

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 10, Isa. 19-21

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 10, Isaiah chapters 19 through 21. Let's begin with prayer.

Thank you, Father, for another opportunity to study your word. We think again of the freedom that we have to do this, a freedom that there are people dying to experience even as we speak. We pray for them, we pray that you will encourage them, we pray that you'll defend them, we pray that you'll protect them and grant oh Lord that their love for the word might indeed spring up to fruit to sixty-fold and a hundred-fold around the world.

Help us we pray in that same way oh Lord, deliver us from being those who look in a mirror and see themselves and then promptly walk away and forget what they saw. Help us oh Lord to look into the mirror of your word to see ourselves where we need encouragement, where we need conviction, where we need challenge, where we need correction. Help us to look into its depths and to see all that we need there and to receive it and to walk out to live it for the sake of your world and your people. Help us Lord in your name, we pray, amen.

All right we're continuing to look at the lessons in trust chapters 13 through 35 and the first part of that is chapters 13 to 23, don't trust the nations. We have seen how we began with Babylon, the glory of the nations.

Someone remarked correctly last time that you were not able to see some of the markers so I'll try to remember to use the darkest ones. The glory of the nations 13 and 14, the scheming of the nations in the latter part of 14 and 16, Assyria, the Philistines, and Moab in 17 and 18, the uproar of the nations, and tonight then we look at chapters 19, 20 and 21. Two reasons were given, don't trust the nations because they are under judgment from your God, don't trust the nations because ultimately many of them are going to turn to worship your God.

So why would you put your trust in them? Tonight, then we go to first of all Egypt and we begin in verses 1 through 4 talking about one of the reasons why perhaps one ought to trust Egypt. Verse 1, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them. Verse 3, and the spirit of the Egyptians within them will be emptied out and I'll confound their counsel and they will inquire of the idols and the sorcerers and the mediums and the necromancers.

What would be one reason to trust Egypt according to these verses? Who are the Egyptians turning to in the moment of crisis? The idols, exactly. So one reason to

trust in Egypt would be their ancient religion. As I commented in the background, the Egyptians at this time were easily the most idolatrous people in the whole Near East.

They had a God for everything and a lot of things you couldn't think about they had gods for. They've only been surpassed in modern times by Hinduism. Hinduism reputedly has in excess of 10,000 gods, but the Egyptians certainly ran them a close second.

The Egyptians were looked to in the ancient world as a sort of the grandmother. She was the one, even though the Sumerians in Mesopotamia actually seemed to be the real parents of civilization, the Egyptians were close behind and the Egyptians were looked up to by the rest of the ancient world as sort of they're the ones that have got it together. And so, this ancient religion would be a reason to trust in them.

Yahweh, well, he's sort of a latecomer, but Ray and Horus and Ammon and all of these would be reasons to trust. But Isaiah says the idols are going to tremble at his presence. And the counsel of the Egyptians will be confounded and God will give them over into the hand of a hard master.

If you look at verse 2, it's pretty clear that Isaiah knows his Egyptian history because, as I point out in the background, twice in Egyptian history you had a period of absolute monarchy, what's known as the old kingdom, which would be the pyramid age. From about 3100 BC until about 2200 BC. This is when the pyramids were built.

I commented on this when we were talking about Abraham. Abraham and Sarah probably took tourist camels out to see the pyramids. They were already 800 years old when Abraham came along.

Sometimes we get the idea that Abraham was an Aborigine who just crawled out of the cave. No, no. Two of the world's greatest cultures, the Egyptian and the Sumerian, had risen and fallen before Abraham came on the scene about 2000.

So, the old kingdom was for nearly a thousand years this absolute monarchy, the God-King sitting on the throne, and then it all fell apart. And you had a period of about 200 years, 2200 to 2000, when they broke up into city-states and it's called the first intermediate. And it happened again when the Middle Kingdom established itself from 2000 to about 1750.

And once again, following 1750, it fell apart again in what's called the second intermediate. So, Isaiah knows his history. I'll stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians, they'll fight each against each other, each against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.

