



2021 1Q Isaiah: Lesson 4 The Hard Way

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read memory Text: “And I will wait on the LORD, who hides His face from the house of Jacob; and I will hope in Him.” (Is 8:17 NKJV).

What does it mean the Lord is hiding his face?

Story of a blind girl who needed to jump from a building but wouldn't until she heard her father's voice and then she listened.

How can we know the voice of God?

Why Did God speak to Enoch, Moses, Abraham, but not others?

I love this quote from *The Desire of Ages*:

“As Christ lived the law in humanity, so we may do if we will take hold of the Strong for strength. But we are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. **The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength.** Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised. Whatever was given to Christ--the "all things" to supply the need of fallen men--was given to Him as the head and representative of humanity. And "whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22. {DA 668.4}

Read last paragraph, “In the same way, God...” Do we have examples in Scripture of God's preferred method of communicating? If you had to lay out the progression of God dealing with us what would it be?

- Approach us gently
 - Adam in Eden
 - The Bible for us to read
 - The Holy Spirit moves upon our hearts and minds
- Speak louder and even threaten



- God at Sinai and other places in the OT
- Discipline in various ways
 - Miriam and Aaron struck with leprosy
 - No rain for 3.5 years during Ahab's reign
- Send envoys, spokespersons—human or angelic
 - All the Bible prophets
 - Angels going to Lot
 - All of God's friends through history sharing the gospel
- Sent Jesus to become human
 - Reveals the truth about God
 - Exposes the lies of Satan
 - Proves God is trustworthy
 - Provides the Remedy to our sin condition
- Sends the Holy Spirit
 - Convicts of sin
 - Convicts of duty
 - Enlightens
 - Empowers
 - Transforms and regenerates
- Loosen His protection and allow us to reap what we sow
 - Scorpions and snakes in the desert
 - Babylonian captivity
 - Many circumstances in all of our lives when we rebel
 - What we see happening in the world today as hearts harden He respects their choice and withdraws
- Let us go completely
 - King Saul
 - Judas
 - The wicked in the end

What is God's goal? What does God want to accomplish? Our restoration to perfection, freeing us from sin and restoring us to unity with Him, which results in life, health, happiness—eternally.

Why does God let anyone go if He loves them?

What would the experience of a person who hates God, who hates love, who is hardened in selfishness, who gets pleasure out of torturing others be if they were to find themselves in God's presence?

If God does love them at least as much as you love your own child, would God use power to miraculously keep them alive in order for them to suffer? What is the reason for their suffering and torture? What is the only act of love God can do for those who insist on rebellion from Him?



If God does let them go, sever all connection from Him with them, and God is the source of life, what happens?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “In Isaiah 7:14-16...” Let’s go back to last week’s lesson and read Wednesday starting with the third paragraph and read the end of the lesson, “Nowhere does the Old Testament...”

So, what is your understanding of the young woman in Isaiah 7 and the child?

If this is referring only to Jesus how would that be helpful to Ahaz as a sign that the two armies threatening him would leave?

If it referring only to Isaiah’s son how would that child fulfill the meaning of Immanuel?

So, what is the solution?

This prophecy refers to two children, that is why the Hebrew for young woman can be a virgin or not, because the first child was specifically for Ahaz’s benefit. This is the child who will still be too young to tell right from wrong when the armies leave. But there will be a second woman and a second child who will be God with us. This second woman will be a virgin as confirmed by the New Testament writers, and this second child will be Immanuel and will be further described in Isaiah 9.

What is curds? It is something made from milk—it could be cottage cheese, butter, yogurt, buttermilk and various translations render it differently, but it is a milk-based product.

What is the significance of mentioning this?

When the Hebrews left Egypt and were going into Canaan how was the land described? A land flowing with “milk and honey” Exodus 3:17, which is a way of saying a land of plenty, a land with abundance, with rich resources. So, in the face of the desolation caused by the invasion in which food was scarce, the promise of God is that before this promised child is old enough to know right from wrong, left from right, there will be enough food for all who trust God.

