



## 2021 1Q Isaiah: Lesson 2 Crisis of Leadership

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

### SABBATH

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Read fifth paragraph, “People do, indeed, want strong trustworthy leadership.” What does strong trustworthy leadership look like to you?

When I was in the military strong leadership was emphasized—a good commander did certain things:

- Never asked his soldiers to do what he was unwilling to do if in that position
- Share the soldier’s experience—i.e. do PT with your soldiers, go into the field and do field exercises with your soldiers, maintain the same fitness for duty—physically, but weapons qualification or any other certification for your unit.
- Always ensure the troops eat and rest before you do, at chow time, eat last.
- Inspect the troops and require they maintain their gear, personal fitness, cleanliness, order
- Ensure your troops have the resources they need to fulfill their mission
- Ensure they are taking care of themselves, adequate hydration, food, rest, inspect their feet on road marches etc.
- Discipline those troops who need it

These are just some of the actions a good leader in the military takes. What was the purpose of the commander taking such actions? To let the troops know:

- He cared about their welfare
- He understood them, their struggles, what they had to do and was willing to share their burdens
- He wanted them to be the best they could be

A good commander wants his troops to trust him and following his orders.

Do you see Jesus doing many of these things? He:

- Became one of us
- Took our burden of sin and has been tempted in every way just like we are
- We know He knows our struggles
- He doesn’t ask us to do anything He wouldn’t do
- He puts us first, ultimately sacrificing Himself for us
- He disciplines us to develop us to our max
- He provides us with all we need to fulfill our mission for Him
- He inspects us to see what we need, where we need pruning and strengthening

Has Jesus earned our trust and are we willing to following Him?



As you think about leadership, what are the qualities that you want in a leader?

I did a lot of reading preparing for this lesson, explored articles on what makes great leaders. Let's explore this idea of what makes a good leader and then ask which do you value in a leader?

- Honesty
- Integrity (own mistakes, puts safety/quality over profits/does what's right/moral/ethical)
- Sincerity/enthusiasm
- Ability to listen to others and hear what is said
- Decisive—can assimilate information, integrate it, and make decisions
- Visionary—has a vision to where they want to go or goal to achieve
- Confident—but humble
- Great Communicator
- Competent
- Loyal to subordinates and/or the organization
- Delegates and empowers others and rejoices in their successes
- Problem solver
- Self-disciplined/motivated/self-starter
- Empathic/emotional intelligence
- High energy and resilient
- High intelligence
- Loves—other-centered, puts others or mission first
- Just and fair
- Kind
- Sensible or reasonable
- Discerning
- Lover of truth—lifelong learner
- Follower of God's will
- Can forgive—doesn't hold grudges

Was there anything on this list you didn't agree with?

But let's go back though and ask—is there anything missing? Is there something vital that we don't have on the list that even if we seek to use this list we may still end up with bad leaders?

For instance:

- Honesty
  - If honesty is what most people want in leaders, why do so many politicians have histories of dishonesty and why do they get re-elected?
  - Can a person be honest yet misguided, confused, or simply wrong?
- Integrity (own mistakes, puts safety/quality over profits/does what's right/moral/ethical)
  - If integrity is what most people want in leaders, why do so many politicians have histories of a lack of integrity and why do they keep getting re-elected?



- Can a person have integrity but not understand the situation or what to do?
- Sincerity/enthusiasm—someone who can inspire others
  - Does it matter what the person is sincere about? If we have a charismatic, sincere, enthusiastic leader who inspires people does that mean they know where they are going? If someone is sincerely wrong are we wise to follow them?

What about qualities like:

- Loves, is other-centered, puts others or the mission first
  - Would this make someone safe to follow?
  - Can a person love others and put the mission first, but have no idea what they are doing, where they are going, how to fulfill the mission?
  - Can a person be completely self-centered, but present themselves as interested in others, compassionate, and concerned? In other words, can we know the heart motives or only the public demeanor of someone we don't have intimate knowledge of?
- Just and fair
  - How can you determine if someone is just and fair?
  - By the reports of people?
  - If you don't know all the variables, all the secret details of the various cases or issues, can you truly know whether the person is just or fair?
    - Psychiatrists have strict confidentiality responsibilities—not even disclosing if a person is their patient. If a disgruntled patient goes online and writes a scathing review or goes throughout their church and speaks cruelly about the psychiatrist, the psychiatrist cannot respond, must remain silent. The psychiatrist cannot disclose the person was selling controlled prescriptions, or overusing them and refused to get into rehab, but must allow the false reports to circulate without comment. Can you tell if the psychiatrist is just and fair by the gossip or online reviews?
- Kind
  - What determines what is kind and what is cruel?
  - Can you always tell by the action itself? Do the circumstances matter?
  - Can people tell whether another person is kind or cruel based on how it feels—it felt unkind?
    - Is it kind to relieve someone's pain? How about it means doing their physical therapy for them? Or preventing them from feeling pain when they touch a hot stove, or removing their guilt and shame for sin before they repent?
- Sensible or reasonable
  - What determines whether something is sensible or reasonable? Would a person's intelligence, understanding, wisdom, perspective impact our understanding?
    - When Jesus refused to go to Passover and publicly declare Himself as His brothers encouraged Him to do, did His brothers think Jesus was being sensible?
    - When Jesus went to Jerusalem crucifixion weekend, did His loyal disciples think He was being sensible or reasonable?
    - How many turned away from Jesus after He said they must eat His flesh and drink His blood? Why? Did they think Jesus was being unreasonable?



- Do our own biases, prejudices, beliefs impact our ability to understand? Do we accept as reasonable things that are unreasonable because we are immature? What determines whether something is reasonable or not? Would harmony with God's design for life, what is actually healthy, in harmony with reality be a factor? Does rule-enforcement or rule-keeping sometimes work contrary to reality and end up being unreasonable?
- Discerning
  - How can we tell whether a leader has discernment or not?
  - Would we need to have discernment ourselves?
- Follower of God's will
  - Is this the litmus test—the one that can tell us who we can trust as our leader?
  - Certainly we don't want leaders who refuse to follow God's will, but how can we tell if someone is following God's will?
  - When false Messiahs come, as Jesus said they would, who will they claim they are following?
  - Can someone actually be following God's will, yet we are still not to follow them?
    - For instance, can someone be called by God to an action, yet God has called us to a different action?
  - So even if someone is a follower of God, does that always mean we are to follow them?
- What if someone has genuine gifts of the Spirit, such as the gift of prophecy, surely we could follow anyone who has confirmed genuine gifts of the Spirit, right?
  - If that is so, then we would follow the Apostle Peter when he refused to associate with certain people? Or would we have some way to realize this leader of God's church should not be followed but corrected, as Paul did (Galatians 2:11-13)?

What are we missing? Is there any element you can think of that would be required to help us differentiate a leader from God from an imposter?

What about leaders who:

- Understand Design Law and God's methods and principles—meaning they actually speak and promote integrated truth applying the integrative evidence-based approach that harmonizes Scripture, Science and Experience. They demonstrate a knowledge of how reality works and their explanations make sense and are testable, reproducible and reasonable. They practice the principles of truth, love and liberty, meaning they don't coerce people who won't agree or follow, but leave them free and show respect for them as people.
- Understand the Great Controversy over God's character and methods
- Demonstrate the ability to make evidence-based, not feelings-based, decisions—a leader who can be aware of feelings, but isn't governed or swayed by feelings—in other words they follow the truth
- Have maturity, they possess the ability to discern at a minimum of level 6 of moral development, but even better would be level 7
- Have a record of outcomes people can review to evaluate whether their rhetoric comports with reality



If someone doesn't actually know God, God's methods, God's design laws upon which reality is built, the issues in the Great Controversy then they may be:

- Honest yet lead by wrong methods, wrong principles and false ideas
- Sincere/enthusiastic but lead in wrong directions
- Decisive but their decisions may frequently be harmful
- Visionary but their vision will likely be warped
- Confident but their confidence will be misplaced
- Seek to be just and fair but their justice may be punitive, worldly, warped, like the justice of the Pharisees who wanted to stone Jesus, and who did stone Stephen etc.
- Claim to reasonable but may actually be unreasonable as they apply the world's methods of rule enforcement instead of God's principles for life and health

The principles of good leadership are very difficult to determine in people with whom we don't have a personal relationship. So, the best approach is for each of us to develop our ability to reason and discern, meaning:

- we have our own personal relationship with God
- we understand God's character, design laws, principles, and purposes
- we have a working knowledge of Scripture, meaning we use the integrative evidence-based approach to knowing truth
- and then we examine the evidence of a person's achievement—the outcomes along with the stated mission, purpose, platform, goals of a proposed leader and decide if they are someone who we could support for the role they are pursuing because we share their goals, support their vision or mission, and have evidence of their achievements.

