

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 15, Isa. 30-31

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 15, Isaiah chapters 30 and 31. Well, it's good to see each of you again this evening.

It's not raining, so it must not be Monday night, but anyway, we're here and you're here and I'm here and so we're ready to begin. I have two announcements to make. One, as you perhaps remember, each month the Francis Asbury Society sponsors a symposium and we have one coming up this Thursday, 10.30 until noon.

Ron Smith is doing the second in a series on freedom in the 19th century in America and how significant that issue is, not only politically, but religiously. So, he'll be finishing that series on Thursday and there's the man right there and you are invited to come. There's a light lunch after that.

Usually, the lecture is about an hour, then a half hour of question and answer, and then a light lunch. So, you're more than welcome to come to that, 10.30 this Thursday. The second announcement, we depend very, very heavily on volunteers.

We had a volunteer here most of today and she shall remain nameless, although she's here. If you would be willing to be called on, stuffing envelopes, that kind of thing, I will name the Barkers who are two of our very, very faithful volunteers. If you'd be willing to be called on from time to time for that kind of thing, would you give your name and email to either Katie Diddle, would you hold up your hand, Katie, or Sarah McQueen, right next there?

So, before you leave this evening, if you'd be willing to be called on from time to time for that sort of thing, please see them and give them your email address. All right, let's pray together.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you volunteered. Thank you that you chose to step into the gap when there was no one else when we were lost in sin and shame and sorrow. Thank you that you came for us. You gave your life that we might live.

Thank you. As we study your word, we ask you to keep fresh in our memories that this is all only possible because of what you've done. Thank you.

Praise you. The living word of God. So, we pray that you will come to us this evening in your spirit and enable us to understand the written word, especially as it points to you, but as it lays the foundation of everything else that's necessary for your coming and for living out the life of the believer.

Help us, Lord Jesus, and we'll be grateful in your name. Amen.

We're looking tonight at chapters 30 and 31. They are part of this sequence, chapters 28 to 33, which I have labeled Woe to Those Who Will Not Wait. If you have been here the last two weeks, you know that we've been looking at this section. Actually, it was last week was the first we did, but we noticed that there is a sequence of woes running through these chapters.

That's one of the elements that ties them together. And in particular, there is woe, there is doom, there is grief, there's regret for those who will not wait. We've talked about waiting before.

We'll talk about it in some detail tonight. The synonym for trust, and we need to keep that in our minds. If I won't wait for God, it may well be said that I have not trusted.

Now, I said that we were going to try to do two and a half chapters tonight, and so we are. We're beginning to look at chapter 29, the third of the woes. It begins at 2915.

The first woe was back there in chapter 28, the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, the rulers of the northern kingdom, who in fact, probably both actually and spiritually are drunk. Then, in chapter 29, verse 1, we see that again, it's the leaders, and this time the leaders of Ariel, which is certainly a reference to the city of Jerusalem. So, woe to the drunken leaders in the north, woe to those leaders in the south, and we saw in 29.9, the same situation.

Astonish yourselves and be astonished. Blind yourselves and be blind. Be drunk, but not with wine.

Stagger, but not with strong drink. So again, these leaders who are insensitive, imperceptive, it's as though they are drunk and they are trying to direct the people. Now then, we come to the third woe in verse 15.

Who is this addressed to? Okay, let's be more literal. What are these people doing? They are hiding, and what is it that they are hiding? They are hiding their counsel. Now, counsel is advice, particularly political advice.

You've got in the regular court, the king and the queen, the prince and the princess, and the counselor. It's typically a five-person deal, and that counselor has terrific power in advising the king and the queen, the prince and the princess, what to do, and how to do it. So, these people are doing what with their counsel? They are hiding it, and hiding it from whom? The Lord.

Whose deeds are in the dark, who say, who sees us, who knows us, you turn things upside down. Now, how are they turning things upside down? Verse 16. They're taking things into their own hands instead of leaving them in God's hands.