And that is pretty much what happened in Egypt during the first millennium BC from 1000 until the time of Christ. It was pretty much one city rising and conquering others and then it going under. So why would you trust them? Their ancient religion is unable to give them the kind of stability they're looking for. In verses 5 through 10, we come to a second reason why we might want to trust the Egyptians.

What is that? Not in 5 to 10. The Nile River, yes, yes. I've said it before, I think, but let me say it again.

The only reason Egypt exists is because of the Nile River. For the last 400 miles of its distance, there are no tributaries coming in. So that means that the flood is absolutely predictable.

Within the same week every year, the Nile floods and within the same week, a few weeks later, the flood goes down. Absolutely predictable. And because of that water, it is literally possible to stand with one foot in the desert and the other one in a wheat field.

Just as far as that irrigation water goes, that's how far Egypt goes in point of fact. So it is said that south of the delta, Egypt is 10 miles wide and 300 miles long. So throughout all the centuries, the Nile made it possible for Egypt to feed people far beyond its borders.

You remember that the Apostle Paul was on a grain ship going from Egypt to Rome. And the reason Mark Antony was interested in Cleopatra was he wanted her grain. Now she might have been cute too, but the reason the Romans are after Egypt is because of that grain that the Nile makes possible.

So yeah, but what does God say? What's going to happen to the Nile? It will be dried up. And all the businesses that depend upon it, the fishermen, verse 8, those who make flax, verse 9, all of it is going to go under. Now as far as we know, this was never literally fulfilled.

We have no historical example of the Nile actually drying up. But what's the point being made here? What are we as humans inclined to trust? There's always a first time for everything. Can't trust in things like that.

We're inclined to trust in what? Nature. Yeah, the abundance of the physical world. And it's amazing to me how our modern society can be totally discombobulated by a natural disaster.

It's just astounding. It's as though we assume that everything is always going to work just like it should. And along comes a super storm and panic strikes because we depend on nature.

I was watching Ken Burns' The Dust Bowl. And at the end he was saying that Omaha is in the Midwest, which could result in another dust bowl. But we rely on science and technology to rescue us.

And there's just no answer. Yes. That water is gone.

Yes. Yes. That aquifer that runs down through the center of the country has been going deeper and deeper and deeper underground for the last 75 years.

And it's going faster and faster as we irrigate more and more. Karen was reading something about the fact that the superstorm striking New York was predicted 30 years ago. But it was too expensive to prepare for it.

So they didn't block off the battery tunnel that leads into the subway. But there we are. I'll trust in the abundance of nature and everything will be fine.

I'll trust in the gods. No, they're confused and confounded. They don't know where the world came from.

They don't know where it's going. They have no purpose. I'll trust in nature.

Nature will fail you. Let's go on. Verse 11 through 15.

Why do we trust Egypt here? Why would we be inclined to trust Egypt here? Their intelligence, their wisdom, the courtly advisors, and again, as I mentioned in the background, the earliest proverbs we have are from Egypt. Again, about the time of Abraham. And perhaps they go back earlier than that.

And the suggestion is that this kind of proverbial wisdom was necessary for running a complicated court. It's interesting how many of the proverbs have to do with how do you manage yourself in a complex hierarchical system. And on that ground, then, it's easy for us to understand why Solomon would have been the one who propagated proverbial literature in Israel.

Because he was the first one to have a big complex court. And so, the issue is, you're a young courtier, and you get invited to sit at the king's table. What don't you do? Don't sit down next to the king.

Sit down at the end of the table, and if he tells you to move up a chair or two, you'll look good. But if you sit down next to him, and he says, who are you? Get out of here. You're going to look bad.

Also, if you come to the king's table, don't eat like a pig. Eat carefully. So again, the wisdom of the ancient world.

Here is Egypt, as I say, the grandmother. She's the one with the development of pagan religion. She's the one with the abundance of wealth.

She's the one with the ancient wisdom. And what happens to them? What won't their wisdom be able to tell them? Verse 12. God's will, God's way, God's purpose.

Now, I've talked about this before, but it bears repeating. Paganism cannot imagine any purpose in existence. Because paganism is deifying the forces of nature.

