

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 11, Isa. 22-23

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This is Dr. John Oswalt and his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 11, Isaiah chapter 22 and 23.

Let's pray together. As we think about the tragedy that occurred this past week, oh Lord, we thank you that what we're celebrating this season is that you came into this tragic broken world, that you chose to become one of us, knowing who we are, knowing what we're like, knowing what we would eventually do to you. You came. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for the privilege of studying your word this evening. Again, as always, we ask you to come in the power of your Holy Spirit and reveal yourself to us.

Help us to understand what you inspired Isaiah to say and to write nearly 30 centuries ago. Help us that your word might touch our hearts and that we might be better able to live your life as your people in this world today. Thank you that because you came and died and rose again, the Holy Spirit is available to every one of us. Help us, Lord, that the spirit within us this evening may come alive again to your spirit and that we may be empowered for holy living. In your name, amen.

All right. We are looking tonight at the last two of the oracles against the nations. We're looking at the lessons in trust as Isaiah is trying to prepare the people for that first step in servanthood, understanding the absolute necessity of trusting him. And we cannot overstate the basic necessity of trust.

If we will not trust God, if we don't trust God, there's no way we can ever be his servants. We have to be able to say, yes, Lord, I know that your intentions toward me are basically fundamentally good. And I know that your will is what I really need in my life.

And I trust you even when I don't understand what you're doing. I trust you to do good for me and through me. If you believe that, if you know that, then you can dare.

But if you don't know that, then you're always, always hedging your bets. Always, always trying to figure out now what is that good for me or not? So, trust is absolutely essential. And he begins, as we've been saying, by saying, don't trust humanity.

It's interesting that in the book of John, right there at the outset in chapter one and chapter two, the people are just so overcome with who he is and what he has done. But at the end of chapter two, but Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them

because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man for he himself knew what was in man. Yes, yes.

Jesus didn't come with some sort of a sugar-coated vision of the fundamental goodness of humanity. He knew what we are. Knew it, I think, from the inside, now that he'd become one of us.

Give himself to us? Yes. Die for us? Yes. Love us? Yes.

But trust us? And that's what Isaiah is saying. And he's saying in particular, then don't trust the human nations. Thus far, we have seen we should not trust the glory of the nations.

And I think that's what is going on in chapters 13 and 14, where Babylon is used really as a symbol of all that is glorious about human creaturely power and glory. And I hope that as we're going through the book, I hope you'll just keep your eye peeled for that word glory. Because it's so significant in the ways in which Isaiah uses it.

So don't trust the glory of the nations. Don't trust the pride of the nations. Moab in chapters 15 and 16.

Don't trust the political scheming of the nations. As we saw in chapters 17 and 18, beginning with Syria and Israel there in chapter 17, and then moving on to the nations as they boil around, sending messengers here and there from Cush in the far South over to Babylon and all for what? Nothing. Don't trust the religion, resources, and wisdom of the nations as seen, particularly in Egypt in chapters 19 and 20.

Chapter 21, which we ended with last time, I think is talking about commerce. The trade that is going back and forth across the desert, the commerce of the nations. What does the glory amount to? Zero.

What does the pride amount to? Zero. What are the political schemes amount to? Zero. What is the religion, resources and wisdom amount to? Zero.

What is the commerce amount to? Zero. And it doesn't matter how many times you multiply zero, the answer is the same. Zero.

So, tonight we come to the last two of these nations that we should not trust. And the first one is very surprising. Chapter 22, the Oracle concerning the Valley of Vision.

I want to come back to that in a minute. But what nation are we talking about here? Judah. Judah.

Wait a minute, Isaiah, you're confused here. We're supposed to be talking about those other nations that Judah might be inclined to trust. What is Isaiah saying by including Judah in this list? Don't trust yourself.

Your nation is not any different from the other nations. If we're talking about trusting a national entity to save us, your nation is no better than any other. And I think I'm a little surprised that Isaiah survived to write any more of his books after this.

