

## Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 22

### Isaiah 44-46

### Resources from NotebookLM

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

#### 1. Abstract of Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 22, Isaiah 44-46, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. John Oswalt's lecture** covers Isaiah 44-46, focusing on God's power and sovereignty. **Key themes** include God's promise of the Holy Spirit, the futility of idolatry, and God's ability to predict the future and redeem his people. **Oswalt contrasts God's actions** with the limitations of pagan gods and emphasizes God's grace as the sole motivator for salvation. He uses examples from scripture and history to illustrate these points, **highlighting God's unwavering commitment** to Israel's redemption. The lecture concludes with a prayer of gratitude for God's grace.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 22 – 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  
on22.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

#### Briefing Doc: Dr. John Oswalt on Isaiah Chapters 44-46

##### Main Themes:

- **God's Sovereignty and Power:** Chapters 44-46 emphasize Yahweh's unique power and authority, contrasting it with the impotence of idols. He is the Creator, the Redeemer, and the One who controls history, evidenced by his ability to predict the future and utilize even pagan kings like Cyrus for his purposes.
- **The Folly of Idolatry:** The text repeatedly mocks the creation and worship of idols, highlighting the absurdity of worshipping something made from the same material it would eventually burn. Idolatry represents humanity's attempt to control the divine rather than submitting to the Creator.
- **God's Grace and Redemption:** Despite Israel's unfaithfulness and the seeming impossibility of their return from exile, God promises redemption and restoration purely out of his own grace. This grace, exemplified in his choice of Cyrus and his willingness to forgive, should motivate believers towards repentance, faith, and godliness.

##### Important Ideas/Facts:

- **God's Attributes:** He is the first and the last, the King of Israel, the Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts (Yahweh), highlighting his eternality, sovereignty, commitment to his people, and omnipotence.
- **Four Reasons Not to Fear:** 1) "I am with you." 2) "I will help you." 3) "I have redeemed you." 4) "I will pour my Spirit upon you." The Spirit empowers believers with strength, wisdom, and the ability to live Christ's life.
- **The Spirit and Identity:** The Holy Spirit enables believers to identify with God, answering the question "Who is the king of your life?" by affirming "I am the Lord's."
- **Predictive Prophecy:** God's ability to predict the future, something idols cannot do, demonstrates his divine power and provides confidence for believers.
- **The Abomination of Idolatry:** Idolatry is disgusting to God because it reverses the created order, leading to the worship of that which should be used and the use of that which should be worshipped.

- **Transformation:** In contrast to the modern idea of self-actualization, the Bible affirms God's ability to transform individuals, breaking them free from their past and creating new life.
- **Cyrus, God's Messiah:** God anoints Cyrus, a pagan king, to liberate Israel, demonstrating his power to use anyone for his purposes and defying human expectations of how God should act.
- **God's Creation of Good and Evil:** While challenging, the text affirms that God is ultimately responsible for everything that happens, including calamity, rejecting the dualistic worldview of independent forces of good and evil.
- **God's Word is Clear:** In contrast to the mystery of pagan deities, God reveals his will and plan through his word, urging believers to diligently study and obey it.
- **God Carries Us:** Unlike pagans who burden themselves with carrying their idols, God carries his people, providing a powerful image of his grace and care.

#### Key Quotes:

- "You can either worship your maker, or you can make a god in your image to worship. Take your choice."
- "Idolatry is the use of that which should be worshipped and the worship of that which should be used."
- "You can only really own something that you can honestly see yourself as better off without."
- "I didn't speak in secret. I didn't create this world to be chaos. I created this world with purpose and with design and I have declared what my purpose and my design are. There it is."
- "You can be carried by your maker or you'll have to carry what you made."
- "Grace is totally God-initiated. They have not done one thing to deserve this redemption that God is promising. And neither can you or I."

This briefing document highlights the core themes and crucial points from Dr. Oswalt's teaching on Isaiah 44-46. It emphasizes God's sovereignty, the emptiness of idolatry, the power of God's grace, and the call to respond with faith and obedience.

