

never bless such an attitude. The one thing He loves above all else is a humble and a contrite spirit. He wants us to realize that apart from the grace of God none of us deserve anything good at His hand.

Common Motifs

As we begin the study of these two chapters we immediately note certain aspects which are quite common in prophetic denunciation of foreign nations. Although little space is devoted to the sins of Moab, we find other common notes in these verses. Much stress is laid on destruction, sorrow, lamentation, ruin, and famine.

The first note stressed is that of destruction. This theme is presented in verse 1, stressed again in verse 9, and suggested in verses 7-8 of the following chapter.

The next four verses (15:2-5) give a vivid picture of the sorrow and lamentation of the Moabites. This note recurs in verse 8 and occupies verses 7 and 10 of chapter 16.

Here the stress is laid upon suffering rather than upon sin. The people who are suffering are kinsfolk of the Israelites. As Ruth, the Moabitess, is one of the finest of Old Testament characters and the great grandmother of David, the king, it is not at all strange that in 15:5 and 16:9 and 11 we find the prophet himself breaking out into lamentation over the suffering of Moab. He sympathizes with the people and feels deeply sorry for them. This seems strange to some interpreters who think that a prophet should always show love and sympathy for Israel and hatred and detestation for other nations. Some even go so far as to say that the prophet does not express sympathy with Moab but merely quotes the statements of the Moabites themselves as they express sorrow for each other! But such an interpretation does not spring from a true understanding of the attitude of the Old Testament prophets, for their books often reveal the universality of God's love. Isaiah 40-66 contains a number of declarations that the Coming One will be a light to the Gentiles. Here it is quite evident that the prophet is sympathizing with the people of Moab.

There is no harshness or cruelty in the heart of the true follower of God, or in the heart of God Himself. God must