

that in this case Jerome let his zeal run away with his judgment!

In addition to its lack of connection with the context, this interpretation encounters difficulty when the Hebrew word translated "lamb" is examined.

There are a number of words in the Bible which are translated "lamb." One of the less common is the word used in this passage. It means "a strong he-lamb." It is never used in the description of the sacrificial ritual in Leviticus, nor does it occur in the prediction of the sacrifice of Christ in Isaiah 53. It presents the idea of the lamb, not as something pure or tender, but as something tough and strong. In fact, the word is sometimes translated "battering ram." It would be very strange if this particular word were used in a Messianic passage describing the coming of Christ as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." We find a better suggestion in 2 Kings 3:4-5 and also in the Moabite Stone. When Moab was subject to Israel the king of Moab paid tribute of a certain number of sheep each year. Since Moab was a great land for the raising of sheep, this was the natural tribute for Moab to pay. At this time the southern kingdom is the only remaining kingdom of Israel, since the northern kingdom has already gone into captivity. The prophet is doubtless calling on the king of Moab to send the tribute to the king of Judah as Moab had formerly sent tribute to the king of Israel. He advises them to seek the protection and friendship of the king of Judah, who is God's representative. Some form of this interpretation has been adopted by most commentators.

The third problem has arisen in connection with the word "Sela." The common Latin version translated this word as "Petra." Petra is a famous town in Edom, far south of Moab. It is a great fortress city protected by cliffs. The word "Petra" means rock, just as the Hebrew word "Sela" does.

In view of the suggestion that Sela here means the town of Petra, some commentators have suggested that this verse represents a situation where the people of Moab have fled far south into Edom and that they are advised to send tribute to Jerusalem from the mountain fastness in Edom where they have sought protection. The difficulty with this interpretation is that the very next verse speaks of the fugitives of Moab as