## 4. Isaiah Study Guide: Session 22, Isaiah 44-46

### Isaiah 44-46: A Study Guide

#### Short Answer Questions

**Instructions:** Answer each of the following questions in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the fourth reason given in Isaiah 44 for why God's servants should not fear? How does this relate to the issue of identity?
2. What three additional titles are used in Isaiah 44:6 to identify Yahweh? What do these titles tell us about God's relationship with Israel and His ability to act?
3. According to Isaiah 44, what distinguishes Yahweh from the idols? Why is the prophet's emphasis on predictive prophecy significant in light of modern biblical scholarship?
4. Why does Isaiah characterize the act of making and worshipping idols as an "abomination"? How does this relate to God's intended purpose for creation?
5. In Isaiah 44, what two actions does God take that demonstrate He is both Creator and Redeemer? How do these actions offer hope for both humanity and the natural world?
6. What does God promise to do for Cyrus in Isaiah 45? Why does God choose to use a pagan king like Cyrus to accomplish His purposes?
7. Explain the meaning of Isaiah 45:7, where God states He creates both well-being and calamity. How does this challenge the dualistic worldview prevalent in the ancient world?
8. What accusation does God level against the people in Isaiah 45:9-13? How does God's response affirm His sovereignty and challenge human attempts to dictate His actions?
9. What is the significance of the nations acknowledging in Isaiah 45:15 that God "hides himself"? How does God respond to this perception in verses 18-19?
10. Contrast the actions of the pagans and Yahweh in Isaiah 46:1-7. What message does this imagery convey about the nature of true worship and the futility of relying on idols?

## Answer Key

1. The fourth reason for not fearing is that God will pour out His Spirit on His people. This empowers them to identify themselves with the Lord, acknowledging Yahweh as the sole ruler of their lives.
2. The three titles are King of Israel, Israel's Redeemer, and Lord of Hosts (or Lord Almighty). These titles highlight God's covenant relationship with Israel as their King, obligating Him to redeem them. Additionally, "Lord of Hosts" signifies His omnipotence, demonstrating His ability to carry out this redemption.
3. Unlike idols, Yahweh can predict the future, showcasing His power over the natural order. The emphasis on predictive prophecy challenges modern scholarship, which often denies the possibility of knowing the future, thus limiting God's power to the natural world.
4. Idol worship is an "abomination" because it perverts the created order by worshipping the created rather than the Creator. This undermines God's purpose for creation, which is to be used and cultivated for His glory, not worshipped.
5. God "formed" Israel and "blotted out" their transgressions. As Creator, He brought them into being, and as Redeemer, He forgives their sins, offering a path to a restored relationship with Him. This redemption offers hope for both humanity and creation, as seen in the rejoicing of the natural world in Isaiah 44:23.
6. God promises to subdue nations before Cyrus, grant him victory in battle, and reveal hidden treasures. By using a pagan king who doesn't know Him, God demonstrates His sovereignty and power, working through unexpected means to accomplish His will and ultimately bring about the deliverance of Israel.
7. Isaiah 45:7 emphasizes that God is the ultimate cause of all things, both good and bad. This challenges the dualistic view of good and evil as separate, independent forces. Instead, all events, even calamities, ultimately serve God's overarching plan and purpose.
8. God accuses the people of questioning His use of Cyrus, a pagan king, to achieve His purposes. He affirms His sovereignty by reminding them He is the potter and they are the clay, incapable of dictating His actions. God alone determines the means by which He will fulfill His promises.