And these forces of nature clearly have no purpose except, perhaps, survival. But the idea of a plan, and the outworking of that plan toward a worthwhile goal, no. No.

Of course, this is exactly where evolution has taken us. There's no purpose in evolution except survival of the fittest. In a real way, Darwin was simply rationalizing what the ancient pagans knew perfectly well.

This is a world of chance. All you can hope for is continual operation of the cycles as they have always operated. What paganism doesn't want is surprises.

So, the idea that Yahweh could possibly have a purpose in what's going on here is simply beyond the possibility of paganism. And that's true today in our world. The idea that there is purpose in your existence, that God has a purpose for your life, and that He if you'll let Him, can achieve it, that is absolute heresy to an atheist.

Despicable heresy. It can't be. But the Word says that's exactly the case.

God has a purpose in all of this. Now, He talks about the leaders, the princes, verse 11, the counselors, the Pharaoh. How can you say to Pharaoh, I am a son of the wise, a son of ancient kings, where then are your wise men? So, what should be a Christian's proper attitude toward our leaders? Respect them, but don't rely on them.

Respect them, but don't rely on them. All right. What else? Honor in terms of the position.

Honor to whom honor is due. What shouldn't we do? We shouldn't trust them. We shouldn't worship them.

We should not expect them to save us. We should pray for them. But here it is, the Egyptians are expecting these leaders with all of their ancient wisdom to deliver them and it's not going to happen.

And Isaiah is saying to Judah, don't you believe that it's going to happen? Don't trust them. Now remember, politically what has happened, the years have passed.

Assyria has destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel. They are campaigning down from your perspective on the Philistine coast down here. Judah is really in the back, behind them to some degree, but they are not afraid of Judah.

And the only thing left that Judah could possibly depend on is Egypt, which is where Assyria is headed. Don't trust the Egyptians. Don't trust them because of their ancient religion.

Don't trust them because of their material abundance. Don't trust them because of their ancient wisdom and their supposed great leadership. Now what's the lesson for us in all of this? Yes, it's fascinating to see the political process and what people expect of this leader or that leader.

And what the book of Isaiah says is that when you expect them to save you, you condemn them to failure. They cannot possibly succeed. So here is the same lesson for us.

Don't trust religion. Don't trust material wealth. Don't trust the wisdom of man as displayed in a political system.

Now then, the latter half of the chapter verses 16 to 25 gives us the other side of this picture. Here's another reason not to trust Egypt. Now, usually Mel, who sits here, has done his homework, maybe someone else has.

How many times does in that day appear between verse 16 and verse 24? One, two, three, four, five, and it depends on where you what translation you have it might be six. But there are at least five times that in that day appears. Verse 16, verse 18, verse 19, verse 23, verse 24.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yes, okay.

All right, good, thank you. Now, what's that talking about? And why the repetition? Okay, prophecy to get attention when the judgment day comes? Mm-hmm, yeah. A day is coming.

A day that won't be like every other day. Now, again, Hebrew uses the word day just like we do in English. It can refer to a 24-hour period or it can refer to a period of time.

And it's never easy to figure out exactly which is which. But, at a minimum, this is talking about a period of time that is to come. A period that is different from now.

A period that is not merely a repetition of now. So that the pagan understanding of time is circular. We come from nothing, we go to nothing.

Day follows night. Night follows day. January follows December.

December follows November. But the Bible sees time in a much more linear fashion. From the beginning to the end.

And tomorrow is not merely a repetition of today. Now, the interesting thing from the biblical perspective is we've got a choice about tomorrow. Will it be an advance on yesterday or will it be a decline from yesterday? The thing we know is it's not going to be a repetition of yesterday.

I hesitate to use better and worse but it's that sense that tomorrow will either build on today or tomorrow will not build on today. But it won't be the same. So, that's the idea that there's a time period out there that is different from now.

And in that day some things are going to happen. Now, what is going to happen? Verses 16 and 17 What is the meaning of those events that are going to overtake Egypt? Verse 17 the very end. What does it say? The Lord will come against them because of what? His plan.

His purpose. Here it is again. God through Isaiah is trying to drive something home in the Judeans thinking what's going on is not chance.

