

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 7, Isa. 13-14

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number seven, Isaiah chapters 13 and 14. All right, I think it's time to begin.

I wanted to give a couple of commercials before we pray together. Of course, there is no charge for these events and I don't get a salary, but there are some expenses for FAS, the lights, the heat, the coffee, and so forth. So, I've put a basket over there on the side and if you felt led to drop a dollar or two in there to help defray the expenses for FAS for this, that would be a blessing.

A second thing is FAS is always in need of volunteers. I am one and there are many others who are involved and it would be a joy if many would volunteer. Things like folding and sticking in envelopes and those kinds of things.

So again, if you would simply give a call to 858-4222 and offer your services, I know that would be a great, great blessing. We run on a shoestring staff, Jenny Lovell and Katie Dittle and Aaron Hill and Ron and I'm in a day or so a week. It would be a great help for any who can and will volunteer.

Okay, thanks. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you volunteered.

Thank you that you chose willingly, freely to leave the courts of heaven for us. To come here without pomp, without power, without position, to take the lowliest position of all in order that we might know the Father. Thank you.

Help us, O Lord, to follow in your footsteps. To have, as our brother Paul said, the same mind that you have. Help us, Lord.

We confess it's hard. We're so jealous of our position, our power and our possessions. Have mercy upon us, Lord.

Help us to know that none of that stuff goes with us in the end. Rather, Lord, help us to experience the joy of your Spirit fulfilling us, to experience the joy of laying down our lives for others. Thank you, Lord.

Help us as we explore your book. Help us to understand what it is you would say to us and help us not only to understand it but to take it in and apply it to our lives. In your name, we pray.

Amen. All right. We turn tonight to the section that I'm calling Lessons in Trust, chapters 13 to 35.

Ahaz failed the examination. Isaiah said to him, how can God make you firm if you will not be firm in faith? How can God confirm you if you're not firm? And so we've seen how in chapters 7 through 12, Ahaz's failure to trust and the implications of that worked all the way out through the coming of the Messiah, the true Son of David, in place of that. Now then, in these chapters, 13 to 35, we, in the old style of what they called programmed learning 30 years ago, you go back and start over again.

You study the lessons again, preparing to take the exam a second time. And in chapters 36 to 39, Hezekiah takes the exam a second time. Chapters 13 to 35 can be divided into three, well actually four, sections.

First of all, 13 to 23, then 24 to 27, and 28 to 33, and then two concluding chapters, 34 and 35. We'll be going back over that regularly as we go along, but here we are tonight with this opening series of what are called oracles, or pronouncements, or messages against the nations. All three of the major prophets, what have I done with the eraser? Oh, there it is on the floor, okay.

All three of the major prophets have these sections of pronouncements against the nations. Isaiah has them, Jeremiah has them, Ezekiel has them, and in a real sense, two of the minor prophets, Nahum and Obadiah, are each a pronouncement against the nation. Nahum is a pronouncement against Assyria, and Obadiah is a pronouncement against Edom.

But each of the three, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, put their pronouncements against the nations in different places in their books, because they're fulfilling a particular purpose in that book, the way it's set up. In Ezekiel, the oracles against the nations are right in the middle. You've had the word, that Jerusalem is going to fall.

Ezekiel is in captivity in Babylon. He went there in 598, and Jerusalem hadn't fallen yet, but he says it's going to fall, and the people are saying, no, no, no, no, no, Jerusalem can't fall. Jerusalem is God's bedroom.

Nothing bad can happen there, and he says, yes, it is. And when the word comes that the siege has started, Ezekiel is struck dumb, and he has nothing to say for two and a half years. And the announcements against the nations, which were spoken at various times in his ministry, are collected and put right there.

And then, with chapter 33, the word comes that Jerusalem has fallen. And so now, Ezekiel has a new message. Jerusalem will be restored, to which the people say, never can happen, no, no, no.