Karine, you were going to say the same? Okay, all right, all right. They are acting as though they are the potter and God is the clay. They can use God for their own purposes and principles, and how easy that is to do.

I sometimes look with chagrin at my prayer life, and think in many ways I'm simply trying to use God to further what I want to accomplish, rather than spending enough time to say, God, what do you want to accomplish? And how would you like to use me in accomplishing your purposes? These people are turning it right on their heads, and we're going to see as we go into chapters 30 and 31, particularly what that advice is. What kind of counsel they are giving that they're trying to hide from the Lord? Now, I often like to imagine this, that here are these people down in a basement committee room at the bottom of the chancellery somewhere, and they're saying, now, we sure don't want Isaiah to find out what we're saying here.

Everybody swears now, everybody swears, this is completely secret, nobody's going to talk, right? Okay, fine, a meeting adjourned, they come out the door, and there stands Isaiah and says, hi, guys. Isn't it amazing that we think we can hide from God? And it goes all the way back to Genesis chapter 3. Get out of there, Eve, that's my bush. Like the child with their head under the pillow saying, you can't see me, but there it is.

All right, let's push on. Now, again, we've talked about the shifting proportion of judgment and promise, judgment and hope. So once again, after just two verses of judgment, we have the promise.

And what is the promise? I particularly want you to look at verse 18. What does God promise? The deaf will hear, and the eyes of the blind will see. Now, remember, that goes all the way back to chapter 6. The message that you preach, Isaiah, is initially going to blind their eyes, deafen their ears, and fatten their hearts.

But God says that's not the end of the story. There will come a day when in place of these drunken, blind, deaf leaders, there will be people who can see, who can hear. And I think again and again of that in regard to our own Christian life.

The Holy Spirit promises us that we will have insight, and that we will be able to see things. Sometimes that's not necessarily a blessing. Sometimes we can see where people are headed, and they can't seem to see that at all.

Sometimes we hear things that we perhaps would rather not hear. But that's the gift of the Holy Spirit to us, that we will be sensitive. And so verse 19, who will then

rejoice? And what will they rejoice in? The humble and the meek, the poor, and they will exalt in what? The Lord, the Holy One of Israel.

Here again, I think this ties back to chapter 6. Isaiah saw the Holy One, and it was kind of terrifying what he saw, particularly when he saw himself in that light. But nevertheless, that's the cause ultimately for joy. The Holy One, the One who is absolutely transcendent, who has given Himself to us of Israel, that One will be the cause of joy.

Again, I feel like I'm speaking platitudes here tonight, but they're platitudes because they're true. If we depend on the circumstances for our joy, it is going to fly away. Real joy is in the fact that you know the Lord, and knowing the Lord, you have life eternal.

In the middle then of difficult circumstances, in the middle of trouble, there can nevertheless be that underlying current, however troubled the water is on the surface, that underlying current of joy. I know who I am, I know who He is, and I know what my destiny is. That's the cause for joy.

Okay, let's push on. Verse 22 begins with what word? Therefore. Now that signals cause and effect.

The cause has come first here, and the effect. So what's going to be the effect of God's promise of sensitivity, God's promise of joy, God's promise that the ruthless are going to be destroyed? What's the effect of that? Verse 21. The good people will not see that they're basically cast off.

That's right. Jacob will no longer be ashamed. Remember what I've said to you several times.

Shame is the result of a failed trust. If you trust something and it fails you, you are shamed, you are disgraced. And so when the Old Testament in particular talks about you will not be ashamed anymore, it doesn't mean you won't be ashamed of God or you won't be ashamed of this.

It means you won't be disgraced. You will trust the Lord, not the idols. You'll trust the Lord, not the false enemy nations.

You'll trust the Lord and your trust will not fail you. And what will be the evidence of that genuine trust? What will you see? Verse 23. The work of His hands, and what will that be? The very first line.

Their children. That's the horror of warfare even still today. But it was especially true then.

