless birds at the shallow crossings of the Arnon River. **3** “Help us,” they cry. “Defend us against our enemies. Protect us from their relentless attack. Do not betray us now that we have escaped. **4** Let our refugees stay among you. Hide them from our enemies until the terror is past.” When oppression and destruction have ended and enemy raiders have disappeared, **5** then God will establish one of David’s descendants as king. He will rule with mercy and truth. He will always do what is just and be eager to do what is right. **6** We have heard about proud Moab— about its pride and arrogance and rage. But all that boasting has disappeared. **7** The entire land of Moab weeps. Yes, everyone in Moab mourns for the cakes of raisins from Kir-hareseth. They are all gone now. **8** The farms of Heshbon are abandoned; the vineyards at Sibmah are deserted. The rulers of the nations have broken down Moab— that beautiful grapevine. Its tendrils spread north as far as the town of Jazer and trailed eastward into the wilderness. Its shoots reached so far west that they crossed over the Dead Sea. **9** So now I weep for Jazer and the vineyards of Sibmah;

my tears will flow for Heshbon and Elealeh. There are no more shouts of joy over your summer fruits and harvest. **10** Gone now is the gladness, gone the joy of harvest. There will be no singing in the vineyards, no more happy shouts, no treading of grapes in the winepresses. I have ended all their harvest joys. **11** My heart's cry for Moab is like a lament on a harp. I am filled with anguish for Kir-hareseth. **12** The people of Moab will worship at their pagan shrines, but it will do them no good. They will cry to the gods in their temples, but no one will be able to save them. **13** The LORD has already said these things about Moab in the past. **14** But now the LORD says, "Within three years, counting each day, the glory of Moab will be ended. From its great population, only a feeble few will be left alive."

17 1 This message came to me concerning Damascus: "Look, the city of Damascus will disappear! It will become a heap of ruins. **2** The towns of Aroer will be deserted. Flocks will graze in the streets and lie down undisturbed, with no one to chase them away. **3** The fortified towns of Israel will also be destroyed, and the royal power of Damascus will end. All that remains of Syria will share the fate of Israel's departed glory," declares the LORD of Heaven's Armies. **4** "In that day Israel's glory will grow dim; its robust body will waste away. **5** The whole land will look like a grainfield after the harvesters have gathered the grain. It will be desolate, like the fields in the valley of Rephaim after the harvest. **6** Only a few of its people will be left, like stray olives left on a tree after the harvest. Only two or three remain in the highest branches, four or five scattered here and there on the limbs," declares the LORD, the God of Israel. **7** Then at last the people will look to their Creator and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel. **8** They will no longer look to their idols for help or worship what their own hands have made. They will never again bow down to their Asherah poles or worship at the pagan shrines they have built. **9** Their largest cities will be like a deserted forest, like the land the Hivites and Amorites abandoned when the Israelites came here so long ago. It will be utterly desolate. **10** Why? Because you have turned from the God who can save you. You have forgotten the Rock who can hide you. So you may plant the finest grapevines and import the most expensive seedlings. **11** They may sprout on the day you set them out; yes, they may blossom on the very morning you plant them, but you will never pick any grapes from them. Your only harvest will be a load of grief and unrelieved pain. **12** Listen! The armies of many nations roar like the roaring of the sea. Hear the thunder of the mighty forces as they rush forward like thundering waves. **13** But though they thunder like breakers on a beach, God will silence them, and they will run away. They will flee like chaff scattered by the wind, like a tumbleweed whirling before a storm. **14** In the evening Israel waits in terror, but by dawn its enemies are dead. This is the just reward of those who plunder us, a fitting end for those who destroy us.

18 **1** Listen, Ethiopia —land of fluttering sails that lies at the headwaters of the Nile, **2** that sends ambassadors in swift boats down the river. Go, swift messengers! Take a message to a tall, smooth-skinned people, who are feared far and wide for their conquests and destruction, and whose land is divided by rivers. **3** All you people of the world, everyone who lives on the earth— when I raise my battle flag on the mountain, look! When I blow the ram’s horn, listen! **4** For the LORD has told me this: “I will watch quietly from my dwelling place— as quietly as the heat rises on a summer day, or as the morning dew forms during the harvest.” **5** Even before you begin your attack, while your plans are ripening like grapes, the LORD will cut off your new growth with pruning shears. He will snip off and discard your spreading branches. **6** Your mighty army will be left dead in the fields for the mountain vultures and wild animals. The vultures will tear at the corpses all summer. The wild animals will gnaw at the bones all winter. **7** At that time the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will receive gifts from this land divided by rivers, from this tall, smooth-skinned people, who are feared far and wide for their conquests and destruction. They will bring the gifts to Jerusalem, where the LORD of Heaven’s Armies dwells.

Galatians 1:1 - 24

1 **1** This letter is from Paul, an apostle. I was not appointed by any group of people or any human authority, but by Jesus Christ himself and by God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead. **2** All the brothers and sisters here join me in sending this letter to the churches of Galatia. **3** May God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. **4** Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live. **5** All glory to God forever and ever! Amen. **6** I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News **7** but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ. **8** Let God’s curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. **9** I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed. **10** Obviously, I’m not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ’s servant. **11** Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning. **12** I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by

direct revelation from Jesus Christ. **13** You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion—how I violently persecuted God’s church. I did my best to destroy it. **14** I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of my ancestors. **15** But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him **16** to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles. When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being. **17** Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went away into Arabia, and later I returned to the city of Damascus. **18** Then three years later I went to Jerusalem to get to know Peter, and I stayed with him for fifteen days. **19** The only other apostle I met at that time was James, the Lord’s brother. **20** I declare before God that what I am writing to you is not a lie. **21** After that visit I went north into the provinces of Syria and Cilicia. **22** And still the churches in Christ that are in Judea didn’t know me personally. **23** All they knew was that people were saying, “The one who used to persecute us is now preaching the very faith he tried to destroy!” **24** And they praised God because of me.

Psalm 58:1 - 11

58 1 Justice—do you rulers know the meaning of the word? Do you judge the people fairly? **2** No! You plot injustice in your hearts. You spread violence throughout the land. **3** These wicked people are born sinners; even from birth they have lied and gone their own way. **4** They spit venom like deadly snakes; they are like cobras that refuse to listen, **5** ignoring the tunes of the snake charmers, no matter how skillfully they play. **6** Break off their fangs, O God! Smash the jaws of these lions, O LORD ! **7** May they disappear like water into thirsty ground. Make their weapons useless in their hands. **8** May they be like snails that dissolve into slime, like a stillborn child who will never see the sun. **9** God will sweep them away, both young and old, faster than a pot heats over burning thorns. **10** The godly will rejoice when they see injustice avenged. They will wash their feet in the blood of the wicked. **11** Then at last everyone will say, “There truly is a reward for those who live for God; surely there is a God who judges justly here on earth.”

Proverbs 23:12

23 12 Commit yourself to instruction; listen carefully to words of knowledge