What's going on is not simply the biggest battalions win. What's going on is the purpose of God is being worked out in human experience. And that's so important for us to remember.

I was thinking about this today. Ron Smith had a very unfortunate event over the weekend. He was to go to Kenya to preach in there the convention of the Africa Gospel Church.

Probably seventeen or eighteen hundred pastors would be there. Got to Amsterdam and discovered that his passport only had four and a half months left on it and Kenya only gives six-month visas. And so was forced to stand in line for four and a half hours to re-book then stood in line for three and a half hours being hassled physically by security because obviously he was some sort of a religious nut who had flown from the United States to Amsterdam and was now flying back in order to carry a bomb obviously.

I thought about that today. A couple ways of looking at that. One way is to say well it was just an accident and God is in heaven saying gee that's too bad.

Another way of looking at it is well God had some purpose in this and he intended for that to happen. But there is another way to look at it. And that is nothing is a surprise to God.

And if he permits something to happen then he's got a way of redeeming it. And I propose that it's that way that we can look at those misfortunes that occur to us in life. They are not out of God's control.

We don't have to believe that God caused them either. But we do know that God is able to bring his good out of anything if we let him. So God says to the Hebrew people remember these things are going to happen.

They're not an accident. They're not merely the work of some powerful bully nation. God is at work in them using them to accomplish his good purpose.

I think if we can live with that sense in our own hearts we can live with confidence. We can live with a certain degree of excitement. Boy, I wonder what God's going to bring out of this.

Because he can and he does. All right, let's push on. Verses 18 to 25 are a remarkable remarkable statement.

16 and 17 says disaster is going to come on Egypt but what's going to be the outcome of that disaster? What are some of the things that are going to happen to Egypt according to these verses? They're going to worship the Lord. They're going to worship the Lord. Now it's interesting again to wonder has this day in fact occurred. Egypt was among the first nations to become Christianized.

The Egyptian church was stronger in many ways than the Greek churches. We don't know exactly who evangelized them but somebody did. And so, from one point of view, this prophecy has already been fulfilled.

Now maybe it's talking also about a future day? Hard to say. They're going to worship the Lord. What's going to be the evidence of their worshipping God? What will be the expressions of it? They're going to build an altar to the Lord with a memorial pillar on the border.

What's going to happen when they get in trouble? They're going to cry out to the Lord. He will rescue them. And what's the outcome going to be in verse 21? The Lord will make himself known and what about the Egyptians? They'll know the Lord.

Now again if you want to talk about religion in the Old Testament there is no word for religion in Hebrew. Because religion suggests a compartment of your life. There's your work, there's your family, there's your leisure, there's your religion.

And the Old Testament doesn't know anything about that. Either you know God and it's reflected in everything you do or you don't. And the parallel is either you fear God and your whole life reflects it or you don't.

So, a remarkable statement. The Egyptians are going to know the Lord. Now verses 23 and 24 once again it's possible to say that that has already been fulfilled in the early Christian era when the Byzantine Empire controlled this whole area.

But it may also refer to the end of time as well. I was talking with a friend about prophecy last week and for me, a good example of the dangers is here in this passage. A well-known Old Testament teacher who's not by any means a wild-eyed prophecy teacher when Egypt alone of all the Arab countries made a peace treaty with Israel he publicly announced that that was the beginning of the fulfillment of Exodus, excuse me Isaiah 19.23 there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria and Assyria will come to Egypt and Egypt to the Assyrians and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.

Well, it hasn't happened yet, has it? Let me say again those of you who have been with me will shortly be able to say everything I say. That's the idea. Prophecy has two purposes.

Predictive prophecy has two purposes. And remember not all prophecy is predictive prophecy. A lot of prophecy is speaking directly to the people and challenging them for the way they're living right now.

If you want to talk about distinctively predictive prophecy then you're talking about Ezekiel 39 to 48 you're talking about Zechariah 9 through 14 and you're talking about Daniel 7 to 12 and many people believe the book of Revelation chapter 4 through 21 That's essentially it. If you want to talk about end-time prophecy in the Bible that's it. But people have made fortunes out of this.

