

## **Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 8, Isa. 14-16**

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number eight, Isaiah chapters 14 through 16.

Well, the clock on the wall seems to be saying seven o'clock. So, let's begin. Let's pray together.

In this season of Thanksgiving, Lord, our hearts are turned to all that we have for which to give thanks. Above everything else, we give thanks for the Lord Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have come freely. Willingly, you who are life itself to become death for us. Thank you. Thank you for the promise of eternal life.

Thank you for the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives to enable us to live your life in this world from day to day. Thank you for this wonderful creation with all of its beauty. All of its order, all of its wonder.

Thank you for this good land that you have given to us. Thank you for those who have gone before us who have been faithful to you and passed on to us the word of salvation and of hope. Thank you.

Thank you for this little town in Kentucky, for what you have accomplished here over the last hundred and twenty-five years. We thank you for Asbury University and Asbury Seminary. We thank you for the Francis Asbury Society.

We thank you, Lord, for all of the other organizations here in town. Go, evangelism resources, others reaching out to a lost world. Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you for the freedom that we have to come here this evening and study your word. And we pray for brothers and sisters around the world who do not enjoy this freedom and yet and yet are determined to love you and worship you and live for you, even if it means death. Thank you for their faithfulness.

And we join together with them and pray for them that you'll encourage them and strengthen them, enable them to stand. And then we pray for ourselves this evening. Once again, Lord, please open your word to us.

Help us that as we study, we may each hear your voice speaking to us, challenging us, convicting us, encouraging us, guiding us. Whatever you have to say to us, oh Lord, we say to you, say it and we'll give you thanks in your name. Amen.

Well, it's a delight to see each of you here again this evening in spite of the rain and the dark and all that stuff. Thank you for coming. We're looking at Isaiah and we're going to actually meet for the next four weeks.

Two weeks off seemed like a long time. So I'm grateful for the four weeks that we can meet together. We're looking at Isaiah's messages concerning the nations.

I've said to you that as I understand the book, this is the first part of a section that we may call Lessons in Trust, extending from chapters 13 to 35. Ahaz failed the test. He did not trust God.

He refused to trust God in the moment of challenge. And so, it is as though God is saying, all right, let's go back to the textbook. Let's go back to the classroom and look at reasons why you should trust me.

We've said that in many ways, chapter six is a model for the entire book, a vision of human inability, a vision of God, a vision of self, and an experience of cleansing. And it seems to me that the vision of human inability, the vision of God, and the vision of self are what we have here in chapters seven through 39. And the key to being God's servant is to be able to trust him.

So here in chapters 13 to 23, we have God's admonition. Don't trust the nations. Don't trust humanity.

And we saw in our last session when we were talking about chapters 13 and 14, that Babylon is sort of set up as the overall symbol of human glory and power and splendor. And God said in those chapters, Babylon is going to be thrown down to the ground. We talked last time about the fact that the book of Revelation seems to use Babylon in very much the same way.

In John's time, Babylon was a little village on the Euphrates River. It was by no stretch of the imagination comparable to Rome, for instance. And many people believe that when John uses Babylon, he's really speaking about Rome.

But I think that John is simply following the lead of Isaiah and that Babylon is the symbol of all that we're talking about. Now tonight, in chapter 14, verse 24, we sort of come back down to earth. We come back to the specific historical realities that Judah was facing during Isaiah's own time.

So, as I note there in the first statement under background, the nations of Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Syria, and Israel are all addressed between chapter 14, 24 through to chapter 17, 11. So we're sort of wide angle. Humanity in all its glory, in all of its pretensions to being God will fall.

Wide angle. Now we come to a narrower angle and talk now about the specific nations that were a threat to Judah and also that Judah might be inclined to trust in to deliver them. So, we begin then with verse 24 of chapter 14.

I want you to notice something. Go back to chapter 13, verse 1. What does that verse say? Did anyone read it? The what? The Oracle. What other translations? The prophecy.

The message. The burden. Yes.

The literal translation of the Hebrew is burden. But it's understood that this is a message that God has laid upon the prophet. And so, we have that.

