

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 15

Isaiah 30-31

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 15, Isaiah 30-31, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Isaiah 30-31 focuses on the theme of **waiting on God**. He discusses the consequences of the Israelites' **reliance on alliances with Egypt** instead of trusting God's plan, highlighting their **rebellion and lack of faith**. Oswalt uses **vivid imagery** and **metaphors** to illustrate their flawed approach, contrasting their actions with God's promised **mercy and deliverance**. The lecture also emphasizes the **importance of seeking God's guidance** in decision-making and the ultimate **reward of trust and obedience**. Finally, he connects the Israelites' experiences to the contemporary Christian life, encouraging listeners to prioritize **trust in God over self-reliance**.

2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 15 – 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).



**Oswalt_Isaiah_Sessi
on15.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from Dr. Oswalt's Session 15 on Isaiah chapters 30-31:

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah Session 15 (Isaiah 30-31)

Date: October 31, 2024 (Based on Context of the lecture)

Subject: Analysis of Isaiah 30-31 within the larger context of "Woe to Those Who Will Not Wait" (Isaiah 28-33).

Main Themes:

1. **The Danger of Not Waiting on God (Lack of Trust):** The core message revolves around the consequences of acting independently of God's will and timing. Dr. Oswalt emphasizes that waiting on God is synonymous with trusting Him. "If I won't wait for God, it may well be said that I have not trusted." This is presented as the central issue throughout chapters 28-33.
2. **Rebellious Counsel and Hidden Agendas:** The leaders of Judah are criticized for seeking political alliances (specifically with Egypt) without consulting God. This secret counsel, hidden "down in a basement committee room," highlights a lack of faith and a desire to control their own destiny. They are acting as if "they are the potter and God is the clay," seeking to use God for their own purposes.
3. **The Futility of Worldly Solutions:** The Israelites are portrayed as placing their trust in worldly powers (Egypt's military) and resources (tribute). Oswalt uses the image of the dangerous journey through the Negev to illustrate the cost and ultimate uselessness of relying on earthly solutions for spiritual problems and the image of a shattered potter's vessel to represent the sudden and complete destruction that awaits them. These are "things that in the end cannot produce what they claim to produce."
4. **God's Invitation to Return and Rest:** Despite the judgment, God offers a path to redemption through repentance and trust in Him alone. Oswalt emphasizes the need for quietness and a clean relationship with the Holy Spirit to hear God's direction: "In quietness and in trust will be your strength."
5. **God's Mercy and Sovereignty:** Oswalt underscores that even when people reject God, His mercy remains available, though it may be postponed. The Lord waits to be gracious (Isaiah 30:18). God's ultimate sovereignty is demonstrated through

the coming destruction of the Assyrians, which will be a clear sign that He is the one who saves. "The Lord will wait. You won't wait for the Lord, so the Lord will wait for you."

6. **The Nature of True Joy:** The lecture emphasizes that true joy is not based on circumstances but on the knowledge of God and a secure relationship with Him. This joy is a "underlying current" even amidst difficult situations. This ties back to Isaiah chapter 6 where seeing the Holy One is terrifying, yet the cause for joy.
7. **The Importance of God's Instruction (Torah):** Oswalt clarifies that "Torah" should be understood not as constricting law, but as instruction that leads to life, in contrast to the people acting as "children who won't learn."

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Woe Sequence:** Chapters 28-33 are framed by a sequence of woes directed toward those who refuse to wait on God.
- Woe 1: Drunken leaders of Ephraim (North) (Isaiah 28)
- Woe 2: Drunken leaders of Jerusalem (South) (Isaiah 29)
- Woe 3: Those who hide counsel from the Lord (Isaiah 29)
- Woe 4: Those who seek alliance with Egypt without consulting the Lord (Isaiah 30)
- Woe 5: Those who trust Egypt instead of the Lord (Isaiah 31)
- **The "Hiding Counsel":** The advice being hidden is the plan to make an alliance with Egypt against Assyria (around 710-700 BC).
- **Transition by Contrast:** The journey through the Negev to deliver tribute to Egypt is a graphic illustration of the futility and danger of misplaced trust.
- **Children Metaphor:** God refers to the leaders as "rebellious children" to emphasize their immaturity and refusal to listen to His instruction (Torah).
- **The Rejection of God's Counsel:** The people's response to God's call for trust is a blunt "No" (Hebrew: "Lo").
- **God's Waiting:** Because the people refuse to wait on God, He waits to show them mercy.

