

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 30, Isa. 63-66

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 30, Isaiah chapters 63 through 66.

Let's pray together. Father how we thank you for your servant our brother Isaiah. Thank you for this man who was open to your spirit, led by your spirit, inspired by your spirit. Thank you that through him you were able to speak to your people not only in that time 2,700 years ago but now.

Thank you. We pray that once again you will help us that we can understand more clearly what it is that you're saying in your book and then be able to apply it more clearly to our lives so that we indeed may be the people of God that you call us to be. In your name, we pray. Amen.

All right, we are looking at the chapters 60 to 62 tonight. The middle portion of that final section of the book, which we have said is the technical term, a chiasm.

And the middle portion of the book is chapters, and the middle portion of the chiasm is chapters 60 to 62. We saw how the beginning and the end focus upon the goal of it all and that is righteous Gentiles. That's God's intention and we saw that all the way back in the beginning in chapter 2. What is this all about? It is about the world coming to know God as the final chapter says, chapter 66, to see his glory.

And again, I've said it many times during our study, but the book of Isaiah is a symphony. The symphony is characterized by these themes which come to the surface and then go back and then here they are again. And one of these themes is seen in chapter 6. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And in this last chapter, all the nations are going to come and see the glory of God. As again, as I've said to you many times, glory in the Old Testament is not something ephemeral and passing.

Glory is reality. It is significant. It is solid.

And so God's goal is that all people will see his reality. They'll see his reality in the world. They'll see his reality in the word.

They'll see his reality in the lives of other people as God sheds his glory upon us. Then we saw how, in fact, the people themselves are unrighteous, the unrighteous Judeans. They fail to be what they were supposed to be for the sake of these folks.

And so, God comes as the divine warrior, the one who indeed defeats the enemy, and as I've argued, the enemy of sin. And the result then is what we'll find in these three chapters tonight. Now let me pull all of this together a bit before we jump into that and remind you how I think the book is structured.

Now I say I think because in a big complicated work like this, there are many, many opinions of how this material all fits together. But I have suggested to you that chapters one to six are the call to servanthood. And we see there the problem.

How can this Israel, this sinful, corrupt Israel, ever be the pure, holy Israel that is going to be the one to whom all the nations come to learn God's teaching? And the solution I suggested to you is when the same experience that the man of unclean lips had is had by the people as a whole. Then we saw how in chapters seven to thirty-nine, trust is the basis of servanthood. Can this God, this holy one of Israel, can he be trusted? Or will we trust humanity, the nations of humanity instead? And we saw how in those chapters, God demonstrates to them that the nations are not to be trusted.

Humanity is not to be trusted. But he is entirely trustworthy. And we saw how that theme of trust, or what is the common synonym for trust here in Isaiah and throughout the Old Testament? Mel got it.

Wait. Wait on the Lord. Because in fact, we may say we trust him, but if we run ahead and try to solve the problem for ourselves, we clearly do not trust him.

It is when we lay aside our own schemes, our own understandings, our own purposes, and allow God to work those out in his way, that we do truly trust him. By the time you come to the end of 39, it has been proven God can be trusted. In the crisis of the Assyrian attack upon Jerusalem, Hezekiah trusted God, and against all the odds, God delivered him.

At the same time, we see that Hezekiah is not the Messiah. Hezekiah is fallible. This Messiah that was promised, especially back here in chapter 11, we are going to have to look for somebody other than Hezekiah.

He is not the child who is born upon whose shoulders is the government. We have to look for somebody else. So, in chapters 40-55, we have grace, the motive, and the means of servanthood.

And it is in 40-48 we see that motivation. They are chosen servants of God. In spite of the fact that they are in exile as a result of their sins.

Nevertheless, God has not cast them off. They are chosen. And He is going to use them in His lawsuit against the gods.

He is going to use them to prove that He alone is God, and there is no other. But the question then that emerges, and so that is the motive. Grace, unmerited, undeserved, is going to motivate them to trust God.

But the question remains, how? Is God simply going to ignore their sin and ours? Just act as if we have done nothing? And I have argued again and again that God can't do that. Of course, He can do anything. But if He did simply ignore our sins, the world which is built on cause and effect would fly apart.