He certainly lost the popularity contest at this point if he had one before now. Now, why does he call it the Valley of Vision? What's going on in a phrase like that? Because they're looking where they're at instead of, look, they're short-sighted and instead of being on top and looking out to get the big picture around them, and we as individuals do that in our own individuals. Okay, instead of being on the high place where you can get the long view, they're down in the valley where they're simply looking at the short view.

Patricia, you were going to say something. I was just going to say it's similar to you can't see the forest from the trees. Right.

You can't see the forest from the trees. You're looking at what's immediately in front of you, and you can't see any farther. I was going to say something like tunnel vision.

Yes, tunnel vision. Yes, yes, but it's an oxymoron. As I've said before, it's like United Methodist.

But anyway, two things that just don't go together. Visions and valleys don't go together. The mountain of vision, yes.

The valley of short-sightedness, yes. But the valley of vision? So, a very sarcastic kind of statement that he's making. You folks think you see so much, and you in fact see almost nothing.

Now, we'll want to explore what he has in mind with a statement like that as we go a little farther. The jubilation that we find in the first three verses is, the cause of it is unknown. Probably the most likely two things are the ones I mentioned in the background.

Remember that in 701, Sennacherib, the Assyrian emperor, has essentially taken every strong city in Judah, 46 of them. Except for two. One is Lachish, and Lachish is down here on the edge of the coastal plain.

And the other is, that's not too good. The other is Jerusalem. So, if he's going to capture Jerusalem, he's pretty much got to get Lachish, because he's going to be coming up this way, and if he leaves that big fortress, and Lachish was a very big

fortress, if he leaves it, then troops are going to be able to come out and cut off his supply line, so he's got to take that one.

And on the other hand, if he does take that one, then Jerusalem's situation is truly hopeless. And so, to save himself the money, when he's attacking Lachish, he sends his officer up to Jerusalem to demand a surrender. And that's what we will see in March, chapter 37, when the officer demands the surrender.

But then, the Egyptians finally get themselves together and come out, and the officer goes back down to help Sennacherib, as they're going to meet the Egyptians. So, possibly, one reason for the rejoicing is, our trust in Egypt has finally paid off. Everything is fine now.

This loudmouth guy has had to withdraw, and everything's going to be lovely. The other possibility is that it's actually after Sennacherib loses 185,000 of his soldiers one night. And decides that maybe he'd better go back home.

So, maybe it's the rejoicing now. Yes, the country has been decimated. Lachish did fall.

He did capture Lachish before he lost his army that night. So, there's nothing else left of Judah except Jerusalem. But, woo-hoo, we're alive.

Everybody else in the country's dead. We've lost every other city in this place. But, hey, we're alive.

So, either one of those two, either the withdrawal of the Rabshakeh or the withdrawal of Sennacherib, maybe the reason for the rejoicing. What do you mean you've gone up, all of you, to the housetops? You're full of shoutings. Tumultuous city.

Exultant town. You're slain where it's slain with the sword or dead in battle. Your leaders have fled together.

Without the bow, they were captured. All of you who were found were captured. And again, I think he's talking about the nation.

So, why doesn't Isaiah join in the general jubilation? Verses four and five. He's on the mountaintop. He can see the distant picture.

They're just looking at the immediate, oh, everything is beautiful. He says, no, no. Don't labor to comfort me concerning the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Now, again, I think we've always got to think about the physical destruction and the spiritual destruction. He sees what is happening to his people. That seems to me to be a real example of what they call a period victory.

Yes, yes, a pyrrhic victory. Where, if I recall, that's a Greek story where they won an apparent victory, but in fact, lost everything in the process. Yes, yes.

Now, in verse five, we've got the first of these titles of God that I ask you to look at. Verse five, verse 12, verse 14, twice there in 14, once in 15, and again, then in 25. Now, remember, what are we talking about? The Lord God of what? And what hosts are we talking about here? The armies of heaven.

It seems to be a phrase that the prophets especially like to use to talk about God's absolute power. The hosts are the stars. Now, we have a problem because we say, well, yes, there are the physical stars, and then symbolically, they are spiritual stars.

