

can be abundantly illustrated by examples in other parts of the Scripture. Either makes perfect sense in the context.

Perhaps the situation is similar to that described in 2 Kings 17:25. After the people of the northern kingdom were taken into exile, the land of Israel was so depopulated that lions increased and began to come right into the suburbs of the big towns and harm the people. Does this verse describe a similar situation as due to occur in the land of Moab? This is a possible interpretation of the verse.

It is equally possible here to consider the lions as figurative for the armies of the king of Assyria. The lion often was used as a symbol of the Assyrian. Assyrian kings loved to picture themselves as fighting against lions. It would be quite natural to take this as a picture of the coming of the Assyrian forces against the land of Moab, destroying the land itself and pursuing its fugitives. Whichever of the two interpretations we take will not greatly affect the interpretation of the passage as a whole.

Sending the Lamb

When we go on to the next verse, 16:1, we find much greater difficulties of interpretation. Many suggestions have been made by commentators in the attempt to explain this verse. The first difficulty comes in the reference to the lamb. The next is the question: "Who is meant by the ruler of the land?" The third is: "What is Sela?" The second of these problems should not be particularly difficult. The ruler of the land here must either mean the king who reigns in Judah or must mean God Himself. The parallel at the end of the verse, where it speaks of "the mount of the daughter of Zion," fits in with either of these interpretations.

The first problem relates to the word "lamb." The Christian reader immediately thinks of "the Lamb of God" and wonders whether this verse may be Messianic. It has sometimes been interpreted this way. St. Jerome, one of the greatest of the early Christian interpreters, took this verse to mean "the lamb, the ruler of the land, sent forth from the rock of the wilderness," and understood it as a prediction of Christ's descent from Ruth the Moabitess. It is to be feared