Go now to chapter 14, verse 28. Someone read that. There's Oracle again or message or burden or there it is.

But now look at chapter 14, 24. It's not there, is it? No. And I believe that what's going on is you've talked about Babylon as a representative.

And Babylon, of course, is a Mesopotamian power. They're over there in what is today Iraq. And so, Babylon, I think, is representative.

And Assyria now is the specific expression of that Mesopotamian power that was threatening Judah during Isaiah's own time. So again, we've gone from wide-angle to narrow Babylon as the symbol, Assyria as the present reality of the Mesopotamian power that is threatening them. OK, now then notice the repeated word or concept in verses 24, 26, 27.

What is the repeated word purposed, planned? Yes. Those two words purposed and planned are repeated five and six times in this very short section. Now, what do you think is the point there? What is God saying to these people in Judah threatened by this monster empire of Assyria? It's in his hands.

Remember back in chapter eight, do not call conspiracy what this people call conspiracy, but make me holy. If you're going to dread something, dread me. So here again, God is constantly seeking to lift our eyes and to tell us that behind all the things that are going on in the world, God is at work and God is accomplishing his good purposes.

Now, we today don't have inspired prophets who can tell us precisely what God's purpose is, but the general truth is still correct. That God uses the nations of the world to discipline his people. He uses the nations of the world to punish his people.

God uses the nations of the world to maneuver his people into a place where they've got to trust him. All of those things are among God's purposes today as much as they ever were then. So whatever Assyria thinks they're doing, they are in fact fulfilling God's purpose.

And that's something that we constantly need to remind ourselves as we look at the evening news. It's very, very easy for us to get all bent out of shape. Oh, what are they going to do now? What's happened? Oh, my.

What about those people? What about what about what about God? As I have planned, so shall it be. As I have purposed, so shall it stand. Verse 25.

I will break the Assyrian in my land and on my mountains trample him underfoot. His yoke will depart from them his burden from their shoulder. Let's look back at chapter 37 verses 36 through 38.

The Assyrians have taken every fortress in the country except for two. Lachish is down on the edge of the coast area and Jerusalem. It looks like it's all over.

And the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. Then Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed and returned home.

Mm hmm. I would, too. So, whenever these words were spoken, they were a specific prophecy of what God was going to do to mighty Assyria.

Whatever they plan, whatever they purpose, God's purposes are going to be achieved. Now, look at the phrase in 26 and 27. This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth.

And this is what? The hand that is stretched out. And look at it again in 27. For the Lord of hosts has purposed and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out and who will turn it back? If you go back to chapter 10.

Let's go back there. Chapter 10, verse four is the end of the poem that began at nine, eight. Four stanzas.

Each one of the stanzas ends with the same line that you have in verse four of 10. And four. For all this, his anger has not turned away and his hand is stretched out still.

God's fist is raised. However mighty Assyria may seem to be, it's the fist of God that is in the end going to call Assyria to account. And so, God says, if you're going to be concerned about something, don't be concerned about Assyria.

Be concerned about God. Make your purposes against his purposes and you're going to run into a brick wall. But set your purposes in line with his purposes.

And next spring, we're going to read about God's mighty arm. With the sleeve rolled up. To defend his people.

So, it's just a question of our condition that determines whether that fist lands on us or whether it lands on our enemies. And interestingly, as we'll see in Isaiah 53, the root out of the dry ground is the mighty arm of God stretched out to redeem the world. Okay, we have to push on here in terms of the time we have.

So, as I say, it seems to me that that symbolic treatment of Babylon comes down to its focus on Assyria. And the statement that whatever is happening here, God is in charge. All right, let's push on.

Now we come to an oracle, a message directed against a specific nation. The mighty empire and the near neighbor. Philistia, remember, is down on the coast to the southwest of Judah.

If you're looking at the map here, Judah's here. Philistia is down here on the coast. Composed of five cities.

And those five cities were the Philistine cities. And the Philistines and the Judeans had constantly been at war over the hill country between them. Judah's up here on the ridge.

Philistia's down here on the coast. And in between the two are some rolling hills called the lowlands. And the Judeans are constantly pushing down toward the coast.