They have spiritual powers, but that's not the way the ancients thought. We do this division, and if I had a long time to talk to you about the impact of the doctrine of transcendence, I would try to explain to you why we're able to do that. But the pagan world couldn't do it.

The stars are the gods. The gods are the stars. They are the hosts of heaven.

And what does the Bible say? All those hosts belong to him. They all exist to do his bidding. Now, again, you talk about chutzpah.

That's chutzpah. That's nerve to say to the pagan, all those gods you worship, they belong to us. Later on in chapter 40, it'll say, he calls them all by name.

So that phrase is a way of speaking about the absolute power of Yahweh. And the phrase is interesting because it is the full form is Yahweh, which is translated in our Bibles, the Lord, Yahweh, God of heaven's armies. That's the full form of what he's saying.

Who is this Yahweh that we worship? He is the God of heaven's armies. And he sees the long-distance verses five, six, and seven. The Lord God of hosts has a day of tumult and trampling and confusion in the valley of vision, a battering down of walls, a shouting to the mountains.

Elam, that's Persia, bore the quiver with chariots and horsemen. And Kier, that's Southern Babylon, uncovered the she-camel, your choice of valleys full of chariots. The horsemen take their stand at the gates.

He has taken away the covering of Judah. Isaiah is looking out 150 years in the future to the day when the Babylonian armies are going to destroy Judah for the last time. And he says, yeah, you folks have a good time.

Have another bud, but I'm not going to join because I see where it's headed. Now, the question that I want to ask is, does that mean that we're supposed to walk around with long faces and every time anybody has a party, we say, no, I'm not going there. What's our approach to be? If we have a long view of the world and its final judgment, what's our attitude supposed to be? All right.

Trust, joy. Let's pursue that joy thing a little bit. Joy in what sense? All right, all right.

Joy that we know the end and maybe better than that, we know the one who is the end. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. We know to whom we belong.

But it's not a giddy kind of joy, is it? It's not the self-forgetful or the, I don't want to say it that way, really. I want to say the delusional joy of a world that says, well, let's just forget the mess and if we can get drunk enough, we'll be happy. A peaceful joy? How about joy and children? Surely not.

No, joy and ministry. Joy and ministry, uh-huh. A realistic joy? Joy in the hope.

Joy in hope? Yes, yes. Not in, number one, just drugging ourselves so we don't see what's going on. Not in a sort of a Pollyanna, well, everything is going to be fine.

But nevertheless, confidence in him and what he's done in our lives and in his final victory. Just assurance, a realistic joy. Yes? Even as you say that, it isn't insane that there is a bit of sadness in thinking that, see, it's that way.

Because they are living as these people were living. Now, some are living good lives, but it troubles me to think, I guess it may be, it's kind of what you're saying about Isaiah. He sees what the end is there.

I think, I think you're exactly right. So is that, is that? He says, don't labor to comfort me concerning the destruction of the daughter of my people. Yeah, he's, he's.

Isaiah himself is totally at peace and joy, but in that reading of this, then I get the feeling of what he's known, really, because he still sees these people and he wants them to be ready too. He's not just thinking about himself. Exactly, exactly.

The partygoer is trying to forget everything around, focusing on, I'm going to feel good at all costs. In a real sense, the very opposite is true for Isaiah. He is filled with a sense of grief over what is going to happen to his people, though he himself knows

that in his own relationship with God, there's comfort, there's confidence, there's assurance.

That's pretty good. No, I'm just, yes, I do understand what you're saying. But that's, I think, what you're saying ought to be the mission.

Yeah, yeah, I think you're exactly right. It kind of reminds me of what a military general in war would feel when he knows that his flag is already planted on the objective because he's got all the troops, he's got all the power, but at the same time, he's sad because of the sacrifice of the people to get there. What it's going to cost to get there, yeah, yeah.

The joy is that he knows what he's got to do, pretty much. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Is this related to the, including our own country? Yeah, yeah, I think he's saying, I can't join this party, which is basically designed to deny what the situation really is.