We have sinned, and so something has to be done about the effect of that. And the effect of that is that the servant gives his life for the servants. And that then is the means.

The motive, 40 to 48. The means in 49 to 55. Well, by the time you come to the end of 55, they have been delivered.

Nature is rejoicing. What's left? Eleven more chapters are left. And we see that righteousness is the expected character of the servants.

And that's what we've been looking at these last days, the character of servanthood. Why are we delivered from our sins in order that we might share the character of God? And that is 56 to 66. So, that's the way I understand the book to be working.

Other people understand it in different ways, and that's okay. They can be wrong. And I could be too.

But this is how I see the book operating. I should say that the thing that is most commonly said about this proposal is, Wait a minute, Oswald. Servant, the word, doesn't appear in 1 to 39.

So how in the world can you use that theme? Well, I use it because of where the book goes. Very clearly in 40 to 66, the servanthood of the people is at the center. And I would argue that given that, we can see how the previous part of the book is leading up to that.

Okay. Questions or comments about that? I mean, if you get done with 30 weeks and you don't have this in your head, I'm sort of blown. Questions? Comments? Okay.

Going once. All right. Chapter 60, verses 1 to 3. And I want you to compare those verses.

Arise, shine, for your light has come. The glory of the Lord, there's glory, has risen upon you. Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, thick darkness the peoples.

But the Lord will arise upon you. His glory will be seen upon you. There's glory again.

And nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. Now I ask you to compare that to chapter 59, verses 9, 10, and 11. Therefore justice is far from us.

Righteousness does not overtake us. We hope for light and behold darkness. For brightness, but we walk in gloom.

We grope for the wall like the blind. We grope like those who have no eyes. We stumble at noon as in the twilight.

Among those in full vigor, we're like dead men. We all growl like bears. We moan and moan like doves.

We hope for justice, but there is none. For salvation, but it's far from us. Would you say there's a contrast between those? Now what accounts for the change? What comes in between those two? The Redeemer.

The Divine Warrior. That whole section, 59, 15b to 21, is what comes in between and explains how you get from 59, 9, 10, and 11 to 61, 1 to 3. How is it possible for us to be the lantern through which the light of God shines on the world? Only one way, if the Divine Warrior comes and defeats the sin and unrighteousness that has indeed held them and us captive. Now again, there are many commentators who will not accept that.

They will not accept that there is an intentional connection between the failure of 59 and the previous and what we have in chapter 60. They'll just say, well, it's accidental. That's one thing, this is another thing.

I do not buy that for a minute. 59, 15b to 21 is in there on purpose. He came, he saw that there was no man, there was no one who could do this, who could translate his people from unrighteousness to righteousness.

He wondered why there was no one to intercede. So, his own arm brought him salvation and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate.

Yes? Yeah, go ahead. What do they do with those verses? There's no intended connection. You've got 59 that says one thing, you've got 59b, 15b to 21 that says another thing, and you've got 61 and following that says another thing, and they're unrelated.

It's just a collection of speeches that various people made at various times. That's why I say to students, if you can do something else than academic Bible study, do it. If you can't, then for God's sake, don't do something else.

The church needs you. But academic biblical study today is a minefield, largely dominated by people who began as believers and lost their faith at the university and don't have anything else to do with their lives. So, it's serious business.

Okay, now, where does the light and the glory come from? Does it come from within them? No, it does not, does it? The glory of the Lord has risen upon you. The Lord will arise upon you and his glory will be seen in you. Yes, it's not saying that they were unrighteous and they really, really worked and really, really did what they were supposed to do and they became righteous.

It's not saying that for a minute. It's saying this light that now shines out of them is a gift. A gift which has been received.

Now, what is the light for? Verse 3, the nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. What's the danger in seeking God's fullness for ourselves? We're quick to think it came from us. Yeah, what else? It doesn't go any further.

It's about me and my relationship to God and what God is doing for me. Back to original sin with pride. Yes, yes.

The devil really doesn't care how he gets us to focus on ourselves. The world's way is fine, but so is the self-righteousness way. Okay.