Is there a lesson for us today?

Israel was facing invasion and God sends a message that those who are faithful will be provided for—is this relevant for the people at the end of time?

Read the bottom green section, “Think, if you were living...” Four years ago in the USA many people experienced a crisis when President Trump was elected, currently there are many on the other side experiencing a crisis as Biden and the democrats are declared to be the winners.



What does all of this mean for the Christian?

Have people on the political left voiced concerns about injustice happening over the last four years?

Have people on the political right voiced concerns about injustice happening in this election?

When you believe you have been treated unfairly, when you are convinced an injustice has occurred—wrongly convicted of a crime, punished for something you did not do, defrauded of your property and no court will give you a hearing...when injustice happens what does it do to you?

Does it stir up more, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” Galatians 5:22-23

The kingdoms of this world are whose? Satan’s—all of them.

And upon what type of law do they operate? Imposed, arbitrary rules, open to manipulation and abuse.

If we place our faith in human governments, human courts, human legal/justice what will be the outcome—always, in every government in the entire world through all history? Injustice, abuse, exploitation, unfairness.

The human systems given the illusion of justice—but they are unjust—all of them. To the degree that the legislators, judges, administrators, and staffers are more godly, more kind, loving, compassionate, truthful, honest, then their actions will also be more just and the injustice of arbitrary laws and Satan’s system will be mitigated by the righteous motives of the godly people holding the various levers of government. But injustice will still happen because the system itself is arbitrary, not everyone is righteous, human biases abound, ignorance, limited knowledge, and outright selfishness that manipulates the system still occurs.

But human governments become even more unjust as the people become more godless. And when your faith is in the law, in the government, in the system being fair, and you find that it isn’t, what is the reaction? Outrage, hurt, anger, disillusionment, disappointment, discouragement, violence. We see a wrong and we must make it right. This is depicted in movies all the time with the many vigilante justice stories—when the system is corrupt we all long for a hero to come in and do whatever it takes to make it right. But such actions are not in keeping with God’s kingdom of love and they are not godly justice.

As hearts turn away from God and harden against Him and the Holy Spirit is withdrawn will we see more love or less? Will human governments give us more justice or more injustice?

And what contributes to hearts turning away from God? Would teaching godless evolutionism, secularism, humanism, communism have any impact on whether people were searching for God or turning away from Him?



Do we see the war—the spiritual war—the war over the knowledge of God raging? We like Ahaz have to make a decision, when we see our world being attacked by those who are against God, the evolutionist, the secularist, the humanist, the communist—will we, like Ahaz, turn to another human agency to deliver us, or will we turn to God?

The Bible tells us that people, including many who claim to be Christian, will turn to human systems, forming a beastly coalition to promote what they believe to be right. They will work to try and save themselves, their countries, the earth itself but what method will they use? Imposed laws with coercion.

God is permitting events to transpire as they are to help us realize there is no justice in human governments. God's kingdom is not of this world. We must break away from loyalty to these human systems. We must give our hearts and our affections to God and be loyal to Him, and then we will see every human being as His child, our brothers and sisters, whether they are democrat or republican, white or black, rich or poor, Christian or agnostic, we see people either in harmony with God and getting healthier, or out of harmony and getting sicker. And when we see someone getting spiritually sicker, more selfish, more exploitive, more spiteful, more violent and we love them we grieve, but we don't embrace the methods of the world and try and force them to comply with what we think is right.