I don't know whether you know the name Jack Van Impe or not. He is the original Teflon man. He has been predicting the end of the world for 70 years.

And every time he's proven wrong he slips right off and says oh well what it means is this and people pay him What is predictive prophecy given for? Not for making a timetable of the future. Not for making a timetable of the future. The failures of the timetables for the last 2,000 years ought to tell us something.

Why is it given to us? Number one, so that we can live with confidence knowing that God knows the future. How's it all going to turn out? I have no idea. Is it going to turn out within the purposes of God? You better believe it.

I think it was Chuck Killian who said I'm not a pre-millennialist or a post-millennialist or an amillennialist. I'm a pan-millennialist. I think it's all going to pan out.

Well, I don't know that I want to go quite that far. But, number one the future is known to God. It's in His hands.

There are no surprises. Number two, when fulfilled our confidence is secured. We can look at the ways in which the prophecies of Christ have been fulfilled and say yes, yes.

I believe. Now, I've said to many people I'm really glad I wasn't alive when Jesus was born. Because sure as the world I would have written a book on it and gotten it wrong.

That's what happened to the Pharisees. They'd written books. And Jesus didn't fit their books.

But we can look back and say oh yeah, that's exactly what the text was saying. So, these are the two reasons why we have predictive prophecy. So that we can live with confidence knowing the future is in God's hands and so that when the predictive prophecies are fulfilled our confidence is deepened and secured.

Okay. So, are these prophecies going to be fulfilled? In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth. Yes.

Yes. I can say it with confidence. How? I haven't the foggiest idea.

And if I did have an idea I wouldn't share it with you because it would probably be wrong. But I am as sure as I'm standing here sure that there will be a day maybe in heaven when I will say oh sure that's exactly what Isaiah said. The point of all this is to say that here are our two reasons.

Don't trust in Egypt because they're under judgment. Don't trust in Egypt because they're going to be worshipping your God. The God that you are abandoning to trust them.

How stupid. Don't do it. Alright, we've got to rush on here.

Chapter 20 tells us how little we know of Isaiah's life. His actual life. We know scads about what he thought and about his relationship with God but how he lived we know next to nothing and what we know from this chapter is pretty shocking.

It says that for three years he walked around naked and barefoot having previously been wearing sackcloth burlap. We know more of Ezekiel. Ezekiel got put through some of these same kinds of things.

Ezekiel's a priest. Never touched an unclean thing in his life for 30 years. Now God says, okay I want you to cook your barley over a fire of human dung.

Ezekiel says, God says, okay you can use cow dung. Wow. Who would want to be a prophet? Now what's the point of this walking around, now I think he probably had on a loin cloth though I cannot prove it.

I think he would not have been allowed in public if he were stark naked. But, as I say I don't know that. But the point is and it's spelled out for us here this is the way God is going to lead away the Egyptians.

Excuse me, the way the Assyrians are going to lead away the Egyptians into exile. Strict. Wow.

Now why do you think God did this to Isaiah? Well maybe first of all I ask why did God do this and second why did he do it to Isaiah? Why did God do this? What do you think? Could he have been using Isaiah as a visual aid? Absolutely. Absolutely. Now again we are restricted because we don't know how many people actually got the point.

But presumably, some did or we wouldn't have the Bible. But it was important enough to God to get this point across don't trust Egypt. That he was willing to use this three-year-long visual aid.

Now, why do Isaiah? He was likely to do what God. I think that's exactly right. Because he was available and obedient.

A whole bunch of other people weren't available and they would have been obedient if they had been available. If you make yourself available to God don't plan on your pride being massaged. Because God is not very concerned about your pride or mine.

He's very concerned about getting his message across. And whatever it takes. Now, as I say in the background there's an incident going on here that is related to the timing.

A Philistine one of the remember the Philistines, there were five cities and each one of them had a king and it was sort of a confederation. And the king of one of these would typically be sort of the first among equals and in this case it was Ashdod and Ashdod led a revolt and the Assyrians didn't much like it and when it was clear that Ashdod was going to fall, the king of Ashdod escaped to Egypt and asked for asylum and they happily gave it until the Assyrians threatened them. At which point the Assyrians turned over the king of Ashdod to the Assyrians.