The Philistines are constantly pushing up toward the ridge. And that area, the lowlands, became throughout all of its history an area of contention between them. So, in the year that King Uzziah died, I've mentioned to you before that the dates of Hezekiah and Ahaz are the most problematic of all the Israelite and Judean kings.

But probably Ahaz died in about 716. Is that right? Yes, I'm wrong. On the notes, I have 516. That's incorrect. It seems probable that Ahaz died in 716. So, we're moving on in time now. Isaiah had his vision in 739. Damascus was destroyed in 732. Samaria was destroyed in 722.

And now we're coming on down to 716. In the year that King Ahaz died, came this message. Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of you, that the rod that struck you is broken.

For from the serpent's rod will come forth an adder. Its fruit will be a flying, fiery serpent. The firstborn of the poor will graze, and the needy lie down in safety.

But I will kill your root with famine, and your remnant it will slay. Probably what Isaiah is referring to here is, oh good, the Judean king, our hereditary enemy, has died. So, this is our big chance.

And Isaiah says, no it isn't. No, it isn't. It's not your big chance, because your fate is already sealed.

In particular, I want you to notice the different future of Philistia and Judah that is here. What is Philistia's future according to 29, 30, and 31? Famine, destruction, death, yes. But what is Judah's future according to verse 32? Refuge.

The Lord has founded Zion, and in her, the afflicted of his people will find refuge. This is a theme that keeps recurring. We'll have reason to talk about it again in a few minutes with regard to Moab.

But the theme is that there will be a remnant. Destruction may come, but there will be a remnant. God has laid the foundation of Zion.

And this is the point that I have made again and again. Destruction is never God's intended last word. Will there be destruction? Yes.

But it is not intended to be final. A remnant will return. The Philistines, no.

And to be sure, they are gone. The Philistines do not exist as a people today. But God's people do.

Against all the odds, the Lord has founded Zion. And in her, the afflicted of his people will find refuge. God keeps his word.

So again, this issue, why would you trust the Philistines? The Philistines are going to be destroyed. And if there was any hope for them, it would be in your God. Why would you trust the nations? As you know, there is this constant argument about just how much did our founding fathers believe.

And you can get arguments on either side. But it's interesting to me that Washington could say, avoid entangling alliances. I believe that that instinct of his grows out of the Bible.

Because over and over again, God says to his people, don't trust the nations. You can't do it. Now, you say, can you prove that? No, I can't.

But I think it's very, very interesting. Obviously, the alliance with the French was very critical to the survival of the American Revolution. And yet, and yet, Washington can say, watch out.

Watch out. Okay. Any comments, or questions about what we've covered here in verses 24 through 32 in chapter 14? What's the lesson here for us? What have you gleaned from what I've been saying? Yes.

And we've been saying, and you don't trust the nations, you don't trust others because they're going to be destroyed too. Yes. Yes.

Yes, don't trust the nations because they're going to be judged too. Who doesn't know that? They can't follow the nations. But it's a little bit hard, I would think, for them to know what nation to follow, or what to do.

Okay, I think the answer is, don't follow any nation. But if they're part of a nation. Oh, well, he's saying, trust the God of Judah.

Don't trust Judean kings. Trust the God who has brought this nation into existence. He has founded Zion, and he will make it a place of refuge.

That's right. When you're saying nation, you're talking about the kings, the leaders of the nations, and people like that, who are not pretending to love God. At least some of them are not pretending, some of them were pretending.

But, he's saying, and we'll ultimately come to that point, he's saying, even the best human kings, even the most faithful human kings, are not God. And if you put your trust in them, they too will fail you. God is the only one who will not fail you.

No, it isn't. And, the Israelite kings were supposed to be constantly pointing beyond themselves to God. When they began to amass power for themselves and begin to point attention to themselves, that's when trouble arose.

Yes, and that's the point that I was trying to make. That hand outstretched can either be outstretched in judgment, or it can be outstretched in deliverance, and it's up to us which it is. Yeah, yeah, certainly, certainly.