- **The Potter's Vessel:** The breaking of the potter's vessel is a metaphor for the sudden and irreparable destruction coming upon Judah.
- **Assyrian Defeat:** The destruction of the Assyrian army is depicted in festival-like language, signifying God's intervention and the opportunity for true worship as a result.
- **"Pakad" :** The Hebrew word "pakad" is translated as visit and encompasses meanings such as judge, bless, appoint, and enumerate. It signifies a personal inspection by the "commanding general."

Quotes:

- "If I won't wait for God, it may well be said that I have not trusted."
- "...they are acting as though they are the potter and God is the clay."
- "They did not ask God about this action."
- "How costly, how dangerous, and how ultimately futile it is to trust in the world."
- "They will not hear what? The Torah, the instruction of God."
- "In quietness and in trust will be your strength."
- "The Lord will wait. You won't wait for the Lord, so the Lord will wait for you."
- "Blessed are all those who wait for Him."
- "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."
- "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."
- "The Egyptians are man and not God. Their horses are flesh, not spirit."

Conclusion:

Dr. Oswalt's session on Isaiah 30-31 is a powerful call to trust in God's sovereignty and timing. It warns against the dangers of self-reliance and the futility of worldly solutions. The overarching message is that true strength and security are found in waiting on God and following His instruction. The lecture also highlights the importance of recognizing and being grateful for God's action when it occurs, as a catalyst for worship.

4. Isaiah Study Guide: Session 15, Isaiah 30-31

Isaiah Chapters 30-31 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What specific action are the leaders of Judah taking that incurs God's wrath?
2. According to Isaiah, what is the root cause of Judah's shame?
3. What does God promise to the deaf and blind who have been misled by their leaders?
4. Why does God describe the leaders as "children" in chapter 30?
5. What does the term "Torah" mean, and how does it relate to God's instructions?
6. What is the effect of Judah's refusal to wait for the Lord, and what surprising thing does God do in response?
7. How does the imagery of a "bulging wall" and a "shattered potter's vessel" illustrate the consequences of their actions?
8. What is the significance of the "holy festival" language associated with the destruction of the Assyrians?
9. In chapter 31, what specific things are the people of Judah trusting instead of the Lord?
10. How does the imagery of the lion and birds illustrate God's protection of Jerusalem?

Answer Key

1. The leaders of Judah are making an alliance with Egypt for protection from Assyria without seeking the Lord's guidance, attempting to hide their political advice from God. This action demonstrates a lack of trust in God's power and provision.
2. The root cause of Judah's shame is their failed trust; they placed their faith in idols and foreign alliances instead of God, leading to disgrace. True trust in the Lord will never lead to shame.