Again, I often say to students, you think you've got a tough church? Do you preach bad news? Never. Do you preach good news? No way. Isaiah puts his oracles against the nations right here at the beginning of these lessons in trust.

Ahaz trusted Assyria, his worst enemy, to protect him from Israel and Syria, his two neighbors who are attacking him. And so, Isaiah is saying, don't trust the nations. All of them are under judgment, and several of them, we're told, they're going to turn to worship your God.

Why in the world would you trust them? And so in these 11 chapters, we see these pronouncements against the nations. We begin with the two chapters we're looking at tonight, 13 and 14. These are a challenge.

If you've read them, you know that. Just exactly what he's doing, why he's doing it, why he puts what he does here in this place, a lot of different answers to those questions, and we'll explore them tonight. When we look at verses 1 through 16, we need to observe the level of the language.

It is said it is an oracle, a message, a burden. Literally, it means a burden. God has laid something on the prophet concerning this nation.

An oracle concerning Babylon. Now, as I commented in the notes, Babylon is no threat to Jerusalem and Judah at this point. The date, probably, and you can see a sort of chronological movement in these chapters.

It's not precise, but there's a general movement from when Isaiah first spoke the message in 735 until the fall of Assyria before Jerusalem in 701. So there's a kind of a general movement there, but at this point, Babylon is no threat. Babylon is just one portion of the Assyrian empire, but Babylon is the wealthiest, most sophisticated, most cosmopolitan city in the empire, and I think that's important for what it's doing here.

But there's another issue. Babylon is Jerusalem's ultimate enemy. Remember that it is to Babylon that Jerusalem will fall in 586, but there's another factor going on here.

Babylon was always looking for partners to rebel against Assyria. Babylon always saw itself sort of as New York sees itself in relation to Washington, D.C. Okay, those people down there run it, but they're a bunch of dummies. We New Yorkers, we're the really slick people.

We're the ones who really know how to do things. Babylon felt that way about Nineveh and Assyria, a bunch of country bumpkins up there who, yeah, they got the power, but it's too bad they don't know how to use it. So Babylon is always looking for partners.

That's what caught Hezekiah in the end in chapters 38 and 39. They're always looking for people who will come on board with them. So that seems to be a possible reason for opening with Babylon.

But we'll talk more about this as we go along. I want to take the time, again, I'm not going to ask for a show of hands, but assuming that not everybody has read this, I want to take the time to read the first 16 verses, and I want you to see what the flavor of the language is. On a bare hill, raise a signal, cry aloud to them, wave the hand for them to enter the gates of the nobles.

I myself have commanded my consecrated ones, have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger, my proudly exalting ones. The sound of a tumult is on the mountains as of a great multitude, the sound of an uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathering together. The Lord of hosts, the Lord of heaven's armies, is mustering a host for battle.

They come from a distant land, from the end of the heavens, the Lord and the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole earth. Well, for the day of the Lord is near as destruction from the almighty. It'll come.

Therefore, all hands will be feeble. Every human heart will melt. They'll be dismayed, paying pangs and agony will seize them.

They'll be in English like a woman in labor. They'll look aghast at one another. Their faces will be a flame.

Behold, the day of the Lord comes cruel with wrath and fierce anger to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light. The sun will be dark at its rising.

The moon will not shed its light. I'll punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity. I'll put an end to the pop of the arrogant lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

I'll make people more rare than fine gold and mankind than the gold of offer. Therefore, I'll make the heavens tremble and the earth will be shaken out of its place at the wrath of the Lord of hosts. In the day of his fierce anger and like a hunted gazelle or like a sheep with none to gather them, each will turn to his own people.

Each will flee to his own land. Whoever is found will be thrust through. Whoever's caught will fall by the sword.

Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes. Their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished. What is not mentioned in those 16 verses? Joy, peace, yes.

Mm-hmm. Geographically, what is not mentioned? Babylon. We have the opening announcement.

This is a message. This is an oracle, a pronouncement against Babylon. Babylon doesn't appear in the first 16 verses.

