

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 14

Isaiah 28-29

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 14, Isaiah 28-29, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This is a transcript of a lecture by Dr. John Oswalt on Isaiah chapters 28 and 29. **The lecture focuses on the themes of judgment and hope**, exploring the consequences of the Israelites' lack of trust in God and their reliance on worldly power. **Oswalt highlights the repeated use of "woe" pronouncements**, interpreting them as expressions of grief over impending doom rather than simple condemnation. **He draws parallels between the spiritual and literal drunkenness of the leaders**, illustrating how their pride and self-indulgence lead to the people's suffering. Finally, **he emphasizes the contrast between the false security of earthly comforts and the enduring hope found in trusting God.**

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Isaiah).



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3. Briefing Document

Briefing Document: Isaiah 28-29, Dr. John Oswalt

Source: Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 14, Isa. 28-29 © John Oswalt and Ted Hildebrandt

Main Themes:

- **Lessons in Trust:** This section of Isaiah (28-33) follows previous sections on trusting God over the nations (13-23) and recognizing God's sovereignty in history (24-27). Chapters 28-33 specifically address Judah's situation and the mounting fear of Assyrian invasion.
- **Woe to Those Who Will Not Wait:** The recurring theme of "woe" signifies the impending doom faced by those who refuse to trust and wait for God's guidance and deliverance. This lack of trust manifests in various forms of spiritual and literal "drunkenness."
- **Judgment and Hope:** The chapters progressively shift from an emphasis on judgment to a focus on hope, illustrating that judgment is meant to lead to repentance, cleansing, and ultimately, renewal.

Important Ideas/Facts:

- **The Problem of Drunken Leadership:** Both Ephraim (represented by the tribe of Ephraim) and Judah are characterized by leadership consumed by pride and drunkenness (literal or metaphorical). This "drunkenness" blinds them to their responsibilities, leaving the people in a state of spiritual infancy.
- **Quote:** "These also reel with wine and stagger with strong drink. The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink. They're swallowed by wine. They stagger with strong drink. They reel in vision. They stumble in giving judgment." (28:7-8)
- **God Speaking Through "Strange Lips":** Since the leaders have failed to teach truth, God will use foreign powers (Assyrians) to force them to confront reality. This principle extends to modern times, urging listeners to discern God's message even through seemingly hostile forces.
- **False Refuges and the True Cornerstone:** The people of Judah, like modern societies, seek refuge in false promises: military strength, wealth, political alliances. Isaiah contrasts these with the "tested stone, a precious cornerstone of

a sure foundation" (28:16), representing Jesus as the true source of security and hope.

- **The Farmer's Wisdom:** Through the analogy of a farmer, Isaiah highlights the inherent order in God's creation. Ignoring this order, like Judah's leadership, leads to chaos and destruction. Living in accordance with God's principles, however, brings security and stability.
- **The Danger of External Religion:** Isaiah warns against religious practices devoid of genuine heart transformation. True fear of God manifests in transformed behavior motivated by love, not merely societal expectations or habit.
- **Quote:** "This people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me and their fear of me, that is, their behavior, is a commandment taught by men." (29:13)

Key Takeaways:

- Trusting in God requires patiently waiting for His timing and guidance.
- True leadership prioritizes the well-being of the people over self-gratification.
- Recognizing God's voice even in challenging circumstances is crucial.
- Genuine faith rests on a foundation of love for God, leading to transformed lives.
- Judgment, though a consequence of sin, ultimately aims at repentance and renewal.

Note: Dr. Oswalt stresses the importance of remembering that "judgment is never God's intended last word." While he acknowledges the severity of judgment, he emphasizes that it is always intended to lead individuals and nations towards repentance and a restored relationship with God.

4. Isaiah Study Guide: Session 14, Isaiah 28-29

Isaiah 28-29: A Study Guide

Key Themes

- **Lessons in Trust:** This section of Isaiah continues the theme of trusting God amidst challenging circumstances. It highlights the consequences of misplacing trust in worldly powers and the blessings that come from relying on God.
- **Judgment and Hope:** These chapters contain a balance of judgment pronouncements against those who have strayed from God and hopeful promises for those who remain faithful.
- **The Danger of Pride and Spiritual Drunkenness:** Isaiah condemns the leaders of Ephraim and Jerusalem for their pride, arrogance, and spiritual blindness, likening their state to drunkenness.
- **The Call to Repentance:** Isaiah urges the people to turn away from their wicked ways and embrace God's way of righteousness and justice.
- **God as the True Cornerstone:** Isaiah points to God as the firm foundation and source of security, contrasting this with the false sense of security offered by worldly alliances and power.

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Oswalt, why is the word "woe" difficult to translate into contemporary English?
2. What does Oswalt identify as the main problem with the leadership in both Ephraim and Jerusalem?
3. How does Oswalt connect the concepts of "wait" and "trust" in the context of these chapters?
4. What specific group of people does Isaiah condemn as "scoffers" in Isaiah 28:14?
5. According to Oswalt, what is the significance of God being described as laying "a cornerstone in Zion" (Isaiah 28:16)?
6. What does Oswalt suggest as the possible meaning of "Ariel" in Isaiah 29:1?
7. In Isaiah 29:5-8, what is the contrast that Oswalt highlights?

