

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 17

Isaiah 34-35

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 17, Isaiah 34-35, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This is a transcript of a lecture by Dr. John Oswalt on Isaiah chapters 34 and 35. The lecture focuses on the theme of trust in God, contrasting the consequences of trusting in nations versus trusting in Yahweh. Oswalt interprets the imagery of destruction in chapter 34 as a result of rejecting God, juxtaposing it with the promise of redemption and restoration in chapter 35. He emphasizes the importance of waiting on God's timing and plan, highlighting the dangers of human pride and self-reliance. The lecture concludes by examining the concept of trust and its implications for faith and action.

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 17 – 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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on 17.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. John Oswalt's Session 17 on Isaiah chapters 34 and 35:

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Isaiah 34-35

Introduction

This session concludes a larger section of Isaiah (chapters 13-35) that Dr. Oswalt has labeled "Lessons in Trust." This section is framed by two segments emphasizing a lack of trust in the Lord. The section is bookended by chapters 7-12 ("No Trust") and 36-39 ("Trust, yes, but..."). The central portion (13-35), is intended to show readers the results of trust and distrust. Dr. Oswalt highlights the dramatic contrast between chapters 34 and 35, which depict the consequences of choosing either to trust in God or to trust in the nations.

Key Themes and Ideas

- **Lessons in Trust (Chapters 13-35):** Chapters 13-23: Do not trust the nations.
- Chapters 24-27: Yahweh is sovereign over history.
- Chapters 28-33: Woe to those who will not wait (waiting is a synonym for trust).
- Quote: *"And we have talked a good deal about the fact that in the Old Testament waiting is a synonym for trust."*
- **Chapter 34: Judgment and Destruction (The Consequences of Distrust)**
Universal Judgment: The chapter begins with a general pronouncement of God's judgment on all nations (verses 1-4), similar to the language used in Isaiah 13 regarding Babylon.
- Quote: *"For the Lord is enraged against all the nations, furious against all their hosts. He has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter."*
- **Idolatry and Corrupted Gods:** Dr. Oswalt notes that the "host of heaven" in verse 4 refers not only to physical stars but also to pagan gods. These gods are corrupt because they are created in humanity's image, reflecting human fallibility, inconsistency, and untrustworthiness.

- Quote: *"We are making the gods in our own image. We are reducing deity to our own model... The gods are humanity written large... Everything that humanity is, the gods are only bigger. With all that that means about inconsistency, about arbitrariness, about untrustworthiness."*
- **The Meaning of "Haram":** The word "devoted" (Hebrew "haram") signifies complete surrender to God, in this case for destruction. This is not merely slaughter but a consequence of total corruption.
- Quote: *"This is the situation where the corruption has become so total that the thing must be given over to God for Him to destroy. This is the word that is used of the Canaanites."*
- **Edom as an Example:** Verses 5-10 focus on Edom as a specific example of God's judgment. Edom's hostility to Israel is emphasized, going back to Esau. They also helped the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem, a betrayal that resulted in their own destruction. Edom symbolizes hostility to God, God's people and God's plan.
- Quote: *"So, Edom then, is symbolizing what? All the nations, and? Sin? Yeah? Can we be more explicit than that? In view of what we've just been talking about here? Yes. Hostility to God, and God's people, and God's plan."*
- **God's Vengeance:** Dr. Oswalt differentiates between revenge (personal payback) and vengeance (God's just repayment for wrongs done to others). God's vengeance offers freedom to believers by relieving them of the burden to get revenge.
- Quote: *"Revenge is me getting my own back for what was done to me. Vengeance is repayment for what somebody else did to somebody else... God, God will take care of it. We don't have to."*
- **Desolate Imagery:** The chapter's imagery of desolation, unclean animals, and fire conveys the self-destructive nature of rejecting God.
- Quote: *"This is a world where the command to Adam and Eve has not been carried out... This is nature run amok. This is nature at its worst. This is nature that has fallen."*