What is the flavor of the language? Destruction? Yes, yes. Is it local? It's universal. We're talking about the world here.

God is coming from heaven. He's going to make humanity rarer than gold of Ophir. The heavens will tremble.

The earth will be shaken out of its place at the wrath of the Lord of hosts. So I think what's happening here is Isaiah is introducing this entire section with a universal statement of judgment. The whole world is under God's judgment.

Yahweh of Jerusalem is the God of the whole world. Now for us, we say, well, of course. No, of course, back then.

I mean, this is crazy. This is like saying the God of Jesmon County Kentucky is the God of the whole world. Judah wasn't much bigger than Jesmon County.

So, this is a pretty amazing statement. Our God is the God of the whole world. And the whole world is going to have to stand before his bar of justice.

Now, I think that's going to become more poignant in the lives of some of you who are in your teens or your late teens. Unless God does something dramatic in your lifetime, Christianity in the United States is going to be a minority sect. It's been pretty easy for us over the last couple hundred years as Christianity has basically been the religion of our country to say, well, yeah, right.

Yeah. Our God is the God of the whole world. Yeah.

The whole world is going to bow at his bar. Yes. It'll be harder to say that in a situation where we are a small minority, as in England today, for instance.

But that's called faith. When everything is obvious and you say, well, sure, there's not much faith involved there. But when things are not very obvious and you say, yes, that's faith.

That's faith. And so, God begins here by saying, how can I say that these nations are under judgment? Because the whole world is under judgment. That's why.

Now, what are the particular sins for which judgment is coming? They're named in verse 11. Pride, arrogance, ruthlessness. We've heard that before and we're going to hear it again.

Now, why is it that pride and arrogance and the ruthlessness that is an outgrowth of pride Why are they being singled out here and throughout the book? It's the root sin. It is to say, I am God. And that's why some of the nicest people are going to go to hell.

We think of the drunks and the addicts and the pimps and the prostitutes, they're going to be there. Well, I fear they will. But they're going to be a whole lot of other nice people for whom they are God.

And so right through the book, you have this picture of the existence of God. The exalted Yahweh and the corollary is then no human flesh can stand in his presence on its own account. And so that keeps coming back again and again and again, we'll see it over and over throughout the book.

The attempt to make myself God and to say, I do not have to bow down to anyone. Is the basic sin of all. We'll say more about this before we're done this evening.

OK. Is there a difference between pride and self-respect? If so, what? OK, OK. Pride thinks we accomplish everything by ourselves.

Pride has no humility. So how is self-respect different from that? OK, OK. I am made in God's image.

Therefore, I have worth, not worth that I have created myself or manufactured myself, but worth that's derived from a relationship. Let's pursue that a little further. How much are you worth? Now, I know chemically you're worth about seven dollars and thirty-eight cents, but how much are you worth? The death of Christ.

You are worth it. The son of God. Again.

It's not, oh, I'm no good. I can't do anything. That's just reverse pride is all that is.

But to say, I know that I have worth in the eyes of my father, I know that he has made me in his image, I know that I am worth the death of the son of God, means you can stand and know that you're valuable. You don't have to cook it up. You don't have to work it up.

But it is something that is derived from outside of yourself. Pride seeks to build oneself up from within oneself. True self-respect is derived from a relationship.

Good, good. All right. Now, then, in verse 17, the focus changes.

Behold, I'm stirring up the meads against them who have no regard for silver, who don't delight in gold. Their bows will slaughter the young men. They'll have no mercy on the fruit of the womb.

Their eyes will not pity children and Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. Now, then it seems as though the focus is narrowing. We're talking about Babylon as representative of the pride and the pomp and the glory of the world.

Now, then we're focusing more particularly on the nations. As I commented in the note, the meads are people from what is today Iran. The Tigris River runs more or less northwest to southeast toward the Persian Gulf, and it is paralleled by a mountain chain that has historically provided the boundary between Mesopotamia, the land of the two rivers, and the east.