He says, I can't join that. But as Christians, we see that, and we can't help but agree, especially with the Bible. That's exactly right.

That's exactly right. Exactly right. Okay, let's push on.

In verse eight, the you is very interesting because we don't know for certain whom it refers to. It's singular, so it's not y'all. It's you, an individual.

You looked to the weapons of the house of the forest. No, that's not God calling. The house of the forest, remember, is one part of Solomon's temple that was filled with cedar columns.

So that's why it was called the house of the forest. And the temple was both the treasury and the armory, as well as the center of worship. So you looked to the weapons of the house of the forest.

You saw that the breaches of the city of David were many. The walls needed to be repaired. You collected the waters of the lower pool.

You counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall. You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. Now, that's all stuff that Hezekiah did.

He, after Sargon died in 605, and while Sennacherib was trying to solidify his power, Hezekiah saw his chance to lead a local revolt. And so he did all the things that he needed to do. The walls were, in that day, the standard military architecture was you had two walls on either side with these interior cross walls.

And in time of war, during ordinary times, people would build their houses right up against the inside wall. In time of war, the right of eminent domain has been around for a long time, you tore down those houses for one reason so that you could have immediate access to the wall at any place. But the other reason was to use the rubble from those houses to fill in these spaces because what the military architects had learned was if you have just one big wall that thick, then when the battering ram hits this one, it communicates the shock all the way through the wall and shakes the whole thing apart.

Whereas with this, the rubble in there would absorb the shock of the battering ram and the inside wall remains. So, you tore down the houses to fortify the wall. He also is the one who, Jerusalem was here, here's the Kidron Valley here, there was a spring, there is a spring.

I think I heard how many hundreds of thousands of gallons of water come out of that thing in an hour. It's astounding. But it was down in the valley, whereas the walls are up here around the top of the hill.

So, what he did was he had a tunnel dug all the way down here through underneath to a pool down here at the lower end. So, we're talking about Hezekiah here. Now Hezekiah is a good king.

The Book of Kings talks about him as a good king, the Book of Chronicles talks about him as a good king. What does Isaiah say he failed to do? He did not consult his maker. Exactly, exactly, exactly.

He looked at everything physical material. And Isaiah doesn't say that's wrong. He doesn't say he shouldn't have done that.

But he just says Valley of Vision. You looked to the material stuff and you didn't look to the Lord. Now I confess, I'm kind of glad this is here because one of the things that a historian said that I read years ago talking about real history writing, he said in real history writing, you don't have any heroes.

What he meant by that is you don't have people who are whitewashed who can never do anything wrong. Because he said, once you see that, you know somebody's not writing history. But if you see somebody who is capable, who is able, who is confident, and yet who exhibits flaws, you're looking at reliable history.

David, and that then was the comment that this historian went on to make is, this is one of the marks that we find in the Bible. There are no gold-plated heroes except for one, Jesus. But all the rest, all the rest have flaws.

All the rest have failings. And it seems to me that Isaiah is saying, we'll encounter this again when we get down to chapters 38 and 39. Isaiah is saying, that if you're looking for this Messiah in the form of any ordinary human being, you're going to be sadly disappointed.

They'll fail you. They'll fail you. But Jesus will not.

So, what do we have in verses 12, 13, and 14? Yeah. Short-term disappearance of the bad guys. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

And what about verse 13, that last phrase, which is fairly famous? Why? Yeah. Who knows? Better live it up while you can. Again, forgive me for jumping on the beer makers, but you better do it with gusto.

You only go around once. Yes, that's right. That's right.

Don't. Now, let me back up here just a moment and say, what does it mean to look to your maker? What does that look like? In practice, what does a person who looks to his maker, what does he or she do? What does he or she do? Pray. All right.

Trust. I mean, for you and me to say, okay, six o'clock in the morning, I'm going to look to my maker today. What are we doing? Putting your trust in him.

But I want to put more feet to it than that. Asking for guidance. Setting up a way of thinking.

Faithfulness. Yeah. Being alert.

Listening. Yes. What do you want today? Putting myself wholly in his keeping and hands.