MONDAY

Read 2Kings 16:10-18:

Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest a sketch of the altar, with detailed plans for its construction. 11 So Uriah the priest built an altar in accordance with all the plans that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus and finished it before King Ahaz returned. 12 When the king came back from Damascus and saw the altar, he approached it and presented offerings on it. 13 He offered up his burnt offering and grain offering, poured out his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his fellowship offerings on the altar. 14 The bronze altar that stood before the LORD he brought from the front of the temple—from between the new altar and the temple of the LORD—and put it on the north side of the new altar. 15 King Ahaz then gave these orders to Uriah the priest: "On the large new altar, offer the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offering and his grain offering, and the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their grain offering and their drink offering. Sprinkle on the altar all the blood of the burnt offerings and sacrifices. But I will use the bronze altar for seeking guidance." 16 And Uriah the priest did just as King Ahaz had ordered. 17 King Ahaz took away the side panels and removed the basins from the movable stands. He removed the Sea from the bronze bulls that supported it and set it on a stone base. 18 He took away the Sabbath canopy that had been built at the temple and removed the royal entryway outside the temple of the LORD, in deference to the king of Assyria. (NIV84)

What are the lessons in this for us today?



Here is what is happening:

- Ahaz was king of Judah
- Judah is being threatened with invasion
- Ahaz doesn't turn to the Lord but goes to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria
- The Assyrian king requires that Judah submit to his authority
- Ahaz erects an altar to the Assyrian god and instructs that the sacrifices to Yahweh be made now to the god of Assyria on this new altar
- The priests build the altar and sacrifice on it and Ahaz also officiates as a priest sacrificing at this new altar

What is the lesson for us today?

When we are threatened do we turn to the God of heaven or to the gods of this world? Do our church leaders resist the call to align with the gods of this world, or do they willingly go along with what the world wants?

Ahaz didn't tear down the temple; he introduced into the temple system a foreign element, a foreign altar to a foreign god and moved the brazen altar from its place and introduced practices that were not in keeping with God's instructions.

Do we find in Christianity that unchristian ideas have entered? Has God's law be replaced with imposed human law? Has God's justice of healing hearts and minds and purging sin from characters been replaced with legal recording of sins and infliction of torture for the unrepentant? Has the priesthood of believers, rather than promoting the truth that God is like Jesus in character, instead advanced a false god of imposed rules who tortures people in hell?

Do we see movements happening in the world today that are motivating people to embrace more of the methods of the world in their religious beliefs and in their community and governmental practices?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Can you imagine..." The message is that turning away from God to get security, wealth, protection, spoils, will only result in one being plundered, ruined, overrun, exploited, destroyed.

Satan is the deceiver. He cannot directly destroy someone's soul. He must get them to choose to destroy their own soul, so he tricks people by getting them to use his methods in their pursuit of justice or righteousness.



It is just and right to seek to avoid getting raped, murdered, exploited, cheated, dominated, beaten—it is wrong for such violence to occur. Seeking to prevent war is just and right, but what method do we use to stop evil—this is the question.

Satan's grand strategy, which he uses over and over again, is to do injustice of various kinds, incite outrage in those who are wronged or who observe the wrong and then get them to embrace his methods to seek to right the wrong, which only wrongs and hurts others and the cycle of violence, exploitation, injury, hurt continues on and on.

What is Jesus' method for dealing with those who wrong us?

You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. **If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.** 40 And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, **let him have your cloak as well.** 41 If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.** He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.** (Matthew 5:38-48 NIV84)

This is the final culmination of events we are heading into—the beastly systems of this world are gaining more and more power. The four angels of Revelation are loosening their hold and Satan's agencies are gaining more power, which means more injustice, more coercion, more exploitation, more fear and more fear leads to more control and less liberty, which means less love—except in the hearts of those who have severed their hearts from the world and have been sealed into the kingdom of God.

We will see injustice, fraud, deceit, exploitation—what will we do? Seek to punish, to dominate, to force or to love, forgive, and trust God with our very lives?

In preparing for the lesson this week, I came across this quote from one of the founders of the SDA church in the book *Early Writings* it describes the strategy of Satan in deceiving Adam and Eve. Consider, do you see this same strategy being employed today?