- **Chapter 35: Redemption and Restoration (The Blessings of Trust)****Dramatic Contrast:** Chapter 35 dramatically contrasts with Chapter 34. Where 34 spoke of desolation and wilderness, 35 speaks of restoration and a garden. The wilderness itself will be transformed. This highlights the transformative power of God's grace.
- Quote: *"It's not just a case of there's the desert, here's the garden, that's that. It's every one of us. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Every one of us has chosen a desert."*
- **Transformation of the Wilderness:** The wilderness and dry land will rejoice, blossom, and become lush. The place where jackals once lay will become a place of reeds and rushes.
- Quote: *"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad. The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus... He can take the place where the jackals have lain down in your life and make it a place of reeds and rushes."*
- **Seeing God's Glory:** Redemption brings about the ability to see God's glory, which is ever-present but often unseen.
- Quote: *"To be redeemed is to be made fruitful, and it is also to be given eyes to see... to be redeemed, to have experienced the benefits of trusting him is to have new eyes, to be able to see the glory of God all around you, all the time."*
- **The Highway of Holiness:** Redemption is portrayed as a journey, a walk with God on a "highway of holiness," emphasizing a relationship, and not just a thing. It is a pathway into God's character. Even a fool can walk this path.
- Quote: *"Redemption is a journey. Redemption is a walk with God... It's a highway. That's right. And it will be called what? The way of holiness."*
- **God's Redemptive Love:** God's love is the driving force behind the redemption. He desires a loving relationship with his "love children" and will redeem them even after they have chosen a path of distrust and self-destruction.
- Quote: *"Because He loves us... He made us to be His love children. And if that's not happening, then His very purpose in creation is frustrated. So, He is determined to find objects for His love."*
- **Why Not Trust Humanity?**The world is on its way out.
- Humanity will betray you.

- The world does not have the answers.
- Elevating humanity strips the universe of meaning.
- **What Does Trust Look Like?**Waiting on the Lord.
- Obedience to his Word.
- Refusing to act on your own volition.
- Vulnerability.
- Faith - trusting even when the answers are not readily apparent.
- **What Does Untrust Look Like?**Pride.
- Selfishness.
- Worry.
- Disobedience.
- Impatience.

Conclusion

Dr. Oswalt concludes by reiterating the importance of trusting in the Lord. He emphasizes that while choosing God may seem scary because it is not always simple to know his way, timing or understanding, choosing to trust him leads to restoration and joy. Trusting God involves vulnerability and a willingness to wait, while distrust leads to self-destruction. He also acknowledges the difficulty of applying the concepts in this portion of scripture to one's own life, but that the only solution is to continue to look to God. The lesson ends with an emphasis on the importance of waiting on the Lord's timing and plan, even when it is difficult, and even when it doesn't produce the answers in one's own lifetime.

This briefing document provides a concise summary of the main themes and important points from Dr. Oswalt's lecture on Isaiah 34 and 35. It can be used for review or to quickly familiarize oneself with the main arguments and concepts discussed.

4. Isaiah Study Guide: Session 17, Isaiah 34-35

Isaiah Chapters 34-35 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the overarching theme of Isaiah chapters 13-35, as identified by Dr. Oswalt?
2. According to the lecture, what is the significance of the word "haram" in the Old Testament context of Isaiah 34?
3. What is the literary relationship between the judgment of all nations in Isaiah 34:1-4 and the judgment of Edom in Isaiah 34:5-10?
4. What historical actions of the Edomites contributed to their judgment?
5. How does the lecture differentiate between "revenge" and "vengeance" as described in Isaiah?
6. What does the imagery of the desolate landscape in Isaiah 34 signify in relation to choosing to trust the nations?
7. What is the dramatic literary relationship between Isaiah chapter 34 and 35?
8. In Isaiah 35, what is the symbolic significance of the desert blossoming and becoming a garden?
9. What is the significance of the highway described in Isaiah 35:8 in relation to redemption?
10. According to the lecture, what is the most fundamental reason why we should trust the Lord?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The overarching theme of Isaiah chapters 13-35 is "Lessons in Trust." This theme explores the importance of trusting in Yahweh rather than in nations or human power. It emphasizes that true security and blessing come from relying on God.
2. The word "haram" signifies that something has been given over wholly to God for destruction due to total corruption. It's not just about slaughter but about something being completely devoted to God's judgment. It illustrates the severity of God's response to pervasive sin.