It is today the border between Iraq and Iran. The meads lived here, and they allied themselves. Babylon is down here.

Actually, Babylon is on the Euphrates. Babylon is over here, and Ashur and Nineveh and Calah are up here. The meads allied themselves with the Babylonians, and together they brought down the Assyrian empire in 605.

Then they changed horses, and the meads allied themselves with the Persians, and together they took out Babylon. So here he is speaking of that situation nearly 200 years in the future from his own time when the meads will be stirred up against Babylon. Now, you can understand that biblical scholars deny that Isaiah could have possibly said this.

You don't talk about what happens 200 years in the future specifically. You can't. Again, if you're still around with me in the spring, we're going to explore that pretty carefully.

I hope you will be around. So, we're talking more specifically now about these people. Look at verse 19.

Once again, what's the issue? Pride, splendor, pomp, glory. Now, we've talked about glory before, and we'll talk about it a good deal more before we're through with this book. Does anybody recall what I've said about the meaning of glory in Hebrew? All right.

Good, good, good. Give me a little bit of glory. Give that man a gold star.

Substance, weight, significance. It's not just passing veils. My favorite example is the sunset.

We saw a gorgeous one the other night, but you turn away and say, hey, look at the sunset, and it's all just gray now. That's not what we're talking about when we talk about glory in the Bible. It is honor, significance, power, and wealth.

It's what makes you somebody. And I rather suspect that this is why Babylon is chosen to go first, that it is the glory of the nations. And what God, in effect, is saying is, in fact, what they have is not true glory.

They do not have eternal significance. What is the earth full of, according to chapter 6? The glory of the Lord. It's not the glory of Babylon.

It's not the glory of Oswald. It's not the glory of wherever you want to think of. It's the Lord's glory that fills the earth.

And so, in effect, God is saying the glory of the nations equals zero. Now, verse 19 is in stark contrast to 20, 21, and 22. Here again, is Isaiah at his finest with word pictures.

What do you think he's doing here? Why? What's his point? What's the point of the picture? The contrast between what is and what will be. And why do you think he uses these particular pictures to make his point? You know, if you go back to chapter 3 and the picture of the beautiful woman, and you've got that catalog of what she's wearing. Now, here, this is kind of overkill, isn't it? It's so dead that there's no place for any human habitation.

Yes, yes, yes. Going to make mankind as rare as the gold of Ophir. Yes, yes.

Empty, abandoned. And what kind of animals are we talking about? Scavengers. We're not talking sheep and goats, are we? Hyenas, jackals, howling creatures.

And there's an argument about ostriches, but maybe there are ostriches there. It's like the list of jewels. In many cases, we really don't know what jewel was actually being talked about.

And if you have several different versions, you look at a list of jewels, and you'll find, yeah, most of them, there'll be agreement. But there'll be five or six where they're all over the map. And it's sort of the same way here.

You can get owls, you can get ostriches, you can get several others as to what the possibilities are. But that's the point. Glorious Babylon.

The windows are broken out, the roof is falling in, and the only people living there are hyenas. Wow. The Latin is sic semper gloria, thus always glory.

Jesus, yes? He amplifies the language. Yeah. Again, that's part of this argument, is the word that's used can sometimes be translated with the word satyr.

You know, a satyr is a half-human, half-goat. And so that's part of the argument. Yeah, we don't know for sure what is exactly intended.

But the obvious intent is clear enough. We're going to see this again when we come down to chapter 34, where we wrap this all up. Even a longer list of animals inhabiting the abandoned palace.

Making his point. And of course, it's true. We did not even know where Babylon was until the late 1800s.

For more than 1500 years, it was totally lost. Now imagine, imagine saying that about New York City. But that's what Isaiah said.

And that's what happened. My face lost. Isn't New York lost? Word plays, yes.

And hey, if climate warming does occur and the sea rises 20 feet, there'll be no Manhattan. Okay, let's move now to chapter 14, verses 1 to 4. For the Lord will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel and will set them in their own land. And sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob.