8. What is the spiritual state of the people described in Isaiah 29:9-10?
9. How does Oswalt interpret the imagery of the sealed book in Isaiah 29:11-12?
10. What is the problem that Isaiah identifies with the people's worship in Isaiah 29:13?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Oswalt explains that "woe" carries a sense of grief and lament alongside condemnation. Modern English lacks a direct equivalent, with words like "alas" feeling archaic.
2. Oswalt identifies pride and spiritual drunkenness as the core issue with the leaders. They are consumed by self-gratification, neglecting their responsibility to guide and protect the people.
3. Oswalt highlights that "wait" and "trust" are closely related in Hebrew. He suggests the section could be titled "Woe to Those Who Will Not Wait" meaning those who fail to trust in God and seek His guidance.
4. The "scoffers" in Isaiah 28:14 are the rulers in Jerusalem. They are condemned for their arrogance and reliance on false security.
5. Oswalt connects the cornerstone imagery to Jesus. He suggests this cornerstone represents a lasting foundation and source of security for believers who trust in God.
6. Oswalt suggests two possible meanings for "Ariel": "city of God" (with "Ari" meaning city and "El" meaning God) or "hearth," based on a separate Hebrew word. He notes that Jerusalem is clearly the city in question.
7. The contrast is between the imminent destruction of Jerusalem's enemies and the sudden, powerful intervention of the Lord of Hosts to save the city.
8. The people are described as being in a state of spiritual blindness and deafness. God has poured out a spirit of deep sleep upon them because they have refused to listen to his warnings.
9. Oswalt interprets the sealed book as representing the truth of God's word, which is inaccessible to those who are spiritually blind and deaf.

10. Isaiah criticizes the people for honoring God with their words but not with their hearts. Their fear of God is based on human rules and traditions rather than a genuine relationship with Him.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the use of imagery and symbolism in Isaiah 28-29, focusing on the metaphors of drunkenness, the cornerstone, and the sealed book. How do these images contribute to the overall message of the chapters?
2. Explore the relationship between judgment and hope in Isaiah 28-29. How does Isaiah balance pronouncements of doom with promises of restoration? What conditions does he suggest are necessary for the people to experience God's salvation?
3. Compare and contrast the leadership of Ephraim and Jerusalem as depicted in Isaiah 28-29. What are the specific failures of each group, and how do their actions contribute to the crisis facing the nation?
4. Discuss the concept of spiritual drunkenness as presented in Isaiah 28-29. What are the signs and consequences of this spiritual state? How does Isaiah's message challenge contemporary readers to examine their own hearts and motivations?
5. Examine the significance of Isaiah's use of the agricultural illustration in Isaiah 28:23-29. What lessons about God's wisdom and the natural order of things does he draw from this analogy? How does it connect to the broader themes of trust and obedience?

Glossary

- **Ariel:** A name for Jerusalem, possibly meaning "city of God" or "hearth."
- **Cornerstone:** A foundational stone that provides stability and support. In Isaiah 28:16, it symbolizes God as the secure foundation for faith.
- **Ephraim:** The leading tribe of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Often used as a synonym for the Northern Kingdom itself.
- **Mishpat:** A Hebrew word that encompasses the concepts of justice, righteousness, and right order.
- **Scoffer:** A term of strong condemnation in the Old Testament, referring to someone who mocks and rejects the truth of God.
- **Spiritual Drunkenness:** A metaphor used to describe a state of spiritual blindness, insensitivity, and self-deception.
- **Woe:** An exclamation expressing grief, lament, and condemnation.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 14, Isaiah 28-29, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

Isaiah Chapters 28-29: FAQ

1. What is the main theme of Isaiah chapters 28-33?

These chapters focus on "**Woe to Those Who Will Not Wait**", meaning those who will not trust God. As Assyria encroaches on Judah, the people face a choice: will they trust in God or rely on worldly solutions like alliances with other nations? Isaiah warns of judgment for those who choose the latter, emphasizing that true security comes only from trusting in God.

2. In Isaiah 28, what two sins are particularly condemned?

Isaiah condemns the sins of **pride and drunkenness** in the leaders of Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom). These sins represent their self-indulgence and neglect of their responsibilities towards the people. This drunkenness can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically, referring to a state of spiritual intoxication where leaders prioritize their own gratification over God's will.

3. How does Isaiah use the image of a crown in chapter 28?

Isaiah contrasts two types of crowns: the "**proud crown**" of Ephraim, representing their fleeting glory based on arrogance and indulgence, and the "**crown of glory**" that the Lord bestows on the remnant who trust in him. The former will be trampled underfoot, while the latter offers true security and blessings of justice and strength.

4. Who are the "scoffers" mentioned in Isaiah 28:14?

The scoffers are the **leaders in Jerusalem** who have placed their trust in false security, likely through an alliance with Egypt. Isaiah condemns them for relying on worldly solutions instead of trusting in God, likening their reliance on Egypt to a "covenant with death."

5. What is the "cornerstone" mentioned in Isaiah 28:16?

The cornerstone represents **Jesus Christ**, the solid foundation upon which true faith is built. Trusting in him brings lasting security and eliminates the need to frantically search for solutions in worldly alliances or strategies. Those who believe in this cornerstone "will not be in haste."

6. What does the graphic illustration of the farmer in Isaiah 28:23-29 teach?

The illustration highlights the **wisdom of following God's ordained ways**. The simple farmer understands the natural order of planting and harvesting, knowing that deviating from it leads to failure. Similarly, those who disregard God's ways and pursue their own will ultimately face destruction.

7. What does the phrase "be drunk, but not with wine" mean in Isaiah 29:9?

Isaiah uses this paradoxical phrase to describe the **spiritual blindness** of the people. They are intoxicated with their own self-reliance and refuse to see God's truth. Their outward religious practices are meaningless because their hearts are far from God.

8. What is the significance of Isaiah's repeated emphasis on hope amidst judgment?

Isaiah reminds us that **judgment is never God's final word**. He desires repentance, cleansing, and renewal for his people. While judgment serves as a consequence for disobedience, it also aims to lead people back to a place of trust and dependence on God. This cycle highlights God's unwavering love and desire for restoration.

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