3. The judgment of all nations in Isaiah 34:1-4 is a general statement of universal destruction, while the judgment of Edom in 34:5-10 is a specific example of that destruction. This shift from general to particular emphasizes the reality and implications of God's judgment.
4. The Edomites historically refused passage to the Israelites during the Exodus and aided the Babylonians in destroying Jerusalem. They even captured and returned fleeing Judeans to the Babylonians.
5. "Revenge" is about getting one's own back for personal wrongs, whereas "vengeance" is about repayment for wrongs done to others. The Isaiah text and the lecture focus on God's vengeance as justice on behalf of His people.
6. The desolate landscape in Isaiah 34 symbolizes the chaotic and unproductive state that results from choosing to trust in worldly powers rather than God. It represents self-destruction and a world where God's purposes for humanity are not fulfilled.
7. The literary relationship between Isaiah chapter 34 and 35 is one of dramatic contrast. Chapter 34 depicts a scene of destruction, while chapter 35 depicts restoration and redemption. It emphasizes the stark difference between the results of untrusting God and trusting in him.
8. The desert blossoming and becoming a garden in Isaiah 35 symbolizes the transformative power of God to turn desolate and barren situations into places of life and abundance. It signifies that God can take our "deserts" and create beauty and life within them.
9. The highway in Isaiah 35:8 symbolizes the journey of redemption and a relationship with God. It represents a clear and safe path into God's character, allowing believers to walk in holiness and find their true purpose.
10. According to the lecture, the most fundamental reason why we should trust the Lord is because He loves us and created us for love. His actions towards us, even after our failures, demonstrate his unwavering commitment to this purpose.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the concept of "trust" as it is presented throughout Isaiah 13-35, drawing connections between the consequences of misplaced trust and the blessings of trusting in Yahweh.
2. Analyze the use of contrasting imagery in Isaiah 34 and 35. How do these contrasting descriptions of desolation and restoration reinforce the main themes of the passage?
3. Explore the significance of Edom as a specific example of God's judgment in Isaiah 34. How does this particular judgment connect to the larger themes of the text?
4. Explain the concepts of revenge and vengeance, as discussed in relation to Isaiah, and discuss the implications for Christian living and how they reflect God's character.
5. How does the lecture connect the ideas of redemption and restoration to the concept of a "journey"? Discuss the significance of the highway described in Isaiah 35 and the meaning of walking in God's ways.

Glossary of Key Terms

Haram: An Old Testament term referring to something devoted entirely to God, often for destruction due to its corruption.

Idolatry: The worship of idols or false gods. The lecture emphasizes that idolatry reduces the divine to human limitations.

Host of Heaven: This phrase has multiple meanings: the stars, the pagan gods, and the Lord's angelic army. All are judged.

Edom: A nation historically hostile to Israel, symbolizing opposition to God's plan and people; a specific example of coming judgment.

Vengeance: God's action to restore justice, not for personal wrongs but for the wrongs done to others. God's action, not ours.

Revenge: A personal act of getting back at someone for what they did to you. Not a Christian response.

Zion: Often used to refer to Jerusalem. Here, a place of blessing, restoration, and God's presence.

Wilderness: Symbolizes desolation, chaos, and the consequences of turning away from God.

Garden: Symbolizes abundance, fertility, and restoration, representing the blessings of trusting in God.