And the people will take them and bring them to their place. And the house of Israel will possess them. In the Lord's land as male and female slaves.

They'll take captive those who were their captors and rule over those who oppress them. Now, what's that paragraph doing here? Sounds pretty good, yes. But in terms of the strategy of the writing, we're going to be coming right back to talk about the fall of pride here in just a moment.

What's this paragraph inserted at this point for, do you think? Yes, yes. Now, why were Judah and Israel, why were they tempted to trust the nations? Fear. They were afraid.

They needed help. They needed these other enemy nations to help them against other enemy nations. What does God say? Trust me, you don't need to be afraid of them.

Now, again, there's a sentence that we're talking about on the other side of the exile. Notice that. He's not saying there won't be any exile.

He will have compassion for them. He'll again choose Israel. He'll set them in their own land.

The people will take them and bring them to their place. So it's a little bit like Isaiah talking to Ahaz. King Ahaz, I want you to meet my son.

Only a remnant will return is his name. You've made a decision here that has set your nation on fire. You've made a decision on the road.

Now, it's not fate. It would still be possible to change that direction. But unless something changes, this is where you're headed.

You're headed to Babylon. But when you've gone there, what does God say? I'll bring you back. God is not true.

He will have compassion. Yes. No, I don't think that's too far at all.

That's Isaianic. That's right out of this book that, again, you are tempted to fall down before the glory and the pomp and the splendor of this world. You don't need to.

You don't need to. God is for you. You don't need to be afraid of what they can do to you.

So, yes, right here in the middle, you've got the power of the nations on either side, the glory of the nations on either side. And right in the middle, the Lord. The Lord will have compassion.

They cannot do to you anything that will keep you away from his care. And ultimately, ultimately, they will serve you. And that comes back again and again at various points in the book.

When we get down to chapter 60, we'll see that in living color. All right. Now, then, in the middle of.

Verse four. Well, really, and again, it sort of blurs together here from verse two to verse three, when the Lord has given you rest from your pain and turmoil in the hard service with which you were made to serve, then you will take up this lament. Lament against the king of Babylon.

So again, we need to keep the context clear in our minds here. There's going to come a day when the mighty king of Babylon has fallen.

And you, whom he put his foot on. Will be singing a mocking lament. Now, as I say in the notes, this poem, particularly verses four through 21.

22 and 23 are sort of added to the end in the same flavor as the last stanza. This is a very, very carefully developed poem. It is in the form of a lament.

I've talked with you before about the form of Hebrew poetry that it is composed typically of. Three beat lines are repeated. God founded the earth.

The heavens were stretched out by the Lord. So that synonymous development where the second part says the same thing as the first part, but in different words. Now, a lament is typical.

And again, I have to say typically, you can never say always when you're talking about a language. But a lament is typically three, two. And it's called a limping meter.

Don't, don't, don't, don't, don't. That's what this is. It's in the form.

The poetic form is typical of a lament. Then a lot of the language here is typical of a lament. Oh, how.

Sorry, we are. All the earth weeps. Etc.

This is a flat-out mock. Oh, how happy we are that you're dead. The whole earth sings for joy now that you're gone.

So it's it drips sarcasm. From end to end. The second thing I need to say is, and you may all throw me out now.

This is not about Satan. Many commentaries will say, oh, this is talking about the fall of Satan. No, it isn't.

John Milton is the first to say that Satan's name is Lucifer, which comes from Isaiah 14. There's no place else in the Bible that he is said to be Lucifer. Now, what we do have here is the fall of creaturely pride.

And to the extent that Satan is an example of that. He's included here, but this is not about Satan. Satan.

I said again, he's included. All creaturely pride is doomed to fall. But this is talking about creaturely pride of all sorts.

Now I say this because of the structure of the poem and, let's look at it. How the oppressor has ceased. And there again, that's, that's the lament language.

Oh, the oppressor has ceased. The insolent fury seized. The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers that struck the people's in wrath with unceasing blows that ruled the nations in anger with unrelenting persecution.