It was the children who were destroyed. It was the children who suffered and disappeared. And one of the themes that runs through the book is Israel will be a widowed woman all of whose children have been killed.

That's on that side. But on this side, ah, but the day will be coming when you won't even be able to count your children. And again, historically there is no reason why the Jewish people should exist today.

If you'd simply look at history, the Jews should have been exterminated about 1500 years ago. People have been trying to exterminate them forever. God has kept His promise.

Yes. Could be. I'd not heard that story.

But it certainly is true that the state of Israel almost certainly would not exist if the Holocaust had not been perpetrated upon the Jewish people. The European nations were so shamed, they were so shocked by what had been done that they permitted the formation of the state of Israel which they had been absolutely refusing to do for 50 years. So, it's fascinating that in fact Hitler's attempt to exterminate them ended up giving them a national state.

So, I simply say these promises have been and are being and I believe will continue to be fulfilled. And again, what will they do then in verse 23 in the light of these promises being fulfilled? What will they do? They will hallow God's name. This version says they will sanctify God's name.

Now how in the world do you sanctify God's name? It's already holy, isn't it? How do you sanctify it? What do you do when you sanctify something? You honor it in your actions. You set it apart. You really say the reputation and the character, that is the name, are the holiest of all.

There is nothing more holy than God's reputation and character. The gods of this world, the natural forces of this world, they're not even in the game. He is the only one who has the right to be called holy and he wants to share that with us.

Okay, once again look at verse 24. Here's, here's this, this theme. The, leadership is drunk, blind, and deaf, but God promises that even though the leadership has led the people into that same drunkenness and blindness and deafness, he's not going to leave his people there.

Those who go astray in spirit will come to understand it. Those who murmur will accept instruction. Good news.

Okay, so first woe, drunken leaders of Ephraim, the northern kingdom. Second woe, drunken leaders of Jerusalem. Third woe, those who try to hide their advice, their political advice from the Lord.

Now here we come to the fourth woe in chapter 30. What are these people doing? Going their own way and what way is that? It's the way of destruction, it's the way of rebellion and let's get more definite than that. What are they advising to do? Their advice, here we come now, what is this advice they're trying to hide from the Lord? It is we ought to make an alliance with Egypt.

Remember what I've said, this is somewhere between 710 and 700 BC. Assyria has defeated everybody else. They are campaigning down the coast.

They're attacking the Philistine cities and the next stop is Egypt. But the problem is Judah is up here in the hills behind them. They can't very well attack Egypt knowing that Judah is up there and able to cut off their supply lines.

So they're going to have to deal with Judah somehow or other before they can make the final push to their final goal of Egypt. And the Judeans are saying, we know, we're in their sights, we're next. What are we going to do? And the advisors are saying, well it's obvious, we make a deal with the Egyptians.

And obviously, the Egyptians were happy to make such a deal. They're glad to have the thought that Judah is there in Assyria's rear. And if the Egyptians can help them and sort of keep them propped up, that means Egypt has a few more years of respite.

So here we are. What's the problem with their plan according to 30 verse 1? It's not the Lord's plan. And look again at verse 2. What didn't they ask for? They didn't ask for the Lord's direction.

Exactly. So then, what have they done wrong? Now I said here don't get trapped by the obvious. What have they done wrong? Okay, they trusted in the strength of Egypt, but what was wrong with that according to these verses? They did not ask God about this action.

That's what was wrong with it. Potentially, God could have used Egypt to defend them. But what did he use? Later on, he used Cyrus.

Cyrus was not a believer. So potentially, God could have said, alright my children, I want you to make an alliance with Egypt. Now that seems very unlikely since they were unbelievers.

But the issue is they made up their minds what to do without asking God. I don't know about you, but I've been there. And it's not a good place to be.

But again, it's awfully easy to waggle our noses at the Israelites. My, my, how could they have done such a dumb thing? And God says, why don't you try looking in a mirror? I mean when danger is about us, when threats are on every side, it's pretty easy to say, well boy, I can do this or I can do that or I can do that. I guess maybe that's the thing to do.