3. God promises that the deaf will hear, and the eyes of the blind will see, signifying spiritual restoration and insight from God. This is a direct reversal of the spiritual blindness and deafness caused by the leaders' poor choices.
4. God describes the leaders as "children" because they are acting immaturely, refusing to listen to His instructions, and arrogantly thinking they know best. This highlights their rebellious nature and lack of wisdom.
5. "Torah" means "instruction" and refers to God's guidance for His people. It is not a restrictive law but a guide on how to live in alignment with God's design for life.
6. The effect of Judah's refusal is that God will wait to show them mercy. The Lord is willing to be gracious but will wait for them to reach the end of their own resources and turn back to him.
7. The "bulging wall" and "shattered potter's vessel" imagery illustrate the sudden, complete, and irreparable nature of the destruction that will result from their misplaced trust. The destruction will happen suddenly and it will not be easily repaired.
8. The "holy festival" language associated with the destruction of the Assyrians highlights the idea that the victory is God's, and it is cause for worship, praise, and celebration. The people are witnessing God's power in their deliverance.
9. The people of Judah are trusting in the strength of Egypt's chariots and horsemen, as well as political alliances, instead of relying on the power of the Holy One of Israel. This shows a complete lack of faith in God's ability to save them.
10. The lion and birds imagery illustrate that just as a lion fiercely protects its prey, and birds protect their young, the Lord will actively and powerfully defend Jerusalem and its people. It also signifies God's complete and unwavering devotion.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the recurring theme of “waiting” in Isaiah chapters 30-31. What does it mean to “wait” on the Lord, and what are the implications of not waiting? How does this concept challenge conventional approaches to problem-solving?
2. Discuss the critique of leadership presented in Isaiah chapters 30-31. What are the specific shortcomings of the leaders, and how do their actions impact the nation of Judah? How does Isaiah contrast the false leadership with the true guidance of God?
3. Explore the complex relationship between judgment and promise in these chapters. How do these two elements interact, and what is the ultimate message that emerges from their interplay? What does this say about God’s character?
4. Examine the use of imagery and symbolism in Isaiah chapters 30-31. How do these literary devices enhance the prophet’s message? Provide specific examples and explain their intended effect on the audience.
5. Discuss the significance of idolatry in these chapters. What are the specific forms of idolatry that the people of Judah engage in, and why are they so detrimental? How does Isaiah contrast their idols with the nature of the true God?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ariel:** A symbolic name for Jerusalem, used in this context to highlight the city's spiritual state and judgment.
- **Assyria:** A major empire during the time of Isaiah, posing a significant threat to Judah and the surrounding regions.
- **Counsel:** Advice, particularly political advice. The act of hiding counsel from the Lord implies an attempt to circumvent God's will.
- **Covenant:** A sacred agreement or treaty, often used in a religious context. In this instance, between God and the nation of Israel.
- **Egypt:** A powerful nation to the south of Judah, which the leaders of Judah attempt to ally with against Assyria.
- **Ephraim:** The Northern Kingdom of Israel, used here as an example of spiritual rebellion.

- **Holy One of Israel:** A title for God emphasizing his transcendent nature and covenant relationship with Israel.
- **Idolatry:** The practice of worshiping anything other than the one true God; in this passage, it refers to the people's reliance on false gods or earthly powers.
- **Judgment:** God's righteous response to sin and rebellion, often expressed through hardship or consequences.
- **Negev:** The southern region of Judah, a harsh and arid land.
- **Pakad:** A Hebrew word meaning to visit, judge, bless, enumerate, or appoint. It highlights God's active presence and interaction with His people.
- **Promise:** A declaration of God's intended future actions that include restoration and salvation.
- **Shame:** A feeling of disgrace or dishonor that is tied to a failed trust in something other than God.
- **Torah:** Often translated as "law," it means "instruction," referring to God's guidance and teaching.
- **Waiting:** The active posture of trusting in God and seeking His direction, often in the face of difficulty. It is the opposite of taking matters into one's own hands.
- **Woe:** A pronouncement of lament or grief, often used to express God's judgment against sin and rebellion.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 15, Isaiah 30-31, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Isaiah 30-31