That's not Satan, is it? That's an earthly king. The whole earth in a normal lament is grieving. The whole earth is at rest and quiet.

They break forth into singing. The Cypresses rejoice at you, the cedars of Lebanon saying, since you were laid low, no woodcutter comes up against us. So that's the first stanza earth.

Earth is rejoicing because you're dead. In particular, that eighth verse, the Assyrian Kings bragged about how they cut down vast forests. Again, by this time, most of the forests were gone from Assyria.

It had been heavily forested, but we humans are hard on trees. And so, for their palaces, they had to conquer Lebanon. The whole of Lebanon, you know, there are two mountain chains there.

There's Lebanon, which is if from your point of view, if that's north, the Mediterranean is out there. There's the Lebanon range, which comes right up out of the Mediterranean. Then there's a steep valley, which in Arabic is called the valley.

Beka is the word in Arabic for valley, and that's the Beka. And then you have the anti-Lebanon over here, another mountain range, which is even bigger. Mount Hermon is part of that range.

So that whole thing, both of those mountain ranges and the valley were filled with trees. And the Assyrians kept bragging about how we went over there, those big, tall mountains, those rough valleys, and we cut down the trees. And Isaiah says, the trees are so glad that you're dead.

I'm not much of an environmentalist, but I am an environmentalist. And when some of us are gone, the land rejoices. Now then, we change from earth.

How is earth feeling about your death? And now in 9, 10, and 11, we go to hell. Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come. It rouses the shades to greet you, all of them who were leaders on the earth.

It raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations, and all of them will answer and say to you, you too have become as weak as we. You have become like us. Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, to hell.

And then the picture here in the end of verse 11 is just so powerful. Here's a funeral procession. The harps are playing, and all of a sudden, the shroud is pulled back.

And what do we have? Maggots and worms. Earth is glad. Hell is glad because you are as weak as we are.

You killed us. You sent us down here, and now you've come to join us. Welcome.

The third stanza then goes to heaven. So, from earth to hell to heaven. And here, particularly in 12, 13, and 14, he's using language from some of the myths of the ancient world.

He's not writing a myth, but he's using language they're familiar with. How you are fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the dawn. How you're cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low.

You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven above the stars of God. I will set my throne on high. I'll sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high. There is a Canaanite myth in which Baal is made to get off his throne.

He's fighting death, and death has temporarily beaten him. So Baal's throne is empty. So this other god says, I think I'll sit on Baal's throne.

Well, the armrests are too high for his elbows, and his feet can't reach the footrest. And so finally, he says, I think maybe. And the rest of the gods join in and tell him, get out of there.

So, he's using that kind of language here to talk about here, not a god, but a human, a king who says, I'm going to be god. Again, we'll talk about this. But in the appeal in chapter 36, where the Assyrian officer is calling on them to surrender, he says, the king of Assyria has destroyed all the other gods, and he'll destroy your god, too.

Wow. It's not a conflict between the god of Assyria and the god of Israel. It's a conflict between the king of Assyria and this so-called god.

The day will come. The day will come. How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low.

Now, I say again, the Bible suggests to us the story of Satan is not very well developed in the Bible. Dorothy Sayers, the playwright, said, you never want to put the devil into your play as a character. He ends up as the main character.

The Bible is the same way. The Bible is not going to deny his existence. No, no.

The Bible is going to say, yes, he does exist. And it's going to give us a little bit of information. But it's not going to satisfy our curiosity about him.

God is the one on whom we focus. Not trying to figure out the devil's life history. You said in your heart, I'll ascend to heaven above the stars of God.

I'll set my throne on high. I'll sit on the mount of assembly. I will make myself like the most high.

But verses 15 to 21 bring us back to earth. You are brought down to shield to the far reaches of the pit. Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you.

Is this the man who made the earth tremble? Who shook kingdoms? Who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities? Who did not let his prisoners go home? All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb. But you are cast out away from your grave like a loathed branch. Literally, it's a miscarriage.

Clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword who go down to the stones of the pit like a dead body trampled underfoot, you will not be joined with them in burial. Earth, hell, heaven, earth. This king is killed on the battlefield and his body is there among the other bodies, not even given an honorable burial.

The worst humiliation possible in the ancient world. There's some speculation that this is referring to the Assyrian emperor Sargon, who in 605, excuse me, 705, was killed in battle. He's the only Assyrian emperor we know of who was actually killed in battle.

And so there are those who think that may have sort of given Isaiah the idea here. And so then he goes on to talk about the fact that this man is going to be deprived of offspring, which again did happen in this case. And so possibly, possibly that's what's going on.

So he concludes with the final humiliation, exalt yourself. Said it before, said again, exalt yourself. And the necessary result is humiliation.

We can't compete with God, no matter how hard we try. Wow. I thought I'll never get done tonight.

I did. The rest of the chapter then is two more oracles, one against Assyria, where it seems as though we come back now, as I say in the notes for next week, the focus comes back to now. Babylon is not our big threat at this moment.

Assyria is our big threat. What about that? And then from Assyria to the near neighbors, Philistia and Moab. And that's what we'll look at next time.

Okay. Questions, comments? Yes. I was thinking of this, when you were talking about, have been disarmed and stripped and spoiled and made a public example of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

And E. Stanley Jones comments on that. The next time the devil starts messing with your mind, tell him to bend his neck, for on the back of it is a nail-pierced footprint. I don't know if you all heard that or not.

E. Stanley Jones says, the next time the devil starts messing with your mind, tell him to bend his head, because on the back of his neck is a nail-scarred footprint. That's a good taunt. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Other comments, questions, or observations? We've got a couple of minutes yet.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. He was alive at least until 701, and probably later than that. The dates of Hezekiah are the most problematic dates of all the kings.

There's a 12-year problem. A man in the 1960s was able to sort out the chronology of the Hebrew kings in a remarkable way. It was a doctoral dissertation that he wrote at the University of Chicago, and he just answered virtually everything.

It makes some of the scholars so mad they can hardly stand it, because he's an evangelical. And all the dates work. They work perfectly, except Hezekiah.

And so we do not know whether he began to reign in 727 and then died in 696, or whether he began to reign in 716 and died in 6, whatever that is, another 11 years after that, 685. Now I say all that to say tradition says that Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, had Isaiah dropped down inside a hollow tree and left there to die. So the only glimmer of Isaiah's death is, according to that tradition, it was during the time of Manasseh.

So it's either after 696 or after 685. Manasseh was not a nice man. Other questions, comments? Yes.

Well, what we know is that it was a desert. So, it makes all kinds of sense to say, yes, in fact, those are desert animals. And yes.

Yeah, I'd seen a movie made for it. Yeah, right. I was pretty young.

I saw a movie that was showing, supposedly, this area. Yeah, yeah. So yeah, there's every reason to say that it was literally fulfilled.

Central Iran, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes, yes. The book of Revelation has many, many allusions to Isaiah.

And I believe that Revelation is using Babylon just like Isaiah is. And that is representative of the arrogance of the world. Now, again, if indeed Tim LaHaye is right and Babylon is rebuilt as the center of the world power, I'm not going to turn in my ticket.

But I think that Babylon is being used representatively there, just as it's being used here in the first part of chapter 13. The symbol of all human pride and arrogance and the destruction of it all. Good.

Thank you. Let's pray. Oh, Father, help us not to be proud of our humility.

We are little people. We are not great earthshakers. And sometimes we can feel proud of that.

Help us not to do that. Because pride, that ability to make myself God, is as much a problem for us little people as it is for the world-shakers. Help us, Lord.

Help me, Lord, to know again and again that we are who we are by your grace and that you see us as priceless, and worth it all. Help that to remind us of who we are in you. In your name, we pray.

Amen. This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number seven, Isaiah chapters 13 and 14.