The Highway of Holiness: Symbolizes the path of redemption and a journey of relationship with God; characterized by safety and accessibility.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 17, Isaiah 34-35, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Lessons in Trust from Isaiah 34-35

1. **What is the primary theme explored in Isaiah chapters 13-35, and how do chapters 34 and 35 fit into this theme?** The primary theme is "Lessons in Trust." Chapters 34 and 35 serve as a conclusion to this section, showcasing the dramatic consequences of choosing to trust in the world versus trusting in God. Chapter 34 depicts the results of trusting in nations and humanity – a world marked by destruction, chaos, and desolation, while chapter 35 presents the transformation and redemption that come from trusting in God, turning a wilderness into a garden.
2. **In Isaiah 34, what is the significance of the language describing God's judgment against the nations?** The language used in Isaiah 34 is similar to that used in earlier judgments (e.g., against Babylon in chapter 13). This connection emphasizes that the consequences of not trusting God are universal and that God's judgment extends to all who oppose His will and plan. The descriptions of devastation using violent imagery and the concept of "devotion to destruction" (Haram) highlight the total corruption that results when humanity rejects God and His purpose.
3. **What does the imagery of the "host of heaven" represent in Isaiah 34, and how does this relate to idolatry?** The "host of heaven" has multiple meanings: the physical stars, pagan deities (the gods), and the Lord's angelic armies. The text describes the "host" as falling and rotting away, which symbolizes the downfall of false gods and the defeat of those who place their trust in them. Idolatry, creating gods in one's own image, corrupts humanity by reducing divinity to human limitations and thus leads to a distorted perception of reality, characterized by inconsistency, arbitrariness, and untrustworthiness.

4. **What is the significance of Edom in Isaiah 34, and what does it symbolize in relation to Israel and God's plan?** Edom serves as a specific example of the general judgment described in the chapter. Edom, related to Israel through Esau, had a history of conflict with Israel. They refused Israel passage through their land during the Exodus and assisted the Babylonians in the destruction of Jerusalem. Edom symbolizes hostility toward God, God's people, and His redemptive plan. Their ultimate destruction highlights that such opposition to God's purposes is inherently self-destructive.
5. **How does the concept of "vengeance" differ from "revenge" in the context of Isaiah 34, and what implications does this have for believers?** Vengeance, as described in Isaiah, is God's just repayment for wrongdoing done to others. Revenge, on the other hand, is taking personal retribution for a wrong done to oneself. The text argues that trusting God's vengeance frees believers from the burden of seeking revenge, allowing them to live in freedom and peace. God promises to balance the books in His time and way, a promise rooted in justice, not in petty anger.
6. **In Isaiah 34, what do the animals and imagery of desolation represent in terms of the consequences of not trusting God?** The imagery of scavenging animals, desolation, and uncleanness represents the chaos and unproductive nature of a world that chooses not to trust God. The destruction of nature, devoid of productivity and lacking the presence of beneficial animals, symbolizes a world where the divine mandate to cultivate and care for creation has been abandoned, leading to self-destruction and a state of utter ruin.
7. **What is the contrast between Isaiah 34 and 35, and how does this highlight the transformation available through trusting God?** Chapter 34 depicts desolation as a result of rejecting God, while chapter 35 emphasizes dramatic contrast by portraying the transformation of that wilderness into a garden as a result of trusting God. Chapter 35 speaks of wilderness blooming, the blind seeing, and the deaf hearing, all as a result of God's work. This contrast underscores the gospel, in which God takes brokenness and makes it new through trust.

8. **What does Isaiah 35 teach about the nature of redemption, and how is this reflected in the concept of "the highway"?** Redemption, in Isaiah 35, is not just a static event, but a journey, a "walk with God," that leads to the fulfillment of our created purpose. The highway symbolizes a clear and safe pathway to holiness and God's character. Redemption is presented as a relationship with God, allowing those who trust Him to participate in His character and purpose. It's a transformation that results in a new way of seeing and being, and it ends in a life filled with joy.