Yeah, we'll do that. Rather than saying, God, what do you want to do? What's your advice here? Because one of the problems is God is typically really slow in answering. God, you know, I can't wait any longer, help me here.

Why do you think that's true? You're ahead of me. Because that's where we're going. That's where we're going.

But I'll say something to it and I'll say it again later. Because repetition is the soul of education? Yes, anyway, because we've got to come to the end of our resources. We've got to come to the end of our ability to solve the problem for ourselves.

And some of us who are so good at it have to wait longer because it takes longer to run out of resources. But that's exactly. God says we're going to have to wait until you can't do it.

And then when it happens, you know it was the Lord. Otherwise, it's really, really easy for us to say when the problem is solved, oh, well, yeah, yeah, you just sort of have to know what you're doing. And that's what happened to Moses, Numbers 20.

He took credit for what the Lord did. Remember, the people, I mean, this is the second generation now. And they learned well from their parents.

They're murmuring. We've got no water here. They're on their way.

They're on their way to Jericho. We've got no water here. Moses, you brought us out here to kill us.

That's just what their parents had said. And Moses and Aaron start out so very well. They go into the tabernacle.

They fall on their faces before God, and they say, God, what shall we do about this? And God says it's not a problem. There's a big rock out there. Just go out and speak to it, and water will come out.

And Moses comes out the door of the Tabernacle, and he says, here now, you rebels, must we produce water for you? And you say, oh, no, Moses. No, no, no. Watch this.

And Moses takes the staff. I'm sure he was left-handed like some others of us. And that staff, the staff that turned the Nile into blood, the staff that filled the skies of Egypt with locusts, the staff that divided the sea, that staff, watch this, bang, bang, splash.

And a little voice way out at the edge of the universe says, Moses, you didn't sanctify my name. You had a glorious chance, Moses, to make God look good, to show that he is the Holy One, and you used that opportunity to make yourself look good. That's a long answer to the question, but that's what it's about.

God's got to bring us to the place where when the problem is solved, there's no way we can take credit for it. Okay. Pushing on.

Now, verses 6 and 7 of chapter 30. We've encountered this kind of thing in Isaiah before. Do anybody remember what I've called it? It's a transition.

Mm-hmm. It's a transition. Mm-hmm.

It's a transition. Transition by contrast, yes. A graphic illustration.

Use a picture to support what you have been saying. And the picture here is an interesting one. The Negev is, that really is a Hebrew word meaning Southland.

The Negev is the land south of the Negev. South of Judah in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula. The Negev is here.

Now, what's the picture? What's going on here anyway? They are taking tribute to Egypt. And how are they taking it to them? What kind of a trip is it? They're carrying it on the backs of donkeys. And what kind of territory are they going through? Verse 6. Dangerous, treacherous, lioness and lion, adder and flying serpent.

Yes, I suspect that what's going on, the normal pathway from Jerusalem, well no, from Jerusalem is down here to Lachish and then out onto the coast road and down. A pretty easy 10 or 11-day journey. But, who's down here on the coast? The Assyrian army.

So, in order to get to Egypt, they have to go through the wilderness with all of its danger in order to get it there. A graphic illustration of how foolish it is to trust in the world. How costly, how dangerous, and how ultimately futile it is.

What kinds of futile things are we tempted to spend our precious treasure on? Intelligence, yes. All kinds of things we can't take with us. Banks are too big to fail.

Yes. Favor, yes, yes. Now, I own insurance, so.

But insurance? Retirement? Doesn't stop preaching and going to meddling. Position? Now again, these things are not in and of themselves bad, but the issue is when they come to replace genuine trust in God. Awfully easy to spend our money, and our lives on things that in the end cannot produce what they claim to produce.

Okay, push on. Back in verse 1, they were called stubborn children. Now in verse 2, verse 9, they are rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the Torah, the instruction of the Lord.