1. **What is the main theme of Isaiah 30-31, and how does it connect to the broader section of Isaiah 28-33?**
 - The central theme of Isaiah 30-31 is the folly of not waiting for God and instead trusting in human solutions, specifically an alliance with Egypt, for deliverance from Assyria. This fits within the larger section of Isaiah 28-33, which Dr. Oswalt labels "Woe to Those Who Will Not Wait," emphasizing the consequences of impatience and lack of trust in God's timing and plan. These chapters highlight a consistent pattern: the people of Judah are facing an imminent threat (Assyrian invasion) and feel compelled to take action themselves, instead of seeking divine guidance.
1. **What specific actions are the people of Judah taking that are condemned in Isaiah 30, and why are these actions wrong?**
 - The people of Judah are condemned for hiding their counsel from the Lord and for pursuing an alliance with Egypt for protection against Assyria. This is portrayed as a rejection of God's authority and guidance, and is wrong because they are not seeking God's will or direction before making such a major decision. They are relying on worldly power instead of trusting in God. They are essentially acting as if they are the potters and God is just clay, to be used for their own purposes.
1. **What does it mean to "wait" on the Lord in the context of these chapters, and what is the consequence of not waiting?**
 - Waiting on the Lord, according to Dr. Oswalt, is not passive inaction. Rather, it is actively seeking God's guidance and timing and choosing not to pursue solutions based on human ingenuity and strength alone. It means coming to the end of our own resources and abilities before seeking God's direction. The consequence of not waiting is that they move ahead with their own plans, which are ultimately not aligned with God's plan. Ultimately, they miss out on God's mercy because they are not able to receive it until they have come to a place of desperation and a genuine dependence on God.
1. **How is the metaphor of "stubborn children" used to describe the people of Judah, and what does this metaphor reveal about their behavior?**

- God describes the people of Judah as "stubborn children" to highlight their immaturity and unwillingness to learn from past mistakes. They are constantly rebellious and choosing to ignore God's "instruction," or *Torah*, which is intended to guide them toward life and away from destruction. This description underscores their tendency to act impulsively, and seek solutions without God. They see themselves as wise but in truth they are like children refusing to listen. They have a tendency to not listen and not want to be held accountable.
1. **What is the significance of the people's request that the prophets "prophesy smooth things" and "leave the way" of the Holy One of Israel?**
 - The people's demand for "smooth things" and a departure from the way of the Holy One of Israel is indicative of their desire to avoid the uncomfortable truths of their sin and rebellion. They are tired of hearing about their need to repent and to trust in God alone. They prefer pleasant illusions rather than the truth that they need to rely on the Lord. They are essentially trying to shut down the voices of the prophets because they do not want to hear their message.
 1. **What is the imagery used to depict the consequences of Judah's rebellion, and what do these images symbolize?**
 - The consequences of Judah's rebellion are depicted with images such as a "breach in a high wall, bulging outward" and a "potter's vessel that is smashed into a thousand pieces." These images symbolize the sudden and irreversible nature of the coming destruction, demonstrating that their actions will not lead to a gradual decline but to a swift and complete collapse. It also demonstrates that their actions are ultimately futile and will not lead to safety or rescue.
 1. **What promise does God offer to those who trust in Him despite their current circumstances, and how does this promise manifest?**
 - God promises that those who wait on Him will ultimately experience His mercy. Even though they may encounter the "bread of adversity and the water of affliction", they will be taught by God and will have the ability to hear and follow His voice. This is conveyed through the image of the Holy Spirit whispering a clear direction. Ultimately, God promises to fight on their behalf and deliver them, as seen in the destruction of the Assyrian army. There will also be abundant blessing and prosperity as a result of this trust.

1. **How does the promise of deliverance and destruction in Isaiah 30 connect to the concept of worship, and what implications does this have for believers?**
 - The promised deliverance from the Assyrians and the subsequent destruction of their army are tied to the concept of worship, with the people celebrating a “holy festival” in response to God’s actions. This connection emphasizes the idea that true worship is rooted in recognizing and glorifying God for what He has done. This has implications for believers by showing that the opportunities to worship are sometimes missed when people try to solve problems using human solutions instead of relying on God. We often are so busy taking the credit for what we accomplish, we leave no room for God to act and demonstrate his power and receive the glory. This also implies that experiencing God's personal presence and involvement in one's life can enhance the worship experience.