Yeah. So, it is an attitude. It is a way of thinking.

But it's easy sometimes to just sort of make it a kind of a mantra. Well, I'm going to look to the Lord. Oh, yeah.

To go on with the idea of the general's flag is already out there. There are no atheists and foxholes. All of a sudden you realize this may be my last day, so I better get right with God.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

And, and, Lord, I know you win in the end. I know the victory is there. But do you need somebody to jump up out of the foxhole and lead a charge today? So again, it's cultivating a whole outlook, and that's exactly what they're not doing.

Eat, drink, and be merry. From now we die. I don't want to look ahead.

I don't want to look at options that might not be entirely pleasant from my perspective. I don't want to take that long view of, okay, how can my choices today fit into God's long-term plan? I don't want to think that way. I just want to focus on feeling good today.

Because life is so uncertain. I want to put it the other way. Life is so certain that I don't have to feel good today.

Now, in our culture, that is pretty radical. Feeling good is really all that matters because there ain't nothing else, baby. No, there is something else.

And so, I think it's entirely possible that all those things are exactly what Hezekiah should have done. But he should have done it with a different attitude, with a different idea, a different plan. All right.

Now, verse 14 seems awfully harsh. The Lord of hosts has revealed Himself in my ears. Surely this iniquity will not be atoned for you till you die, says the Lord of hosts.

Now, I did not check that you, but I believe that one is a plural. But I don't know for certain. Anyway, wow.

This iniquity will not be atoned for you till you die. Why won't it be atoned for? What is such a problem with what has just been said here in 12 and 13? It's a deliberate rejection. All right.

It's a deliberate rejection. It's a deliberate blinding of oneself. Other thoughts? What is it about this iniquity that is not going to be atoned for? A refusal to repent? Yes.

I'm not looking to the Lord. I'm looking to the next bottle of bourbon. Our time is going too quickly here.

We don't have time to look at these references. But John says, there is a sin unto death, and I don't tell you to pray for that. Wow.

But if you see someone who has committed a sin, which is not unto death, yes, pray for them that they may be pardoned. Well, a lot has been written on what is the sin unto death. And if you go back to Hebrews chapter 10, it looks as though it's the

person who has really known what it is to have Christ in his or her heart, and now has turned against.

I've often likened it to a radio receiver. This room is filled with music, all the way from classical to R&B. It's filled with talking, but I don't think any of us hear it.

If you do hear it, don't hold up your hand. Why not? Because we don't have receivers. Does God stop loving anybody? No.

But is it possible to smash your receiver so that you cannot hear it? That seems to be what John, Hebrews and Isaiah are talking about. You get yourself to the point where, I think of Christopher Dawkins, the famous atheist who died this past year of cancer. Arrogant to the end.

Said, you people praying for me, go right ahead, but it's not going to do any good. Right? Smashed the receiver. Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.

Serious stuff, serious stuff. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is in essence, it's not merely saying bad things about the Holy Spirit. It's really putting yourself in a place where you say the Holy Spirit means nothing to me and you're not going to do anything.

Can do nothing in my life. That's all a myth. That's right.

It's all a myth. Well, that's what Paul or what Peter is talking about in 2 Peter and the first chapter about forgetting that you have been cleansed. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

And it talks to me about the necessity of what somebody I heard years ago say about keeping short accounts. If you go on and on and on with unrepentant sin in your life, there comes a point where you have forgotten. Keep short accounts, keep short accounts.

Now, I always worked with students over the years, I've had several times when someone has come to my office and said, I'm afraid I've committed the unpardonable sin. And my answer is, no, you haven't. Cause you're afraid, yeah.

If you're afraid you have, you haven't. It's when you don't care and you don't worry about it. That's when the danger arises.

Okay, in the remainder of the chapter verses 15 through 25, I think we have one of these things that I've called a graphic illustration. Isaiah uses these all the time. He talks about something, he presents some theology and then he draws a picture or he tells a story or something that illustrates it.

So here is Shevna. Shevna is almost certainly the prime minister. The steward over the household is almost certainly the prime minister of the country.