Now, verses 4 to 14. What is it that the nations will bring to Jerusalem? There are two or three things they're going to bring. What is one? Riches.

Yeah, your sons and daughters. Those are the two primary things. They're going to come with their wealth.

And they're going to bring your sons and daughters. And if you remember all the way through, particularly from chapter 40 on, the question is, doesn't the exile mean we're done? We're wiped out as a people. We're absorbed into these great empires and it's over.

That's why they thought the exile couldn't happen. Because if it did happen, we're gone. But he says, no.

The nations, the nations that once oppressed you are going to come and they're going to bring your children. Mary Jo, you're trying to ask something. I would like to just go back to verse 3 there a minute.

When you're saying that us seeking God, it's not like we're just seeking him in some random way because he has a mission for our life. And the thing is when we're searching for him, it may not be what we want. So that's sort of a – I'll just use the word tricky.

But you may not really know what it is you're asking for. I think that's very likely. And again, I think that's – you heard my message yesterday.

God is willing to start with us with very, very inadequate understanding of what his ultimate program is. But as long as we stay with him, as long as we're responsive to his Holy Spirit, he's going to open up what that program is. And that's not all at once.

No, that's typically not. It's typically – You have consistently said, wait. Yeah, we're fairly slow learners.

It would be nice if he would just tell us all at once. But probably it wouldn't be nice if he would tell us all at once. We'd get scared and run away.

Or we just wouldn't get it. Yeah, we wouldn't get it. Yes. Yes. So yes. Yes.

Good. Yes. Now why do they bring these things? Verse 9. To honor the Lord.

The coastlands will do what? Wait for me. Back in chapter 41 that was said. The ends of the earth wait for me.

They don't know it. They think they're doing just fine. But in fact, he being the only God, whether they know it or not, they're waiting for him.

So, they're doing it in response to the revelation of his character and of his nature. But look at the very last clause. Why are they doing this? Last clause of verse 9. Yes.

He has made you beautiful. He has glorified you. Now the question is, how does he do that? And we'll talk more about this.

But there's that theme. They see something in redeemed Israel that attracts them. And let's skip to question 3 there.

What is that wealth going to be used for? Look at verse 13 especially. Adorn the sanctuary. Yes.

They want to come and join in glorifying God. They want to come and express something of the wonder of who God is that they see in the lamp. And the light that is shining from the lamp.

They want to be part of that. Back in chapter 2. I keep drawing you back there because I think it is so programmatic. They want to come to the mountain of the house of the Lord to learn his ways.

Those two go together. They want to come to the place of worship. They want to come to the sanctuary.

But they want to come there because they believe that in the sanctuary they can learn the ways of God. That they so desperately need. Now let's look at number 2. These are the last two occurrences of the phrase, the Holy One of Israel.

In verse 9 and in verse 14. Now I've said it before. We've talked about it before.

What two things does this phrase, the Holy One of Israel, connote? There are two ideas in here that are intertwined. What are they? Separation. But more than separation.

Relationship. So there is the one side. It is a relationship.

It's the Holy One of Israel. The other side. He is utterly transcendent.

He is not this world. He is not any part of this world. But that not only relates to a separate essence.

He is a separate kind of being from the creation. How else is he separate? Good, good. Character.

Again, I think I've said this before. The most influential book on holiness written in the 20th century was *The Idea of the Holy* by a German scholar named Rudolf Otto. And in that book, he basically defined holiness as this kind of separation.

He used Latin terms. You always use Latin when you want to impress people. He spoke about the *mysterium tremendum*.

I don't know why he couldn't say the tremendous mystery. But that which produces awe. When we're in the presence of it, we're terrified.

He used another word, the numinous. But there's one thing he did not talk about. Because you see, it's only in the Bible that there is a distinctly holy character.

You cannot separate his transcendent essence from his transcendent character. And the amazing thing is, he wants to share that character. When he says, you must be holy as I am holy, he doesn't mean we have to become God.

But he does mean, I want you to share my character. And that phrase, the holy one of Israel, occurs 25 times in the book. And then there's also the holy one of Jacob, which occurs once and only here.