Why do you think God is particularly calling them rebellious children here? Why use the children metaphor and rebellious children in this context? Children have a tendency not to listen. Immature, don't want to be held accountable. They were in a covenant with Him, they were deceitful.

They never seemed to learn. Yes, yes. They were always not listening.

Again, you see, we're talking about these advisors who are so subtle and so smart, who know all the ins and outs. God says you're a bunch of children. You think you're so wise.

You think you've got it all figured out, and you're just children. And children who won't do what, according to verse 9? They will not hear what? The Torah, the instruction of God. Remember, I think it's awfully important because of our unfortunate connotations with law.

Law is something that constricts you, that confines you, that shuts you in. But the word Torah, the Hebrew word Torah, actually means instruction. And instruction has very different connotations, doesn't it? God isn't trying to shut me in.

God isn't trying to limit my options. God's trying to say, this is the way you were made. Walk in this way and life will work.

Walk in that way and life won't work. And we just can't seem to get that through our heads. We can learn algebra, but we still think adultery will make us happy.

So they are children who won't learn. Remember, back in chapter 28? Well, I guess I'm just going to have to instruct you with people who speak a strange tongue. Cov, v'cov, lav, v'lav, line upon line, precept upon precept, because you seem to be so dull.

And here it is again. Rebellion, in the end, is childish. We feel so big and powerful, and I can make it myself.

I don't have to do what you say. And God says, no, there you go again, acting like a baby. So then, verses 10, 11, and 12 are some of my favorites.

What do they say to their preachers? Don't talk to us about sin. Prophesy smooth things. Speak illusions.

Leave the way. Turn aside from the path. And then this last line.

Let us hear no more of the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah, would you shut up? All the time you're blathering on about this Holy One of Israel. We're sick to death of that.

He never says anything nice about us. So, what's Isaiah's response? Verse 12. He says, don't talk to us about sin.

Prophesy no more of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore, thus says the Holy One of Israel. You didn't want to hear any more about him? Let's tell you what he's got to say about it.

Because you despise, you think it's worthless, this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness. I think he's talking about Egypt. I think that oppression and perverseness, I think, is a synonym for Egypt.

I'm not sure of that. It may be that they really are trusting in their own oppression and perverseness. But in either case, they're trusting in the wrong thing.

Now here's a good, good example. What is the relationship between verse 12 and verse 13? The literary relationship. Woo! Give that woman a gold star.

Yes. Because you despise this word, therefore, in fact, this iniquity will be to you like a breach in a high wall, bulging outward. Wow.

Here's the wall. One of these days, this baby's coming down. You just don't know when.

Did you trust in perverseness and oppression? Okay. Okay. You're going to get it then.

You put your trust in that. That's coming down. Verse 14.

What's the, what's the, what point is he trying to make by using, breaking a potter's vessel? What connotations does that image bring to your mind? You can't put it back together. It's useless. Does a potter's vessel break gradually? Uh-uh.

Bang! And it's gone. And a thin pottery vessel, how many pieces did it break into? At least two. Yeah.

It shatters. And again, that's the imagery that Isaiah is trying to bring to bear here. You know, he could simply say, because of this, you are going to reap the results of your sin.

End of discussion. But no, he uses this kind of imagery. It's going to be like a bulging wall that one day comes down.

It's going to be like a potter's vessel that is smashed in a moment and breaks in a thousand pieces. No piece big enough to be used for anything. Not even big enough to use as a little scoop to pick up ashes or to get a drop of water in.

Okay. Push on. So, what's the point of this? What is the Lord's counsel? Verse 15.

That's right. Trust me in returning. Turn back from the way you're walking on.

Turn around and rest in me. In quietness and in trust will be your strength. But what's their response? No, we can't do that.

I mean, Yahweh this is a crisis here. You don't seem to understand. We only have a few days or months.

We've got to act now. Now, remember that at this point, the horse and the horse and chariot are the ultimate weapon. The horse and chariot had been, and just at this point, cavalry was coming in.