We are in the last days of human history, now more than ever the people of God need discernment, need to be able to tell who are on God's team and who are not, where God leading and where the enemy of God is leading.

Consider this quotation from the book *The Great Controversy*, in which this author describes the final deception coming upon the world:

Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. **The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived.**

I want to pause here and consider this. When you hear spirits of devils what do you hear? Does this mean simply attitudes of devils? Does it mean fallen angels in the room bringing evil emotions, ideas, influences? Does it mean ghosts or apparitions appearing? Any or all of this? Could it mean humans with Satan's worldview, Satan's values, Satan's methods going to world leaders to influence them? Could it mean fallen angels presenting themselves in the form of human beings? We have accounts of God's angels in the Bible presenting themselves as human



beings, can Satan's angels present themselves as humans to humans to deceive? Could it mean that devils will go forth to the kings of the earth as human counselors to deceive?

Consider these quotes from the same author who wrote *The Great Controversy*:

Satan will use every opportunity to seduce men from their allegiance to God. **He and the angels who fell with him will appear on the earth as men, seeking to deceive.** God's angels also will appear as men, and will use every means in their power to defeat the purposes of the enemy.—Manuscript Releases 8:399 (1903). LDE 160.2

Who will they seek to deceive? Just the kings of the earth? Consider this quote:

**Evil angels in the form of men will talk with those who know the truth. They will misinterpret and misconstrue the statements of the messengers of God.....**—Selected Messages 3:411 (1903). LDE 160.3

Notice that the devils go to the leaders of the world **seeking to deceive**, but the devils go to those who know the truth and talk with and **then go out and misrepresent them**...interesting. I don't know whether it was devils doing this, but I have had several people over the years speak to me and then turn around immediately misrepresent and misconstrue what I have said, as have others who support our ministry.

So, devils will go to the leaders of the world to deceive them and enlist them to unite with Satan in the final struggle against heaven. What methods will the devil use and will that final struggle be over?

Earlier in *The Great Controversy*:

**Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in Heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow.** [In the final deception Satan will move upon world leaders to seek to save the planet, save the earth, to make things better, but will implement policies and practices that actually destroy it. This is so obvious to those who understand God's design law. I see this happening right now, today, here in America, and around the world, I write about it, speak about it. Yet people write me defending the deception, failing to see the lie, believing the practices or policies or movements are good because they **claim** to be for good.] **And the very work which he was thus endeavoring to accomplish, he charged upon the loyal angels.** [If you haven't seen this practiced in the last four years then I don't know what to say. Leaders doing various forms of corruption, while immediately blaming the corruption on the other side.] **The same policy of deception has marked the history of the Romish Church. It has professed to act as the vicegerent of Heaven, while seeking to exalt itself above God, and to change his law.** [What is the core principle of Rome? Imperialism, imposed law that can be changed, not design law. And with imposed law comes authoritarianism, hierarchical





government, top down control, a few ruling elites dominate and exploit the masses. This was ancient Rome, it is Papal Rome and it is the form of every earthly government, that is why they are beastly. It is the kingdom of Satan. They make up their rules, contrary to God's design laws and then enforce them under penalty of the state. Those who don't comply are accused of being law breakers and fined, have their businesses closed, imprisoned, all under the guise of saving lives, of creating a better and safer government or nation. They always end up with a few ruling elites dominating the masses. God's government is the opposite the greater resources one has the more they give to help others, God the greatest is constantly giving of Himself for the welfare of His creation.] Under the rule of Rome, those who suffered death for their **fidelity to the gospel were denounced as evil-doers; they were declared to be in league with Satan**; and every possible means was employed to cover them with reproach, to cause them to appear, in the eyes of the people, and even to themselves, as the vilest of criminals. **So it will be now.** While Satan seeks to destroy those who honor God's law **he will cause them to be accused as law-breakers, as men who are dishonoring God, and bringing judgments upon the world.** GC88 591.2