The only place in the whole Bible. So, for my money, it's 26 times. Whatever that means.

Out of the 31 occurrences in the whole Bible, 26 of them are here in Isaiah. Now let's look at a few of these and try to understand what's going on. First of all, before we do that, look at how they're used here in verse 9. The coastlands will wait for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the Lord your God and for the holy one of Israel, because he has made you beautiful.

Now, verse 14. The sons of those who afflicted you will come bending low to you and all who despised you will bow down at your feet. They will call you the city of the Lord, the city of Yahweh, the Zion of the holy one of Israel.

In other words, they're going to recognize that you are a distinct people because of this distinct relationship. Now, let's go back. Chapter 1, verse 4. See where we've come from.

Somebody read it, please. Chapter 1, verse 4. Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a group of evildoers, children who are corruptors. They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked anger, the holy one of Israel.

They have turned away backward. They have provoked the anger of the holy one of Israel. The version I have says they have despised the holy one of Israel.

Wow. That's where we started. That's where we started.

It's picked up again in chapter 5. We won't take the time to look at that, but the same thing. You have treated the holy one of Israel with contempt. Now then, to chapter 30, verse 11.

And you really have to start with verse 10. They say to the seers, don't see. To the prophets, don't prophesy to us what is right.

Speak to us smooth things. Prophecy illusions. Leave the way, turn aside from the path.

Let us hear no more about the holy one of Israel. Now I love verse 12. Therefore, thus says the holy one of Israel.

You want me to shut up? Well, let me tell you something. Contempt, provoking him to anger. Trying to get him to shut up.

Verse 15 of chapter 30. What is the holy one of Israel's word to us? In repentance and rest you'll be saved. In quietness and trust will be your strength.

Grace. Would you just stop rushing around, trying to get your illusions to come true, and rest? Rest in me? That's the holy one who's saying that. Chapter 37, verse 23.

This is addressed to Sennacherib. Somebody read that one. Reproached and blasphemed.

Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the holy one of Israel. Yes, yes. My friend, you don't know whom you have chosen to take on here.

You think that you have mocked Hezekiah. You think that you have mocked the local god of Judah. Oh, he's the god of Judah, all right.

But he's the holy one. You have gotten yourself into a lot bigger mess than you bargained for. Chapter 41, verse 14.

Fear not, you worm, Jacob. You men of Israel. I am the one who helps you, declares Yahweh.

Your redeemer is the holy one of Israel. So we've moved through from where the people are mocking the Lord to where the people are trying to get the holy one to shut up to Assyria mocking the Holy One and getting himself in a lot of hot water for it to the Holy One of Israel proclaiming himself in grace as their redeemer. And in this whole last section of the book the holy one, your redeemer, occurs over and over and over again.

Because he's the holy one, he's able to redeem you. Because he's given himself to you in love, he wants to redeem you. And he's going to redeem you.

And the nations will come to glorify the sanctuary of the holy one of Israel. Okay, moving on. Verses 15 to 22.

What will be the evidence that the people are truly redeemed? Verses 15 and 16. Yes. When the oppressors will come.

And then what will happen in the end of verse 16? Yes, yes. You'll recognize, finally, when these things occur you'll know I am the Lord. Our time is flying away here.

26.1 talks about you have a strong city whose walls are salvation. And 60.18 says you will call your walls salvation and your gate praise. What's the point of imagery like that? What's he saying? All right, they're closed in with him.

Good, good. What else? Walls are sort of like the helmet of salvation. All right, the helmet of salvation.

Salvation becomes your protection. And its gates praise. What's the point of that imagery? All right, the entry to praise.

Pardon? All right, it faces out. Those who come through the gates come through with praise. Lift up your heads, you mighty gates, that the king of glory may come in.

Yes, yes. So, there's a sense in which salvation is, if you will, static in the sense that it provides our protection, it encloses us, but praise is the entrance and exit of our lives in relation to him. That kind of imagery is worth your thinking about when you're reading the Bible devotionally.