9. The nations' acknowledgement that God "hides himself" reflects their limited understanding of His ways. God responds by asserting that He has clearly revealed Himself and His plans through His word, refuting the idea that His actions are shrouded in mystery.
10. The pagans labor to carry their idols, which offer no help, while Yahweh carries His people, sustaining and delivering them. This imagery highlights the contrast between the futility of relying on powerless idols and the liberating power of worshipping the true God, who actively cares for His people.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the "I am" statements found in Isaiah 44-46. How do these statements contribute to the overall message of these chapters and reveal God's character?
2. Explore the theme of creation and redemption in Isaiah 44-46. How do these concepts intertwine to offer hope for both humanity and the natural world?
3. Examine the prophet's critique of idolatry in Isaiah 44-46. What are the dangers of idolatry, and how does it ultimately fail to provide what it promises?
4. Discuss the significance of God's use of Cyrus, a pagan king, to bring about the deliverance of Israel. What does this choice reveal about God's sovereignty and His ability to work through unexpected means?
5. Analyze the imagery of God "carrying" His people in Isaiah 46. How does this image contrast with the burdens carried by those who worship idols, and what does it teach us about the nature of God's relationship with His people?

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Abomination:** Something that is morally repugnant and contrary to God's created order, specifically evoking His disgust.

**Dualism:** A worldview that posits two opposing forces, typically good and evil, as eternally co-existing and vying for power.

**Idolatry:** The worship of anything other than the one true God, often involving the creation of physical representations of these false deities.

**Messiah:** Hebrew term meaning "anointed one," often used to refer to a king or leader chosen and empowered by God for a specific task. In Isaiah 45, Cyrus is referred to as God's "messiah."

**Redemption:** The act of delivering or setting free, often involving the payment of a price. In Isaiah, it refers to God's deliverance of Israel from exile and forgiveness of their sins.

**Yahweh:** The personal name of the God of Israel, often rendered as "LORD" in English translations.

## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 22, Isaiah 44-46, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### Isaiah 44-46 FAQ

#### 1. Why should God's servants not fear, according to Isaiah 44?

Isaiah 44 offers several reasons why God's servants should not fear:

- **God is with them:** He promises his constant presence and support.
- **God will help them:** He pledges his strength and assistance.
- **God has redeemed them:** He has already purchased their freedom from sin and death.
- **God will pour out His Spirit upon them:** This empowers them to live a life pleasing to Him, overcome temptation, and know their identity in Him.

#### 2. What is Isaiah's main point about idols in chapters 44-46?

Isaiah emphasizes the absurdity and futility of idolatry. He argues that worshipping idols is disgusting to God because it inverts the created order. Humans are created to worship God, not to fashion gods from creation. Idols are powerless and ultimately cannot save, while God, the Creator, has the power to redeem and transform.

#### 3. Who is Cyrus, and what role does he play in God's plan?

Cyrus is a Persian king who, though not a believer in Yahweh, is chosen by God to conquer Babylon and release the Israelites from exile. God calls Cyrus "My anointed" (Messiah) and promises him victory and wealth. This demonstrates God's sovereign control over history and his ability to use even those who don't know him to accomplish his purposes.

#### 4. How does Isaiah 45:7 address the problem of evil?

Isaiah 45:7 states that God creates both well-being and calamity. This verse emphasizes that God is ultimately responsible for everything that happens. While he does not directly cause evil, he permits it and allows it to exist within the world he created. The point is that God is sovereign over all things, both good and bad.



**5. What is the significance of the imagery of carrying in Isaiah 46?**

Isaiah 46 contrasts the pagans carrying their idols, which are burdens, with God carrying his people. This imagery highlights the futility of relying on false gods, which cannot save themselves, let alone their worshippers. Conversely, God, the Creator, is strong enough to carry and save his people.

**6. How does God prove his godhood in these chapters?**

Isaiah repeatedly points to God's ability to predict the future as proof of his unique divinity. He contrasts God's fulfilled prophecies with the false predictions of pagan diviners. The fact that God knows and declares the future demonstrates his sovereignty and control over history.

**7. What is the basis of Israel's redemption, according to Isaiah?**

Isaiah emphasizes that Israel's redemption is solely based on God's grace and initiative. It is not earned by Israel's repentance or good works. God chooses to redeem them freely out of his love and faithfulness to his covenant promises.

**8. What is the central message of Isaiah 44-46?**

The central message of these chapters is that Yahweh alone is the true God, the Creator and Redeemer, who is worthy of worship. He is sovereign over history, able to fulfill his purposes through unlikely instruments, and he will ultimately deliver his people through his grace.