People were learning how to ride horses in war and a cavalry troop was almost, almost, you could not defend against it. So, we will get horses so that we can ride fast. And what does God say? Yeah, you're going to need fast horses to get away from those enemies that are faster than you.

John, it is sort of shocking, I haven't seen many places where you have the response, no. That's very seldom do you see that kind of response. Yep.

That's it. And it's like no in English. The Hebrew word is lo.

Lo. Not. Not even good at it.

No. Okay. Now, here's verse 18.

What's the first word in verse 18? So, therefore, is giving us what? The effect of a previous cause. So, these people, God has said, now here's what you need to do. You need to just back off, just rest, and trust me to solve this problem.

They say, no. We're going to solve it our way. We're going to buy military hardware and we're going to solve this thing our way.

So, what is the effect of their rejection of God's advice? This is stunning. What is the effect? Show mercy. Show mercy.

Show mercy. The Lord will wait. You won't wait for the Lord, so the Lord will wait for you.

And He'll wait to show mercy. I'd love to show you mercy now, God says, but you can't receive it. You're going to have to go to the wall before you're ready to say, Lord, I can't do this.

I need your mercy. I don't want to send you to the wall, God says. I don't want to see these horrible things happen to you.

But if you won't turn back to me, there's nothing else for you to do but to reap the results of your choices. Those of you who are or have been parents know that this is one of the hardest things in the world to do, to let your kid reap the results of his or her choices. They're crying, they're hurting, and everything in you as a loving parent says, no, no, I'll deliver you from those results.

Many times that's the worst thing we can do. We need to let them experience the results of their choices. And that's what God is doing here.

Blessed are all those who wait for Him. Verse 18. Great word, great word.

Wait on the Lord. And as we've said several times before, we have occasion to say it again. We need to get it clear in our heads that waiting is the sort of putting feet to trust.

Trust is an easy word to say. Oh yeah, I trust you. And God says, well, if you do then, stop running around and solving your problems for yourself.

Now I just, I want to say clearly, we're not talking about sitting on your hands and just waiting for God to do something. But to wait is to actively be in a relationship to Him saying, God, what do you want to do here? How do you want to use my ability? How do you want to use my resources? But boy, oh boy, it's fascinating to me in my

limited experience pastoring churches if you say to a church administrative board, I think we just need to wait on the Lord to solve this problem. You're going to have a bunch of hardheaded businessmen and women standing up and say, preacher, sit down.

You do the preacher business, we'll do life. But to really, as a group, spend enough time to come to the place where as a group we have a wholehearted consensus, this is what the Lord wants to do in this situation. Oh my, when that happens, you can go forward like gangbusters and nothing can stop you.

But most of the time we go by parliamentary procedure and you got a 51-49 vote and bye-jingles, that's what we're going to do. Well, how did I get off on that? Anyway, here comes promise again. Look at verse 20.

I think it's very important. Okay, if you trust the Lord, you're not going to have any trouble or any problems. Is that what verse 20 says? No.

Though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, good news, yet your teacher will not hide himself anymore. Your eyes will see your teacher. Your ears will hear a word behind you saying, this is the way, walk in it when you turn to the right or turn to the left.

Yes, yes. Oh, you can face almost anything if you've got your eyes open on the Lord and you've got a clean, clear relationship with the Holy Spirit and you can hear that gentle whisper. The Holy Spirit is not in the yelling business.

He's not in the yelling business. And again, most of our lives are full of so much noise. I don't mean necessarily the radio or the TV.

I mean noise. But we can't hear what he's trying to say. There's not enough quietness.

There's not enough rest. And so, the quiet voice is unheard. That's what he wants to do.

I often think of the horseman or horsewoman doesn't want a horse where you have to saw on the bit to get the horse to do what it's supposed to do. What you really want is the horse where all you have to do is lay the rein on the side of its neck. That's what the Holy Spirit wants to do with you and me.