What are Satan's methods? How does he deceive the leaders of the world to do his bidding? By getting them to believe that imposed laws, imperialism, rules enforced by threat is righteous and that by more laws, more control over the people the world can be saved, a better world can be our future. Yet, this method violates God's design, destroys love, incites division and rebellion, and results in God's Spirit being withdrawn as hearts and minds harden. Satan gains more control over nature, more natural disasters, pestilences and violence occurs. These are alleged to be due to those who won't comply with the new world order and their laws, and billions are deceived because they want to be safe and they turn on those who seek to honor God.

Going back to our original quote about devils going to kings to deceive them and get them to join his ranks...

**Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself**, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They **will perform wonderful miracles of healing** and will profess to have revelations from heaven **contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.** GC 624.1 [Again will all of these persons be human, or may some be fallen angels in the form of humans? Imagine the power of such a deception of this occurred today and people dying of COVID in the ICU were miraculously healed by the thousands? How many would be deceived? What testimony of Scripture do you think they will contradict? Won't it be the truth about God's character and government—design law? Won't it be that they claim that disobedience to God's law is causing the problem and that people must return to faithfulness to God and obey His law, but His law will be presented as imposed and they will say that if people don't obey, then justice will require punishment. How many will go along? How many are going along now with the COVID rules that almost all are done without due process of law and in many cases actually violate the law?]

**As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ.** [After other false Christ's performing miracles have come, so the Bible can be fulfilled that



false Christ's come first, then Satan impersonating Christ appears. How many will embrace him as their leader? The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will **make it appear that Christ has come**. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as **a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation**. Revelation 1:13-15. **The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld.** [What method is the devil using here? Signs, wonders, miracles, charisma, charm, which plays on the emotions, thrills the heart, but does not bring enlightenment, it shuts down inquiry, blunts reason.] The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, **while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them**, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. **His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered;** [What leadership qualities will Satan present? He will appear honest, sincere, humble, kind, gentle, compassionate, gracious, presenting the SAME truths Jesus spoke as recorded in the Bible., should we follow him? How will we know not to? He does more,] **he heals the diseases of the people,** [He heals, this is love, this is service, another leadership quality we value. Why not follow him, how will we know? Next the author describes one action that would expose him what is it?] and then, in his assumed character of Christ, **he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed...** [What is the action here described? The specific is action described by this author is changing the day from Sabbath to Sunday, but what is the true issue at stake? Claiming that God's law is arbitrary, imposed, functions like human law and is subject to amending or changing and therefore, since it is not design law, requires external enforcement through imposed punishment. This is the real deception, hidden behind the change in the day. This means, that the evil one could potentially do the same thing with another specific, as long as God's law is viewed as imposed, and God as the punisher of law breakers.] Acts 8:10. GC 624.2

Do we have a crisis in leadership in the world today? Are we prepared to discern leadership that is from God, from leadership that is from God's enemy? Can anyone do this for you? Then what is required of you?

## SUNDAY

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Read number 1 & 2, "Although Uzziah's reign..." Why did God strike Uzziah with leprosy? Was it because Uzziah broke a rule and tried to do what only priests could do?

If so, why didn't David get struck with leprosy when he ate the showbread and gave it to his men, which only the priest were authorized to do?





Is there anything of saving value in the rituals of the sanctuary? Were any of the rituals required to be performed in order for someone to be saved? If so, how was anyone saved during the 70 captivity when no temple services were being performed?

No, nothing of that system was required for salvation, people were saved without it. Then what was it for? It was object lesson, it was a teaching tool—it was theater.

The Temple was a grand stage, with great props and costumes and a very intricate script—we call Scripture. But the service was to teach the larger reality, the service was not the reality.