All right, let's push on now to the next oracle, and there's a sense in which we just jump across the Dead Sea. The Philistines are out here, Judah is here, here's the Dead Sea, here is Moab. Moab and Judah always had a kind of an iffy relationship.

Remember where Ruth came from, and how did she get involved with that family? Because they were from Bethlehem, and they went to Moab because there was a

famine in Judah. So again, here is this sort of quid pro quo relationship between them. It's very probable, it's true today, this area here now is completely dry.

I ought to redo my line here. If you see a satellite picture today, this really is almost all just salt flats, and the actual Dead Sea is up here. So much water has been drained out of the Jordan by both Israel and Jordan that the Dead Sea is getting deader all the time.

But it's probable that in ancient history, the Dead Sea also rose and fell like our Great Lakes do, and that it was easy to get from Judah to Moab. They didn't have to go from Bethlehem all the way up around the north end to this area. Now there's a big, big discussion about exactly where Moab was.

This area here was the area that was given to Reuben, the tribe of Reuben. And supposedly, this is the homeland of Moab down here. But most of the cities referred to here in Isaiah, in fact, are located up here.

It seems that the Moabites had fairly early kind of pushed the tribe of Reuben out. Intermarried with them, all of those kinds of things. So really, all of this area in biblical times is referred to as Moab.

Or I should say, in the time of the United Monarchy, the time of David and the kings after that. So, when we're talking about Moab here, we're talking about that region on the eastern side of the Dead Sea that Judah was kind of inclined to rely on. Edom is down here to the south.

And Edom and Judah never had a good relationship. The Edomites were constantly trying to push up here into the Judean area. The Judeans were constantly seeking to control this area.

And so there's really just basically hatred between Judah and Edom. But that wasn't true with Moab. A much more tenuous relationship.

Sometimes hostility, sometimes guarded friendship. And it's in that vein that we can see what goes on in this chapter. In 15, 1 through 9, what's the dominant tone in this poem? Do you see some repeated words there? It's grief.

That's exactly right. In verse 2, Moab wails. In verse 3, everyone wails and melts in tears.

Verse 4, they cry out. Verse 5, my heart cries out. The end of verse 5, is a cry of destruction.

So forth. Verse 8. And again, people who write commentaries spend a lot of time discussing this. But it appears that overall, the movement is from north to south.

The cities that are referred to. It seems as though you start up in the north. It's not absolute.

But nevertheless, it seems as though the movement is this way. And you can imagine then refugees who are fleeing. Because the Assyrians would have been coming down the King's Highway from Damascus to the north.

And so, the attack would have been from the north southward. And you see these people fleeing from the Assyrian armies that are coming. I don't know whether you've seen pictures from the Second World War.

But there is one picture in particular that I found very, very gripping. It is a road from the north of France toward Paris. And it's after the Nazis had won and France had capitulated.

And the road is absolutely lined with stuff. Baby buggies, dressers, kitchen tables, motorcycles, cars. All the stuff that refugees tried to take with them.

And as they became more and more terrified, left to get on and get away from the oncoming Nazi hordes. That's what I think about when I read this chapter. Are you going to trust the Moabites? Are you going to think that they can get you out of the mess you're in? No.

They're not going to be able to save themselves. And they're not going to be able to save their stuff as they go. Verse 7. Therefore, the abundance they've gained and what they've laid up they carry away over the brook of the willows.

And that brook is down here in this area. Trying to save bits and pieces of the accumulations of their lives. And he says, the final verse, verse 9. The waters of Dubon are full of blood.

Dubon was one of the major cities. For I will bring upon Dubon, even more, a lion for those of Moab who escape for the remnant of the land. So even the remnant that tries to escape to the south is going to be devoured by this lion that's coming from the north.

Now I'm sure it has to do with my age. But I look at the stuff that, and I won't bring my wife into this, that I have acquired over the years. And as someone has said, there are no pockets in shrouds.

And yet how much of our lives are spent in acquisition, acquiring? Again, we in this land have been spared what much of the world has experienced. In terms of losing everything.

As you, if you know about European history, between 1615 and 1645, was essentially 30 years of unending warfare in Central Europe. It is said that in Germany in those 30 years, fully half of the population died. They started in 1615 with 12 million and in 1645 they had 6 million.