John, that way. Yes. I wish I could say to you that that's 100% characteristic of my walk and it isn't.

But that's my aim. That's my goal. I think we're talking about some of the particular things like bipolar and all of those things.

But you're talking about how some of them we can't prevent. When you put it in life and depression and whatever. He was saying, we need quiet.

And we need sleep. And one of the questions was, what about playing the radio when we sleep? And he said, absolutely because your brain is trained to listen to a voice.

You said now, soft music is not as disruptive, but if you have music, I mean, a voice play, with singing or whatever, your brain is genetically tuned to that. So it's not kind of what you're saying. Even if we think we're listening, our brain is sometimes not, I mean, I can even think I'm praying and I'm thinking about something.

Yeah, there are 40 or 50 different voices talking, and we're trying to plug in on any of those and the voice of the spirit. He said even though we're asleep, Yeah, that's fascinating. Okay, so the promise.

Again, a graphic illustration, verses 23 through 26. Rain for the seed, the livestock will graze in large pastures. There'll even be springs breaking out on the mountaintops.

And this language is similar to that that we find in the book of Revelation. The light of the sun and of the moon. So then in the end chapter 30, verses 27 through 33, the end of the chapter, there is a picture of the destruction of the Assyrian army.

And in that, notice that the people, it's as though they're having a holy festival. Verse 29, you'll have a song in the night as when a holy festival is kept and gladness of heart. Verse 30, the Lord will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen.

The Assyrians will be terror-stricken. Verse 31, on down in verse 32, every stroke of the appointed staff that the Lord lays on them will be to the sound of tambourines and lyres. Now, what's this holy festival stuff connected to the destruction of the Assyrians? Is that referring to the 185,000? Oh, I think it is, I think it is.

The point that God is increasingly making through here is I'm going to take care of them. You don't have to take care of them, I'm going to. Now, he didn't do that every place, he doesn't do it every time.

He has a very low boredom threshold. He doesn't like to do the same thing twice. But this time, that's what he was going to do.

So yes. Why is this religious festival language associated with that, though? Okay. Worship.

The recognition that God has done this. Is then the cause for worship. It was a result of prayer, right? Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, it was a result of prayer.

Hezekiah, right? Yes, and Hezekiah, both. Many, many times, our worship of the Lord is hindered because we've done it ourselves and haven't given him a chance to demonstrate his power. We're so good at solving our problems, that there's no place for God to act, and thus, no opportunity to worship him for what he's done.

And that first struck me. That was a very interesting thought. How many opportunities for worship have I missed because I have not allowed the Lord to do it his way and get the glory? I had to do it my way, so there was no place for glory for God.

I'm pretty good at problem-solving, aren't I? I also see here that there's a little, he's saying, I will visit you. You and I, we'll become involved together in this worship. You will have my presence with you.

Yes, yes. I think you, with your military background, will have a special appreciation for that word. It's a Hebrew word that is translated with some meanings that on the surface don't seem related to each other.

We've got a few seminary students here. It's the Hebrew word pakad, and it will be translated to visit. It'll also be translated to judge.

It'll be translated to bless. It'll be translated to enumerate. It'll be translated to appoint.

This is an inspection by the commanding general. Commanding general's going to visit us, and that could be good news or it could be bad news. He's going to come.

He's going to enumerate the troops. He's going to appoint some to a task, and that's exactly what he's saying here. You guys are running around going to Egypt.

Hey, the general would like to visit you, and if you'll let him, he'll straighten the situation out. So yes, it is. It is that personal presence of God coming into contact with you.

It is that personal presence of God coming into contact with them in their situation and dealing with it. Okay, so when you're in your Bible translations, when you come in the Old Testament, that word visit, nine times out of 10, it'll be this one, and it'll be all these ideas are in there. Yes? I'm trying to think like these people.