It's easy for us to just sort of, our eyes sort of skitter across the surface and we don't really think, now what's that about? Your walls are salvation. Yep, okay, what's the next verse say? So, it's worth your time, in poetry especially, to try to think, what is this imagery, what's the author seeking to convey by using that kind of imagery? Now, verse 21. Your people shall all be righteous.

Go back to 58 verses 6 through 8. And I want to ask the question, is this, when it says, your people will all be righteous, I want to ask you, is that a real condition, or is it just a declaration of a position? Okay, you're right, Candice, we're talking about behavior there in 58, aren't we? We're talking about lifestyle, yes, yes. Exactly, and so, again, there are many people who will say in regard to this whole passage, no, no, this is the righteousness that is by faith. God declares that we are righteous, even though we're not.

I don't think so. Now, to be sure, to be sure, in justification, we are given the righteousness of Christ. We are put in the place of Christ.

That is a theological truth. But, I want to insist, we cannot stop there. He gives us that position in order that we might manifest that character.

He gives it to us, then what are we going to do with it? Exactly, yes, yes. So, in Philippians, Paul says, I want the righteousness that comes by faith. And many people will say, that's a position.

God looks at you through Jesus' colored glasses, he sees you as righteous, even though we all know you're not righteous, but it's righteousness by faith, not by works. Well, that misses the point. Can I be good enough for God in my strength? Absolutely not.

How can you and I live the life of God in our relationships, in our behavior, in our lifestyle? Only one way, by faith. Do you see my point? Character change is by faith. It's not a question of character change, oh that's works, and position, that's faith.

No, it's both. We come into a new position, no longer enemies, but sons and daughters, by faith. Thank God.

And by faith, we are enabled to live God's life. All right. Your people shall all be righteous.

The branch of my planting. Now, I want you to keep your eye on that phrase. The branch of my planting.

Way back in chapter one, the people were compared to a dried-up forest that is tender for the fire that's going to sweep through. This language of trees runs through the book. Trees can be arrogant, they can be upstanding, they can be proud, or they can be a blessed gift from God.

Okay, keep your eye on that. Now then, chapter 61, one to three. And I ask you to look at chapter 11, verses one to three, and the key thing I was hoping you would see there is the same emphasis on the Spirit.

Chapter 11, in its discussion of the Messiah, speaks about how the Spirit is going to live His life through the Messiah. And so here it is again. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.

Why? Because the Lord has anointed me. Now I'm perfectly confident, and I could be perfectly wrong, but I'm perfectly confident this is what's going on in Jesus' baptism. Again, I hope there are instant replays on these things.

I want to see John's face, you know? He's baptizing these people in the name of God, in the name of God, in the name of God, in the... Jesus, what are you doing here? You ought to be baptizing me! And Jesus says, let us fulfill all righteousness. John, let's do the right thing here. What's the right thing? To demonstrate as the Spirit of God comes down on this man, He really is the Messiah.

Why is the Spirit upon me? Because the Lord has anointed me. So, no, Jesus didn't need to receive the Holy Spirit. One of the heresies of the Church is that Jesus became the Son of God when He got anointed by the Spirit, to which I say reverently, hogwash.

He was the second person of the Trinity from the beginning of the beginnings. He didn't become anything here, but this was a symbolic action that confirmed this one really was the Messiah. He is, in fact, fulfilling Isaiah 61.

Now, what is the anointed one going to do? Can we list it here? All right, he's going to preach. He's going to bring good news to whom? The poor. Blessed are the poor, Luke says.

And I don't think that Matthew is wrong when he says, to the poor in spirit. Sometimes we who are rich use that as a kind of an excuse, but typically it is the poor who are contrite. That's what we're talking about here.

We've seen that note running all the way through the book. Those people who can stand in themselves and in their own righteousness, they have nothing to hear from God. Again, Jesus confirmed that.

You don't send the doctor to somebody who's well. You send the doctor to somebody who knows they need help. All right, what else is he going to do? He's going to heal the brokenhearted.

What else? Freedom for the captives. What else? Release the prisoners. Pardon the prisoners? He will announce the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance for our God.