So, what's he doing? He's out overseeing the building of his tomb. You did not look to the Lord, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. And Isaiah says, yeah, you're going to die, all right.

But you're going to die in some foreign land. We do not know how that was fulfilled. We don't know how Shevna died.

But it appears that what he's saying is, you're going to be taken hostage. Now we know that after Hezekiah's death, his son Manasseh became a vassal of the Assyrians. It is true that of all the nations in Canaan, only Judah remained quasi-independent with its own native king on the throne.

That's remarkable. But nevertheless, Manasseh did become a vassal of the Assyrians. And that almost always involved hostages.

So, it's not out of the question. In fact, I think it's likely that Shevna as a high official was one of those who was taken hostage. And Isaiah says you're going to die in a foreign land.

You're not going to live in that big fancy tomb that you're building. What's going to happen is verse 20, my servant Eliakim is going to take your place. And it's interesting that when we come to chapter 36 and see the embassy that is set out to meet the Assyrian general, Eliakim is the prime minister and Shevna is the secretary.

So, the prophecy has already been fulfilled by the time that occurs. I think about three or four years after this event. So, it has happened.

Now, one more thing that I want to point out here in chapter 22, verse 23, I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place. He'll become a throne of honor to his father's house. They'll hang on him the whole honor of his father's house, the offspring and issue every small vessel from the cups to all the flagons.

In that day declares the Lord of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a secure place will give way. It will be cut down and fall and the load that was on it will be cut off. Now, the question that I ask here is, what does this paragraph say about the guarantee of success from a human perspective if you're faithfully doing God's work? Don't measure your success by what people say it is.

Don't measure your success by what people say it is. God's work done in God's way will never lack for God's supply. Have you heard that? Well, if Eliakim is doing God's

work and all the evidence is that he was, then isn't he guaranteed not to fail? Kind of quiet in here.

Depends on how you define success. Yes, yes. Okay, that we may have failed from a human perspective, but in fact, more was accomplished in the long term than we had any idea of.

Yes, I think that's very possible. We're not told that that happens in Eliakim's case, but that's surely very, very possible. My point is simply to say, we're called to be faithful and leave the outcome in God's hands.

And that's hard. That's hard. Some of you know I was president of Asbury College when it was Asbury College for about three and a half years.

And one of my questions to God when I get to heaven will be, what was that about? I think one of the things was, speaking very personally here, really up to that point in my life, anything that I really, really tried, I succeeded at. And I really, really tried to be president of the college. And I failed.

It's just lots of people like to say nice things, but I failed. That's the long and short of it. And that was a very, very salutatory lesson for me.

But the issue is, Lord, to the best of my ability, looking to you, I will live my life for you. And it's up to you to use the results any way you choose. No, no, no, no, no.

No, no, no, no, no, no. If I give my life to you, God, you got to guarantee me that the outcome will be pleasant and effective. And God says, not necessarily.

And that's hard. That's hard. All right, we've got to rush on here.

Chapter 23, in many ways, is one big graphic illustration. As I say in the notes, Tyre and Sidon were the two great port cities up on the coast north of Israel. Tyre, the southern one, and Sidon, the northern one.

And they were sort of twins. So, if you're talking about one, you're really talking about the other. The mountains here, the Lebanon Mountains, are very close to the shore.

And the fingers of the mountains run right down to the coast. So north-south travel is very difficult by land. But you've got great ports between these fingers of mountains sticking out into the sea.

So going over the top is difficult too. You've got a steep valley here. Then you have the anti-Lebanon Mountains on this side.

So even today, Damascus over here doesn't easily control Lebanon. Even in a day of air power, land-wise, it's difficult to go from Damascus to Tyre and Sidon. So, these two cities looked westward.

And basically, they controlled the eastern Mediterranean in trade. These are the Phoenicians that you learned about in world history. And they are the ones who established the colony at Carthage, which is modern Tunisia.

And they ran the Romans a very, very close second. The Romans and the Carthaginians fought for nearly 150 years before the Romans finally got them. Hannibal is a Phoenician.