Yeah. I don't have any trouble doing that, unfortunately. Well, maybe a little different, but Euripides said there's no greater grief on earth than the loss of one's native land, and that's what these people are looking at, and they're trying, I think they're trying, to see God over the spears of 185,000 Assyrians.

Yes, sir. They know what the Assyrians have done everywhere else. Yes, sir.

Yes, sir. It's going to be very difficult for them to say, Isaiah will do what God says. You're absolutely right.

Thank you, thank you. Yeah, it's easy for us, sitting here in a quiet room, in peace, to say, well, those stupid people, they should have done differently. No, they are in a desperate situation, and humanly speaking, the only possible out is an alliance with Egypt.

They're the only people humanly able to help them. So yeah, yeah, this is scary, scary business. The Assyrians were not nice people.

One of my professors in graduate school was a Hungarian, and we were reading a history of Mesopotamia, Babylon, and Assyria, and the author was saying, you know, these folks, they've gotten kind of bad press. They're really, they're okay. This was, a Hungarian professor said, yes, nice people, like us Germans.

Okay. But yes, yes, thank you, thank you. That's very, very important, that this was not simply a little, well, we could do this, or we could do that.

It's crisis time. Okay, hang on with me for five minutes. I want to look at chapter 31, just nine verses there.

So that'll get us back on track here. Here comes the fifth woe. Now it's more explicit.

I would, if I were given a title, I would say verse 30 is those who trust Egypt and not the Lord, chapter 30, verse one. Chapter 31, one, I would say those who will not trust the Lord but will trust Egypt. So, I would just try to reverse the order there.

They trust in chariots because there are many, in horsemen because they're very strong, but do not do what? Look to the Holy One of Israel. Here again, this almighty transcendent God like whom there is no other who has given himself to you, the Holy One of Israel, and you don't pay any attention to it. Verse three, the Egyptians are man and not God.

Their horses are flesh, not spirit. When the Lord stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble and he who is helped will fall and they will all perish together. The Egyptians are not going to be able to help you.

But then here we go back to promise again. Verses four through nine are promise. The Lord says, as a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, when a band of shepherds is called out against him, is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the Lord of heaven's armies.

We're going to have the Lord of heaven's armies versus Assyria's armies. The Lord of heaven's armies will come down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill like birds hovering. So the Lord of heaven's armies will protect Jerusalem.

He'll protect it and deliver it. He'll spare and rescue it. Turn to him from whom people have deeply revolted, oh, children of Israel, for in that day, everyone will cast away his idols of silver and idols of gold, which your hands have simply made for you.

That thought, this is about the fourth time in the book. When God acts, you're going to see how foolish your idolatry was and you're going to throw those things out. Again, what are the things upon which I'm depending to run my life, to make my life work instead of God? Now, here it comes.

Here's the prediction. The Assyrian will fall by a sword not of man and a sword not of man will devour him. He will flee from the sword.

His young men will be put to forced labor. His rock will pass away in terror. His officers desert the standard in panic, declares the Lord whose fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

The Assyrian emperor doesn't know what he's up against. He's up against a raging fire that's burning in Jerusalem. And the day will come when he'll know it.

Yes? I want to ask you this. It's about Hezekiah's prayer. Yeah.

Could that be viewed as him doing that on his own when he prayed for 15 years? No, no, I don't think so. I don't think so. I think this is at that crucial moment when he prayed.

And we'll get there and we'll talk about it. But no, I don't think it's the 15 years of prayer. Okay, let me pray.

Father, thank you. Thank you that you have proven yourself trustworthy to a thousand generations. Thank you for all those who have gone before us, part of that great heavenly throng tonight who can say we trusted him and he delivered us.

Oh God, help us. Help me as we're faced with decisions, not to rush into the situation and solve it in our own ingenuity, our own intelligence, our own strength, but to allow you to say, this is the way, walk in it and gladly respond. In your name, amen.

Okay, we're back on schedule and we'll go ahead with chapters 32 and 33 next time. This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 15, Isaiah chapters 30 and 31.

God bless you.