And I hope by this time I don't need to talk to you about vengeance in this context. This is good news and not bad news. And to comfort those who mourn.

Now again, I think if you know this passage and you hear the Beatitudes, you know what this guy is claiming. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Yeah.

And all those people standing there on that hillside are saying, wait a minute. Who is this? But wait a minute. I'm from Nazareth.

I knew him when he was a runny-nosed kid running up and down the streets. What's he saying? The oil of gladness instead of mourning. The garment of praise instead of a faint spirit.

Now here's where I'm coming to. The latter statement in verse 3. Why is he going to do all this? Give them a new name. The planting of the Lord.

That they may be called oaks of righteousness. The planting of the Lord. Remember that? The branch he has planted.

The planting of the Lord that he may be glorified. Yeah. He's going to turn us into trees.

He's going to start his own plantation. Not the southern plantation where we're all slaves, but a tree plantation. Rooted, fruitful, productive.

A blessing. That's his goal. Those who are contrite.

Those who are broken-hearted over their sin. Those who are captive to their sin. Those who mourn.

Lord, God has anointed me. Yes. Beauty for ashes, I think.

Yes. Beauty for ashes. And again, you remember back at the end of chapter 3, where the beautiful women of Zion, with every kind of accoutrement that you can imagine, walked along with ankle bracelets that were linked together, of course, so they couldn't stride like they're walking through a plowed field, but they have to take little mincing steps.

And God says, yeah, in place of that beautiful embroidered sash, there's going to be a rope. In place of that beautiful coiffure, there's going to be baldness. Which I take personally, but anyway.

But here, we've turned it on its head. Beauty for ashes. The ashes of our unrighteousness.

The ashes of our brokenness. The ashes of our failure. His beauty.

The question is, is the broken-hearted for sin or for grief and sorrow? And my answer is yes. I think it's inclusive. All of the things that break our hearts.

And to a significant degree, broken-heartedness is in the world because of sin. So, all of the grieving that comes to us as humans, Christ has come to deal with. And I'm confident that's why you do have that interesting language in Isaiah 53.

He has taken our pains and our illnesses, is what it literally says. Now I don't think that King James is wrong when it translates it, our griefs and our sorrows. I think those who would totally limit it to sickness and pain are wrong.

But if we were only to say it's that spiritual kind of stuff, I think that's wrong too. In the cross, he has taken all the pain, the grief, the illness, the sorrow of this world, and has taken it into himself. And I always, I can never get away from this in meditating on Good Friday.

Think of it. In those three or four hours, all the pain, all the grief, all the horror, all the tragedy of this world came upon him. It's no wonder that he sweat drops of blood in Gethsemane and asked God if there was another way.

Many people have gone to martyrdom singing. So, what's the matter with this Jesus fella? A wimp? Oh no. Oh no.

Because of what was going to come to him. And he was able to proclaim freedom as a result. All right, our time is gone.

And we've got a ways to go here yet. Let me just quickly point out some things. Now we're starting down the other side of the hill.

We've come to the apex here in 61.1-3. And in a real way, what's the goal of the whole thing? That they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. In a real sense, that's the apex of it all right there. Now we start down the other side.

They shall build up the ancient ruins. They shall raise up the former devastations. They shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

Strangers will stand and tend your flocks. Foreigners will be your plowmen and your vinedressers. These people that oppressed you are going to be your slaves.

They're going to do your menial work for you. Why? Verse 6, so that you can be called the priests of God. They will speak of you as the ministers of our God.

You will eat the wealth of the nations. In their glory, you will boast. Ah, remember what God said back in Exodus 19? In that chapter that's preparing them for the covenant? If you accept my covenant, you will be a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

They thought that to have the kingdom of God was to have a Davidic monarch on the throne, that they would be an independent nation-state whose independence was guaranteed by a standing army, and that would be what it meant to be the kingdom of God. They came back from exile and none of that is possible. There's no Davidic monarch.

They are not rich. They are not the center of the world. They have no army.

They have no independent state. So, it's over. Now, folks, you have a chance to become what you were meant to be, the priests of the world, for God's sake.