And that's what the importance of that last line in verse 6 is. This is what has happened to those in whom we hoped and to whom we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria, how shall we escape? This is what happens to people who trust Egypt. Egypt will sell you out.

And Isaiah is saying this is what's going to happen to the Egyptians. Why would you trust them? All right? Anything you want to comment on there in chapter 20? Pushing on rapidly? Does the buttocks uncover? You can still have a lump of loin cloth. Sure.

Yeah. I'm not going to demonstrate but right, yes, the buttocks would be uncovered. It's like a bikini.

He not only was obedient to God but he trusted God. There's a big difference that we can be obedient to this. But it's just a blind following.

It's not blind following. It is not only obedience it is trust. Yes.

Isaiah is himself a model of what will happen to them but also a model of trust in God whose ways he may not precisely understand at this moment. But I'll trust him and do what he says. All right.

Chapter 21. This is one of the more bizarre chapters. I say that at the outset.

First of all, he begins you can see from verse 9 that we're talking about Babylon. See where it says down there? Fallen, fallen is Babylon. But he titles this poem the oracle or the message or the burden concerning the wilderness of the sea.

Now think about that for a minute. The wilderness of the sea. What is that what is that figure of speech? An oxymoron.

Wilderness is dry and barren Sea is anything but dry and yet the wilderness of the sea You can't drink it. Yes, yes, it's salt water. A good bit of discussion among commentators as to exactly what this means because nobody knows for absolutely certain.

But I think it's sarcastic. Babylon on the Euphrates River had access to the Persian Gulf and the sea trade to the east was a big part of its wealth as well as around Arabia and up the Red Sea to Egypt and so the riches of the sea, the wealth of the sea the abundance of the sea not really. You get below the surface all that abundance is finally just wilderness.

All that wealth is finally just tinsel. So I think it's sarcasm that he's dealing with there. He talks about then verse 2 that people who are going to destroy Babylon Elam that's Persia and Media.

We've talked about the Medes before who live up in the Zagros Mountains Babylon down here the Tigris River running up this way the Zagros Mountains running along the Tigris and the Medes lived up in the Zagros Mountains Persia and the Medes got together to destroy Babylon. Now, in verse 2 evidently, it's God speaking a stern vision is told to me the traitor betrays, the destroyer destroys he's calling Babylon a traitor and a destroyer and that certainly was true they were very good at making covenants with people, and then breaking them Go up O Elam, lay siege O Media all the sighing she has caused I presumably this is Yahweh I bring to an end but now look at verses 3 and 4, therefore, my loins are filled with anguish, pangs have seized me like the pangs of a woman in labor I am bowed down so I cannot hear I'm dismayed so that I cannot see my heart staggers, horror has appalled me, the twilight I long for has been turned for me into trembling well now that's either Yahweh or Isaiah talking. How do you put the two together? I have brought to an end all of their betraying, all of their traitorousness, all of the sighing that they've caused in the world and I'm stricken with grief How do you put those two together? In the heart of God or in the heart of Isaiah? I think you're exactly right He wept over Jerusalem Just like when you punish your son to break your heart Yes, yes, yes, I think this is a very important insight into the heart of God We tend to be sort of all or nothing Oh, if you really love them you won't do anything bad to them Or, if you do something bad to them you'll hate them! There are consequences that come and God is not going to prevent those consequences all the time Sometimes he does in remarkable ways but not all the time But if he lets it come if he brings it it is still out of a broken heart I think that's a very important insight Verse 5 I think is a just a little picture on Belshazzar's feast You remember this story? Belshazzar is the second in command of Babylon The real king has gone out into the desert and taken the gods with him and Belshazzar is second in command Belshazzar is having a feast and they bring out the golden vessels from that Judean temple and they're drinking from those vessels and praising the gods of Babylon and a hand begins to write on the wall Talk about the DTs That night Belshazzar dies and the city is taken Prepare the table Spread the rugs Eat, drink Get up, princes Oil the shields Now Verses 6 to 9a are an absolute mystery to everybody What is going on? Thus the Lord said to me, Go set a watchman, let he announce what he sees When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs Riders on donkeys, riders on camels Let him listen diligently Very diligently Then he who saw cried out, on a watchtower I stand O Lord, continually by day At my post I'm stationed whole

nights Behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs And he answered, Fallen is Babylon