- In service the priests in their white robes represented what? The priesthood of believers who possess the righteousness of Christ, have Christlike character pure and holy.
- The showbread represents what? Jesus, there were 12 loaves which represent Jesus being sufficient to feed the 12 tribes, and the 12 tribes symbolically represents all the peoples of the world. Jesus is the bread of heaven, the Word made flesh, and we are to ingest Him into our hearts and minds.
- It was every Sabbath, that the priests would join with the High Priest in the Holy Place and eat the showbread. What does this represent or teach?
  - The High Priest represents Jesus.
  - The Holy Place represents the church with the lamp that represents the Word of God both living and written, and the believers united with Christ who are light unto the world.
  - So, every Sabbath the believers of God are to come together in worship, joined by Jesus they partake the Word of God, ingesting into our hearts and minds the truth, love, and character of Christ.
  - This is what David symbolically did when he took the bread, he nurtured himself and his men and partaking of Christ which heals and brings life. So David and his men were fine.

Why then did Uzziah get leprosy for seeking to light incense?

- What does the golden altar represent? The converted heart of the believer filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit.
- What does the incense represent? The prayers of the righteous, sweet and perfumed because they come from hearts renewed by the life of Christ.
- What did Uzziah's action represent?
  - A person renewed in godly love humbly seeking to lift up prayers to God OR a prideful arrogant unconverted person seeking to displace God's holy ones (as represented by the priests in their white robes) with his own selfish self?
  - And what is the Bible symbol for selfishness or sin? Leprosy, so since Uzziah insisted on going into the theater and stepping on stage, and taking a role that wasn't his, God respected his choice to act a part that wasn't his and gave him leprosy to appropriately teach the truth—sinfulness, selfishness numbs the heart, deadens the conscience and is a deadly disease.



So, when Uzziah went into the temple was he actually seeking holiness? No, he was seeking power and self-exaltation, thus the leprosy.

## MONDAY

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Read first two paragraphs, “Notice what was happening...” A change in leadership triggered fear....questions of who is in control? Do we ever face situations like this today where a change in leadership instills fear and questions of who is in control?

Well, who is in control? In order to answer one must ask—of what?

God controls what God controls and we control what we control—the question is what does God control?

And the key question to answering this is—how do we understand God’s law?

If one views God’s law functioning like the laws that humans make up — imposed rules requiring the ruling authority to impose punishments — then what do people think God controls? Imposed law views have imperial gods that make everything happen. This leads to bad theology like tragedies or suffering are God’s will or come from God, or natural disasters are God punishing evil.

The truth is realized when we accept that God is Creator and His laws are the protocols upon which reality is built to operate, such as the laws of physics, law of love, truth, worship, liberty, exertion, laws of health, the moral laws, and so many more. It is how reality works.

Thus, God is in control of what God controls — **and God controls Himself and all His laws.** He sustains reality; He keeps the universe running upon the protocols and laws He established. And one of those laws is the law of liberty, which grants real freedom to sentient beings. Why? Because love only exists in an atmosphere of freedom.

Does God control people or angels?

Does God control nations?

So what does it mean to be controlled by the Spirit of God? Do we become puppets? When we surrender to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit heals us and gives us the fruits of the Spirit. What is the last fruit listed? Self-control! When we are “controlled” by the Holy Spirit we are restored to beings operating upon God’s design laws and are set free to exercise authority over ourselves.

Consider this quote from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

In the work of redemption **there is no compulsion. No external force is employed.** Under the influence of **the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve.** In the change



that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, **there is the highest sense of freedom.** DA 466.4

Read last paragraph, “The transcendent holiness...” What do you think of this idea that God demands holiness from His people?

What does it mean?

What is holiness?

Consider these quote—what is holiness and why does God demand it?

**Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God;** it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; **it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial,** in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; **it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.** {AA 51.2}

**True holiness is wholeness in the service of God.** This is the condition of true Christian living. Christ asks for an unreserved consecration, for undivided service. **He demands the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength.** [Why does Christ demand this? Because it is His right? Because He has paid the price? Because He is Creator? Because He is Sovereign? No, He demands this because He is the source of life, health, happiness, and only in a surrendered relationship with Him can we have life and health and happiness. It is for our good, not His need. Anything else and we cut ourselves off from life.] Self is not to be cherished. **He who lives to himself is not a Christian.** {COL 48.4}

**Love must be the principle of action. Love is the underlying principle of God's government in heaven and earth, and it must be the foundation of the Christian's character. This alone can make and keep him steadfast. This alone can enable him to withstand trial and temptation...** {COL 49.1}

What is holiness? Restoration to God’s perfect design for life, having God’s law restored in us so that we live in perfect accord with it because it is the protocol life is built upon. Holiness then is perfect harmony with God.