And in a real sense, that was when they began to recover their sense of identity, when they said, ah, we can become a nation of priests. Now, I don't think they still understood that that priesthood was really for others. They saw it as simply, okay, we're going to serve God.

But what's a priest? A priest is a mediator who stands between God and the world. So if the oppressors, the former oppressors, become your menial servants, it becomes the opportunity for you to finally become what you were called to be in the outset. All right, push on a bit farther.

I'll rejoice in the Lord, and my soul will exult in my God. This is verse 10. For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation.

He has covered me with the robe of righteousness. As a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, as a bride adorns herself with her jewels, for as the earth brings forth its sprouts, as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations. Now, if you have the RSV or the NRSV, or even the NIV in some cases, in a lot of these places where the word righteousness appears, you'll find vindication, particularly here in verse 11.

He will cause vindication and praise to sprout up before all the nations. No, not so the NLT. The NLT got it right.

Do you see the difference between vindication and righteousness? Now, what they're doing is they're saying, well, that's God's righteousness displayed in you. That is your vindication. Again, there's a theological reading there.

The text says he will make righteousness. It doesn't say God's righteousness. Righteousness will spring up before the nations.

For Zion's sake, I'll not keep silent. For Jerusalem's sake, I'll not be quiet until her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a burning torch. Now, notice, and I am going to let you go before midnight.

Notice that pairing. Not P-A-R-I-N-G, but P-A-I-R-I-N-G. Remember what I've said about Hebrew poetry, that the same point is made twice, but using synonyms.

So, righteousness is paired with salvation. Now, each one of them offers something to the other. They're not just plain synonyms.

So, what is it to be saved? It is to be enabled to display the righteousness of God in your life. But, by the same token, the only way you can ever display the righteousness of God in your life is as a result of God's divine salvation. I'm a good man.

I'm righteous. The way God calls people to be righteous. And if you people would work a little harder, you could be as good as I am.

Never, never, never. Oh well, I'm saved. So, it doesn't matter how I live.

No, each one informs the other. To be saved is to live the righteousness of God. But you cannot possibly live the righteousness of God without gracious salvation.

They're interlinked. God works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Yes, yes.

Work out your own salvation with trembling. Because God is doing it. Wonderful, wonderful mix there.

Okay, let me just point out a couple of more things and we'll stop. In these remaining verses, here it is again. The nations will see your righteousness.

All the kings your glory. Here righteousness and glory are paired. You'll be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.

You will be a crown of beauty. Again, here's another one of those themes. You go all the way back to chapter 28.

And Samaria is the crown on the head of the drunks at the head of the verdant valley. You'll be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord. No more forsaken.

There's another term that has appeared before. You'll be called Hepzibah. We don't name our daughters that anymore.

But that literally means my delight is in her. It's a beautiful name. Yeah, or Hepsi.

When we were trying to decide if we would use a nickname for our daughter Elizabeth, Karen proposed Betsy. And I said, no, we had a cow named Betsy. That won't work.

So, he speaks about her as his bride. And finally, verse 10, go through, go through the gates. Prepare the way for the people.

Build up, build up the highway. Use a concordance and look up the highway in the book of Isaiah. And you'll find it very interesting.

Lift up a signal. Some versions, and I really kind of like it better say a banner. A signal flag.

Look that one up. Say to the daughter of Zion, behold, your salvation comes. Behold, his reward is with him.

His recompense before him. And they shall be called the holy people. The redeemed of the Lord.

You shall be called sought out. A city not forsaken. Yes.

God enables his people to be righteous. The divine warrior whose blood stains his garments. He is the one who is anointed of the Lord to preach good news.

That one. And the result is you'll be the bride of God in whom he takes pride. And all the nations will come to your God because of you. Amen.

Let me pray. Father, thank you for these days together around your word. Thank you for these dear friends. And I pray, oh God, that some of the things that we have talked about will find lodging in their hearts. That you will indeed convince them how precious they are to you.

And you will indeed display your beauty in their lives. In ways that will draw men and women to you. Thank you, Jesus. In your name, amen.

God bless you all. This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah.

This is session number 30, Isaiah chapters 63 through 66.