Cities fought over again and again and again. And again, all of our acquiring, all of our acquisitions, for what? For whom? So, you say, Oswald, you think we all ought to become monks and nuns? No, I didn't say that. But I simply said that I simply say that to myself, as much as I would say to you, what does it mean to hold things lightly? It's exactly right.

It's just stuff. Just stuff. So, I weep for Moab, he says.

Don't trust them. Don't believe that they can solve your problems. They've got their own problems.

And they're going to lose all the stuff that they've acquired. We'll move on to 16 then. Send a lamb to the ruler of the land.

From Sila, by way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion. Well, again, Sila is down in this area. It may refer to the city of Petra.

Some of you have seen pictures of that, the rock city where all the houses and everything were cut into the walls of the canyons in this area. Send from Sila, the rock, to the ruler of the land. Well, if we stop right there, we might think it's the ruler of Moab.

But you go on. To the mount of the daughter of Zion. Like fleeing birds, like a scattered nest, so are the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.

The Arnon goes right through here into the Dead Sea. These people that you're inclined to trust, they're going to be sending messages to your ruler. The ruler on Mount Zion.

And what will they say? Verses 3, 4, and 5. Give counsel. Grant justice. Make your shade like night at the height of noon.

Shelter the outcasts. Do not reveal the fugitive. Let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you.

Be a shelter to them from the destroyer. When the oppressor is no more and destruction has ceased. And he who tramples underfoot has vanished from the land.

What are the Moabites asking? They're asking for refuge status of Judah. Don't trust them. There's going to come a day when they're going to be turning to you.

Now, this next verse is very, very significant. Verse 5. Then a throne will be established. The king.

And it will be established in... My version here says steadfast love. What do some other versions say? Okay, that's the next word, isn't it? A throne will be established in what? Mercy? Loving kindness? Does anybody guess what Hebrew word we're talking about? Hesed. Yes.

Yes. This is this Hebrew word that we've talked about before. And you'll hear from me again.

An untranslatable word in English. There is no single English word that captures everything that this word in Hebrew means. Love, mercy, kindness, grace, compassion, loyalty, steadfast love, loving kindness.

And the list goes on and on. The passionate, undying devotion of a superior to an inferior, especially when undeserved. A word that is, so far, unique to Hebrew.

Which is remarkable. Most Hebrew vocabulary you can find in other Semitic languages. Not this word.

This word occurs some 250 times in the Old Testament. About three-quarters of them refer to God. So, this throne will be marked above all by this kind of self-giving love.

And we've talked about Hebrew poetry before. That it's marked by this thing called parallelism. Where one phrase will be repeated using synonyms.

Well, the synonym for hesed is the second word you've got here. Faithfulness. Which can also be translated truth.

But it's not truth as an idea. It's truth in relationship. It's being true too.

This king will manifest self-giving love. This king will be true to every promise he ever made. This promise will bring, and here comes the next Hebrew word that we've talked about before.

This king will bring mishpat. The word is often translated justice or judgment. Those are not bad translations.

But the word means more than that. It means divine order. A world of injustice is a world that is not in the order God intended.

But it is not merely legal equity that we're talking about here. It is one who restores God's order to life. And the last word then is he will unfailingly do what is right.

Wow. And where will he do it? Verse 5. Right in the middle. Where will he do it? In the tent of David.

And that's interesting. Not the house of David. Not the palace of David.

In the tent of David. Why do you think they say that? And there's no wrong answer here. I don't know what it is.

Oh, the tabernacle? Yeah, could be a reference to that idea. Yes, David could be a representative. But why the tent? That's what I'm really interested in.

Yeah, yeah. Could be, could be. Okay.

None of the trappings of kingship. Yes, a tent is very movable. A tent is very impermanent.

It's fascinating that Amos uses this same expression. When he's up there prophesying in the northern kingdom of Israel and saying for eight and a half chapters it's been unreserved judgment and destruction. And then in the last six or seven verses of the book, he says, yeah, but the tent of David is going to be repaired and restored and it's going to become a canopy for the peoples.