When Satan became fully conscious that there was no possibility of his being brought again into favor with God, his malice and hatred began to be manifest. He consulted with his angels, and a plan was laid to still work against God's government. When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden, Satan was laying plans to destroy them. **In no way could this happy couple be deprived of their happiness if they obeyed God. [Satan cannot corrupt any human soul. He can tempt and in this world of sin he can cause suffering, but he cannot corrupt any soul. We must choose to corrupt our own souls by believing his lies, preferring, embracing and**



practicing his methods which always violate God's design and damage us.] Satan could not exercise his power upon them unless they should first disobey God and forfeit His favor. Some plan must therefore be devised to lead them to disobedience that they might incur God's frown and be brought under the more direct influence of Satan and his angels. **It was decided that Satan should assume another form and manifest an interest for man.** [Is this strategy used today? Are there evil agencies masquerading as agents of good, representatives of powers to improve one's life, one's circumstance, to lift up out of suffering, but are in reality leading people to violate God's design and damage their own souls?] **He must insinuate against God's truthfulness and create doubt whether God did mean just what He said;** [Do we see millions deceived about God's law, His design protocols for life, who have accepted arbitrary rules and believe justice can be achieved by power over, by force, by more legislation?] next, he must excite their curiosity, and lead them to pry into the unsearchable plans of God-- the very sin of which Satan had been guilty--and reason as to the cause of His restrictions in regard to the tree of knowledge." {EW 146.2}

What do you understand the judgments of God to be?

- Do you see judgments through the human law lens as legal rulings and handing down of punishment?
- Do you see judgments through design law to be accurate diagnosis and the judgment as to the most righteous action to take in any given circumstance?

Consider this historic quote, what do you think?

"How great is the long – suffering of God toward the wicked! The idolatrous Philistines and backsliding Israel had alike enjoyed the gifts of His providence. Ten thousand unnoticed mercies were silently falling in the pathway of ungrateful, rebellious men. Every blessing spoke to them of the Giver, but they were indifferent to His love. The forbearance of God was very great toward the children of men; **but when they stubbornly persisted in their impenitence, He removed from them His protecting hand.** [Why would God remove His protective hand? What would be the result if He didn't? What would they come to believe about their sinfulness if God continued to protect them? What would happen to their hearts and minds? And in OT times what would have happened to the avenue for the Messiah?] They refused to listen to the voice of God in His **created works, and in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs of His word**, and thus **He was forced to speak to them through judgments.**" [What were His judgments? Removing His protecting hand and allowing them to reap what occurs when one is out of harmony with God. And what is the blessing to people in experiencing this?] - PP 587.4

What about today as people become more godless, what will God do? What are we seeing in the world today? What will happen as time unfolds? Revelation speaks of pouring out vials of wrath or judgments, what do we think causes this? Is it God inflicting or is it God letting go, the four angels no longer holding back the winds of strife?

Here is another historic quote:



"I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way; They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, **then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.**

It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. **He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained;** we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

I want to tell you another thing. **The vials of God's wrath** and the sprinkling of them, are already coming. **What is the matter that we do not discern it?** It is because the light of truth does not affect the heart. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the world.

You hear of calamities by land and by sea, and they are constantly increasing. What is the matter? The Spirit of God is taken away from those who have the lives of men in their hands, and Satan is coming in to control them, because they give themselves to his control. Those who profess to be the children of God do not place themselves under the guardianship of the heavenly angels, and **as Satan is a destroyer, he works through those men** and they make mistakes, and they will get drunk, and because of intemperance, many times bring these terrible calamities upon us.

And see the storms and tempests! Satan is working in the atmosphere; he is poisoning the atmosphere, and here we are dependent upon God for our lives—our present and eternal life. And being in the position that we are, **we need to be wide-awake,** wholly devoted, wholly converted, wholly consecrated to God. **But we seem to sit as though we were paralyzed. God of heaven, wake us up!** Sermons and Talks Volume 2, p. 69.3; Manuscript 1, 1890; SM book 2, p. 52

Do we see today, just as in Ahaz's day, that when the people turn away from God, harden their hearts, go after the gods of this world, the gods of imperialism, power over, force, coercion, that God sets them free to reap what they choose. And as millions harden against God His Spirit is withdrawn and satanic agencies gain more power over the earth and the people not sealed by the Holy Spirit and evil continues to rise. Are we awake to see it?