## TUESDAY

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The lesson is about Isaiah having an angel take a coal from the golden altar and touch his lips. What does this represent?



The coals represent the fire that purifies, which is the same fire that fell at Pentecost, it is the fire of God, the fire of the Holy Spirit, the fire of truth and love that purges lies, fear, selfishness, and enlightens and ennobles. It is the fire that is to live in the hearts of all the believers.

Why touch it to Isaiah's lips?

From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, Jesus said. The mouth represents the expression of the heart, Isaiah is being empowered to express, communicate, speak the truth about God, His kingdom of love, character of love, and the fulfillment of the promise given to Adam of the coming Messiah.

## WEDNESDAY

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Why did this happen to Isaiah?

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:8 NIV84

Why was Isaiah equipped for God's service? Because Isaiah was willing!

What about us?

God equips and empowers all who surrender to Him to fulfill roles and engage in service for God's kingdom in various avenues that God knows that person will be most useful in.

However, will God empower people to take a false gospel to the world? So God's equipping isn't just skills like ability to speak in public, God's equipping is enlightening with truth—Isaiah was enlightened to see reality of the condition of Israel, of God's methods, of the contrast between legalism and healing hearts and minds, of bringing God's principles to bear. Isaiah also saw the larger Great Controversy reality and the coming Messiah to cure the sin condition, not use the methods of power and might.

So, equipping by God will always be equipping into God's design laws and methods.

## THURSDAY

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Read second paragraph, "God does not..." This has some really good insights, the more we resist truth, the harder we become.

Read last paragraph, "Clearly Pharaoh..." This also has good insights in the process...how do we understand the process of hearts being hardened?



- The Lord said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. **But I will harden his heart** so that he will not let the people go.” Exodus 4:21
- "Yet **Pharaoh’s heart became** hard and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said." Ex 7:13
- "But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, **he hardened his heart** and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said." Exodus 8:15

So, who hardened Pharaoh’s heart? What is God’s role, what is Pharaoh’s role? Was Pharaoh a puppet, was he free?

What causes a heart to harden?

When the Bible describes Jesus standing at the door to the heart knocking, what is that representing? With what does Jesus knock upon the door to our hearts? Truth and love—what happens to a heart when truth and love are rejected?

If a person never rejects truth or love do they harden as much?

So what happened to Pharaoh? God provided evidence after evidence, truth after truth that the gods of Egypt were false and He was the true Creator, and Pharaoh was convicted, but later rejected the truth. And what is the result to any heart that rejects truth—it hardens.

God’s role in Egypt was to present the truth to which Pharaoh had to decide how he would respond. If no truth had been presented to Pharaoh his heart would not have hardened against God as it was, but when truth is presented, and we reject it, the rejection of truth results in hardening of the heart.

**So why did God present truth to Pharaoh when He, in His foreknowledge, knew Pharaoh would reject it and experience a hardened heart?**

Even though Pharaoh was going to reject the truth, God knew it is only by the presentation of truth that sinners can be set free (John 8:32). God would not deny Pharaoh the opportunity to be freed from sin. God would not deny Pharaoh the opportunity to be saved. Therefore God presented truth to Pharaoh in order to reach his heart and save him.

God did not force Pharaoh’s will. Pharaoh freely chose to reject the truth and when Pharaoh hardened his heart, God used Pharaoh as a powerful demonstration of the futility of worshipping false gods. The lessons of Egypt were publicized throughout the ancient world and awareness of the true God spread.

Therefore, God presents truth, which sets free all those who accept it, but God does not force the will of individuals to either accept or reject the truth. When we reject the truth our hearts harden in proportion to the truth rebuffed. The Bible record of all three descriptions of this event is accurate.



God hardened Pharaoh's heart by presenting truth in such a way that Pharaoh was forced to make a decision upon it. But it was Pharaoh who hardened his own heart by rejecting the truth and refusing to repent.

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