He's a Carthaginian. So, these two cities were immensely wealthy in terms of a monopoly on the seaborne commerce of the eastern Mediterranean. The Egyptians had scads of grain and gold, but they had no timber.

They also were lousy at seaborne shipping. So, Tyre and Sidon were their commerce partners. And what you have here then is the news.

Ships are coming from the west. Tarshish almost certainly is the eastern coast of Spain. The ships of Tarshish are coming.

They're coming back to their home port at Tyre and the news comes Tyre is destroyed. And in the poem, the news is spreading around the rim of the Mediterranean out to Cyprus, the island that's out there, remember? And everybody is horrified by this news that Tyre and Sidon have fallen. Look at verse 9, 23:9. And why did this happen? The Lord of hosts has purposed it to defile the pompous pride of all glory to dishonor all the honored of the earth.

That theme runs right through the book. God is the only one who is to be honored. Every human attempt to exalt ourselves against God is doomed to fail.

And so Isaiah says to his people, why would you trust that? Why would you trust? And this would be the last zero. Why would you trust the wealth of the nations? Why has this happened? And again, in five weeks, we'll talk about this again. Because God has purposed it.

God has planned it. Now, again, if you want, if you want to raise the ire of a secular nation like ours, just say God is planning what takes place on the earth. No, no.

If that were true, I would have to submit to his plans. And I do not submit to anybody. I'm God in my life.

And God says, good luck with that one. Good luck with that one. But that whole concept, again, running through the book, what is happening is not the result of chance.

It's not the result of simply geopolitical power. It's the result of the God of the universe who is at work. Now, immediately, we'll ask, well, are you going to tell me that God planned Connecticut? No, I'm not.

But I am going to say that what has happened there is not outside of God's capacity to rule his world. You say, how? I do not know. But the Bible is going to say what happens does not happen as a result of chance.

I personally think in this case, what happened is a result of human sinfulness. But that's not outside of God's planning, purpose, and control. That's the point that he's making.

Bob? Separating the religious leaders also follow in God's ways. Is it the same way of thinking as the political leaders? Very much so. Isaiah doesn't do it as much.

But Micah, who is the contemporary of Isaiah, castigates the religious leaders right down the line with the political leaders, the whole leadership. And he'll do nobles, prophets, priests. All of them are corrupt.

All of them work for bribes. So, you find people like Isaiah and Micah who are apparently somewhat alone on the scene. And I'll let you go after this.

But I always chuckle a little bit because the Old Testament scholars, they're always discovering, well, my goodness, the Hebrew people, they were all idol worshippers. Uh-huh, that's what the book says. Well, the Hebrew people, they didn't all worship at Jerusalem.

Yep, that's what the book says. Yeah, there was not. I think what you got, and as I've said to you before, all my original thoughts come from either Dennis Kinlaw or C.S. Lewis.

But Dr. Kinlaw talks about Sophia Perennis, the perennial wisdom, the thread that runs through. So, the culture may be all over the place, but here's this thread that's running through. And I think that what we see in the Bible is those minorities who were the representatives of this thread of truth that's running through.

So I become a little more cautious about talking about the Israelite religion. Biblical religion, yeah. Israelite religion, I think that's Israelite religion.

So, in the midst of the country of Israel, Judah, you really have a remnant of God's people. Exactly, exactly. And that starts all the way back in the Judges period.

The, well, I can't keep you any longer. But the idea that there was just sort of this straight line progress from simple to complex, that's not what the Bible has. The Bible says there was this tremendous explosion that culminated at Sinai, and then almost an equally tremendous decline down to the top of Mount Sinai.

And then, down to the time of Samuel. And then back up again, almost to the heights of Sinai with David. And then, down and down and down to the exile.

And Ezekiel sees the return from exile as a new exodus. We're starting over again on this plane. So yeah, okay.

Merry Christmas. Let's sing a song. Oh, thank you. Thank you, thank you.

This is Dr. John Oswald. And his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 11, Isaiah chapters 22 and 23.