WEDNESDAY

Nothing to Fear When We Fear God Himself—what do you think of this title?



Does it sound contradictory? Are they making a word play, purposely trying to contrast the word fear to mean two different things, are they intending fear to mean the same thing both times it is used?

Read second paragraph, “God warned Isaiah...” What does it mean to fear God and give glory to Him?

The lesson asks a great question, What does it mean to fear God in light of the command for us to love Him?

Read third paragraph, “True fear of God as holy...” Does this sound like fear of a different nature or the same type, the fear of terror, anxiety, distress—watch out God is most powerful and God can get you no matter what!

In the last paragraph the lesson tries to mitigate this ugly view, let’s read the last paragraph, “There are different kinds of fear...” thoughts?

From where does fear originate? Does fear come from God, godliness, God’s law, God’s design, holiness, righteousness, love or any fruits of the Spirit? There is no fear in love the Bible says—so where does fear originate?

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid. Fear originates in sin, it is the natural result of being out of harmony with God’s law, God’s design for life.

What is the experience of people when an angel from God appears to them or they are in the presence of someone from heaven, like the apostles at the Mount of Transfiguration? Isn’t it fear? And what do the angels say to God’s prophets every time—almost always the first words? “Fear not” or “Don’t be afraid.”

Why do we initially experience fear when God when we come into His presence or when one of God’s angels or representatives appear to us? Because the holiness, truth, love of heaven exposes the corruption, sin-sickness in us and sin causes fear.

But as we trust God, as we spend time in His presence, as we embrace His truth, experience His love, practice His methods the lies are expelled, our characters are transformed and the fear is eradicated. We become friends of God who know there is no need to fear God for God is for us.

The bottom green section asks, “are there things the world fears that we as Christians shouldn’t fear? If so, what are they, and why shouldn’t we fear them? At the same time, what things does the world not fear that we Christians should?”

What things are we not to fear that the world does?

- Financial ruin?
- Public humiliation or embarrassment?
- Being labeled a racist, sexist, bigot—(not actually being one, just being labeled one)?



- Rejection—be blocked on social media?
- Global warming and climate change?
- COVID-19?
- Death?
 - “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” (Heb 2:14-15 NIV84)
- What about truth? Does the world fear truth?

What things are we to fear that the world doesn't fear?

- Sin itself, deviating from God's design laws? The world doesn't fear rebellion against God, denying His existence, deviating from His design laws, embracing deceit, selfishness, coercion.
- How many Christians have been deceived to be more afraid of God who is working to save them than the sin in their lives which is destroying them?

THURSDAY

The lesson points out that Ahaz was deeply involved in paganism sacrificing to false gods and Isaiah had a message for him about this:

Read Isaiah 8:19-20:

And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (NKJV)

What does this mean?

- The law refers to the Torah or Old Testament Scripture, God's revelation of truth to us. If it isn't in harmony with God's revealed truth then we shouldn't believe it.
- The testimony is the testimony about God given by God's spokespersons through time, the truth of God's character, design law, methods, the issues in the great controversy. If a message contracts all of this then we are not to believe it.
- Light refers to the light of truth and those who consult the dead are going to the source of lies and falsehood and there is no truth there, there is no light, only darkness.

What is spiritualism? It is the pursuit of knowledge without the investigation of evidence or the use of reason—

- Saul talking to the witch of Endor—wanted knowledge of the future
- Tarot cards
- Palm reading



- Astrology
- Tea leaves or chicken bones
- Seances
- Ouija boards
- Automatic writing

What is wrong with pursuing the occult or using these methods?

What happens to people who utilize these practices?

FRIDAY

In the quotation from the book *The Great Controversy* it states, “But the ‘familiar spirits,’ as these visitants from other worlds were called are declared by the Bible to be ‘the spirits of devils.’”

Could spiritualism take on the form of communication or visitation from aliens from other planets?

What would happen in the world today if we started receiving communications from listening stations purported to come from some other star system or galaxy?

read and discuss questions



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