So again, it seems as though you have this idea of God in his own way, not in the way of human trappings and power. And I think in regard to this of where Jesus chose to be born, not in a palace, but in a barn. So, the thing that's going to mark this king will not be his palace.

It'll be his character. That's pretty hard for us to come to grips with. Okay, let's push on.

Verse 6 tells us what the problem is. Pride. Pride.

Here we are again. We're going to run into this right through these 66 chapters. When human beings exalt themselves against God, the result is absolutely predictable.

They're going to be humiliated. Not because God is jealous of his position. Not because in some cruel kind of way he's going to say, well, you can't do that to me.

No, it's simply the reality. If I smash my fist through the glass back there, two things are going to happen. Number one, the glass is going to break and I'm going to get cut.

Why? Because God hates me? No, because that's the way the world is made. And it's the same thing. Only God is exalted.

If I try to exalt myself against him, the result is very predictable. It's not going to work. So here it is again.

And you then come back to this theme of weeping. Verse 7, let Moab wail for Moab. Let everyone wail, mourn, utterly stricken.

What is the figure of speech that's being used in verses 8, 9, and 10? What imagery is being used there? The vineyard, yes, yes. The vine, that's going to show up again. In the world of the Near East, wine is associated with joy and laughter.

Not necessarily drunkenness as we think of it, but nevertheless, you've had a good harvest. You're going to have stuff to drink through the winter. You can't drink the water, so you need something to drink.

So there's going to be wine to drink, a cause for joy and rejoicing. And God says, nope, not going to happen. Not joy and rejoicing, but weeping and wailing.

And Moab is compared to a vine. You see it there, especially in verse 8. They've struck down its branches, which reached to Jaser, and strayed to the desert. It shoots spread abroad and passed over the sea.

Probably the Dead Sea is being talked about. So, Moab is like a vine that has spread out and stretched out. But I weep with the weeping of Jaser for the vine of Sibmeh.

I drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Eliella, for over your summer fruit and your harvest, the shout has ceased. Joy and gladness are taken away from the fruitful field. In the vineyards, no songs are sung, no cheers are raised, and no treader treads out wine in the presses.

I've put an end to the shouting. Therefore, my inner parts moan like a lyre for Moab. That's kind of interesting.

My stomach growls for Moab. My inmost self for Kier Haresseth. One of the things that I find interesting here is, notice the pronouns in verses 9, 10, and 11.

When you're doing Bible study, it always pays to look at the pronouns. What are the dominant pronouns in 9, 10, and 11? First person. I weep.

I drench you with my tears. I have put an end to the shouting. My inner parts moan.

My inmost self. Now, I wonder why that is. First of all, who is this first person? I think we've got two choices.

What are they? God is one choice. What's the other one? Isaiah. I think that's it.

Now, why? Let's say it's Isaiah. Why would Isaiah be mourning for Moab? I think that's generally true. But Moab is the only one that we have I weeping for in this whole section.

It could be that mourning. That I'm mourning because Moab is not listening. That Isaiah is failing.

Perhaps. If he is not seeing anything change, he changes. I think that would be especially true if it were addressed to Judah.

And that is true in some other parts of the book. But here, Moab is their neighbor. Any other thoughts? Are you still thinking about Isaiah? Yeah.

Yeah. Yes, I think most of the way through it's Isaiah speaking for God. Speaking as God.

Well, I think one possibility is precisely an expression of this closeness that has existed between Judah and Moab. He's not going to cry for Edom. He's not going to cry for the Philistines.

But he does feel the anguish for those who have been closer historically. I think that's one possibility. The other possibility, if it is God and one indication, I have put an end to the shouting.

Well, that's not Isaiah. Isaiah hasn't put an end to the shouting. God has.

If it is a reference to God, then it may well go all the way back. Remember who Moab's ancestor is? Lot. Moab and Ammon are the incestuous offspring of Lot.

So perhaps it goes all the way back that far that God feels a special affinity for them because of the connection through Lot. Yes. Yes.

Yeah. Oh, unquestionably. Yes, yes.