Well, we know what that means But what the deal is with horsemen in pairs Riders on donkeys, riders on camels Nobody knows for certain The guess is and this is where I come down The guess is You're on the caravan routes coming west out of Babylon and you've got these refugees flooding out along the caravan routes and the watchman is told Let us know when you see the refugees coming and that that's what is going on here Maybe As I say it's the one that makes the most sense to me but again it's fun to read the commentaries You can get every interpretation under the sun Pretty much one per commentary Fallen is Babylon All her carved images are fallen to the ground O my threshed and winnowed one What I have heard from the Lord of Hosts the God of Israel I announce to you Now I think I think that's talking to the exiles out there 150 years in the future from Isaiah who are in Babylon who have been threshed and winnowed You know how threshing occurred? You drove an ox around on the pile of grain separating the kernels from the husks Then you took a winnowing fork and threw the whole mess in the air and the wind blew the chaff away and the grain fell back to the ground three or four places in the book the exiles are referred to as the threshed and winnowed ones And I can imagine I can imagine some exile there in Babylon with perhaps just a scrap of the Isaiah scroll and on that scrap is this Fallen, fallen is Babylon All the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground O my threshed and winnowed one What I have heard from the Lord of Hosts the God of Israel I announce to you Friends, friends Let's not become assimilated to the Babylonians Let's not sell out to them Let's not give up our biblical faith because God says that Babylon is going to fall Zeke, you've got to be kidding me Babylon is the greatest nation in the world They're all powerful I know But that's in the scroll I'm going to stand And so when the day came that against all the odds Babylon fell And Cyrus the Persian said, anybody who wants to go home can go home and I'll pay for the rebuilding of their temple There were Judeans ready to go Because of words like this.

Okay The last verses from 11 to 16 again I think and here again you've got commentators all over everywhere I think we're talking about the caravan route that led across the desert from Babylon to Edom Duma probably is a reference to Edom It's an anagram You've reorganized the letters So Babylon here The Mediterranean over there This is way out of proportion Let's try that again Yeah, that's better Okay, you may not believe it But it is Galilee here Dead Sea here Edom located here And again, part of the significance is the connection to Egypt A caravan route went out across this way Through a couple of oases out here And I think what's going on is here again you have the refugees fleeing from destroyed Babylon and the word is coming and these groups that depended on this trade realize we're in bad trouble here So the oracle concerning Duma in verse 11 the oracle concerning Arabia in verse 13 and the other references that are mentioned here all seem to relate somewhere

here The Babylonian king was actually down here somewhere The oasis that he was living at so all that then I want to read to you an Advent hymn based on chapter 19.

Watchman tell us of the night what its signs of promise are Traveler o'er yon mountain's height see that glory-beaming star Watchman doth its beauteous rays ought of joy or hope foretell Traveler yes, it brings the day promised day of Israel Watchman tell us of the night higher yet that star ascends Traveler blessedness and light peace and truth its course portends Watchman will its beams alone gild the spot that gave them birth Traveler ages are its own see, it bursts o'er all the earth Watchman tell us of the night for the morning seems to dawn Traveler darkness takes its flight doubt and terror are withdrawn Watchman let thy wandering cease hie thee to thy quiet home Traveler lo, the prince of peace lo, the son of God is come Watchman, tell us of the night morning comes and also night if you want to ask, ask and come back again John Bowering took those verses and said what are we talking about here in the end what's the Watchman looking for he's looking for the light of light let's sing O come all ye faithful joyful and triumphant O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem come and behold him born the king of angels O come let us adore him O come let us adore him O come let us adore him Christ the Lord Watchman, tell us of the night morning comes thank God morning has come God bless you.

Ralph was asking if we were going to meet on Christmas Eve, no we're not but we are going to meet next week so get your Christmas shopping done next week we'll finish up these oracles against the nations.

This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah this is session number 10 Isaiah chapters 19 through 21 you