Both Edom and Moab, Moses asked for permission to travel through their lands and that they would provide their own food. They wouldn't do anything. And both Edom and Moab said no.

They had to go out around the desert. And while they were doing that, the Edomites and the Moabites were doing bad things to them. So, yeah, yeah, there's centuries and centuries and centuries of hostility.

And I've been in Israel. I've sometimes wanted to pick up my feet for fear the ground would ooze blood. All right.

Let's look at verses 12 through 14. Look at 16.12 and now look back at 15.2. In their trouble, what are they inclined to do? Turn to their God. And what does Isaiah say about that? It's useless.

It's useless. Yes, yes. Around the world tonight, men and women are going to useless gods to deliver them.

In India tonight, with that terrible, terrible fire, they're going to their gods looking for comfort. And they're not going to find it. I've never quite forgotten.

I was walking down a street in Bangalore and passed a little workshop. And I realized the guy in there was making idols. He was making an elephant goddess.

And I thought, my, man, talk about futility. But there it is. Somehow or other, I've got to get control of this world.

Somehow or other, I've got to get the powers that are here lined up in my support. And over and over again, Isaiah says, no, no. He made you.

You don't make him. But we can't quite get that through our heads. Verse 13 and 14 then.

Again, a bit mysterious. This version says this is the word that the Lord spoke concerning Moab in the past. Well, in the past it was not just quite as clear as this translation would make that appear.

In three years, like the years of a hired worker. That phrase is going to occur again in the book. And the thought is that, okay, I'm an indentured servant.

I have sold myself to this guy for three years. And I am checking off the days. As carefully as that hired worker would keep track of how many days, God has said three years, three years.

And Moab is going to be gone. And here it is again, the glory of Moab. We've seen it before.

We'll see it again right through the book. The earth is full of the glory of the Lord. My glory, your glory, the glory of any nation.

The glory of any ruler is like a match compared to the sun. Compared to God's glory. Three years and it's going to happen.

I've said it before, I'll say it again. One of the keys that Isaiah insists on that proves that Yahweh is God. Is that He can specifically predict the future.

Not, you know, sort of the, well if this happens. Not the horoscope. Three years.

Moab is gone. Well, did that happen? I think it's obvious it did happen or this book wouldn't exist. Yes, God is not part of this world.

He's not caught up in the endless cycles. He stands outside the world and He can say, this is what's going to happen. And so, He says, don't trust the nations.

All right. Four minutes over, not bad. Questions, or comments before we go? Yes.

Prison Day Israel seems to have a lot of allies. They don't have a lot of allies, do they? No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no.

Anything else? Get out of the United Nations. Well, I think that's an important question. The issue is that America is not Israel.

The church is Israel. If you want to look for a one-for-one equivalency. And so, in that sense, I don't think, I don't, here I'm talking very personally, it seems to me that prohibition was a major disaster for the church.

When we attempted to enforce Christian morality on a nation that was, even in 1920, not really Christian. So, again, I take your question very seriously. The question is, what is the message to us? And I believe the message is, we ought not to depend, we as Christians ought not to depend on the nations of humanity for our security.

I think for a long time, we've had civil religion in the United States where we have been in the pocket of the power brokers. And I think that's going to change radically

in the next 50 years. And in those days, then we're going to have to make some decisions.

Who do we trust? But anyway, personally, I have the feeling that we have got to act as Christian citizens and we've got to vote our consciences as Christians. But if we attempt to enforce Christian morality on an essentially pagan nation, I think we'll be in trouble. It's very interesting and, you know, I'll get myself in trouble here.

Prohibition was the first great success of feminism. It was women who brought Prohibition to pass. Cary Nation, good Christian women, deeply convicted Christian women.

But it's very interesting to me to wonder, what if? How would things have been different if we had not passed that amendment? Because I think it can be pretty well argued that Prohibition created the mob in this country. So that's a long answer to a complex question. But I do believe that if we look for one-for-one comparisons, it's not ancient Israel and the United States, it's ancient Israel and the Church.

And so, what is the message there to us today? Okay, thank you so much. God bless you. See you next week.

This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 8, Isaiah chapters 14 through 16.