



2021 1Q Isaiah: Lesson 7 Defeat of the Assyrians

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

This week we are examining the story of the defeat of the Assyrians when they attacked Judah at the time of Hezekiah.

If you lived in Judah at that time, with an army of 185,000 pressing down upon the city, an army that has just defeated every other major power in the region, what would you think and feel?

Why are these events recorded in Scripture?

“Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.” (1Corinthians 10:6 NIV84)

What is the example for us today?

Do we live in times when enemies surround us? Are all of our enemies military powers or enemies that use physical force? Could we be surrounded by spiritual enemies?

In fact, in the OT we not only have the record of real historical events, but the events themselves serve as object lessons for the larger spiritual realities. Jerusalem represents God’s kingdom; the Assyrians represents the powers of the world or of Satan’s kingdom.

The Assyrians will use a variety of tactics to try and conquer Judah. Did Judah win this battle by fighting with their own power? Is there a spiritual lesson for us when we are being attacked by spiritual forces?

What are the weapons the devil uses to attack?

He is the Father of lies—deception, falsehood originated with Satan, and lies believed breaks the circle of love and trust and results in fear and selfishness—the me-first survival drives.

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid.

This fear driven me-first survival instinct is the playground of the enemy and his various weapons or powers are used to increase fear and inflame selfishness which gives him greater control over people ultimately destroying love and the fruits of the Spirit out of the hearts of people who embrace the fear.



The Bible identifies at least six powers that Satan uses:

- First power is the power of lies—so deception—and the title of **MONDAY**'s lesson is **PROPAGANDA**

What is propaganda?

- information, ideas, or rumors deliberately spread widely to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, nation, etc.
- the deliberate spreading of such information, rumors, etc.

Propaganda is information with a specific agenda—to influence people or groups in specific ways. In other words, propaganda is information designed to get people to join sides, causes, take action or refuse to take action.

Is propaganda honest and truthful information? No—because propaganda is shaped information; it is spin; it is crafted, it will purposely highlight some facts and ignore other facts to present the information in such a way as to lead to the conclusions those who make the propaganda intend. Further, propaganda agents will not present the whole truth or full truth and will purposely obstruct or exclude or silence voices that would present evidence which undermines the propaganda.

In Hezekiah's day we see this in chapter 36 when the Assyrian king sent a representative to propagandize Judah notice what he says, in verses 4-7:

On what are you basing this confidence of yours? 5 You say you have strategy and military strength—but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? 6 Look now, you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces a man's hand and wounds him if he leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him. 7 And if you say to me, "We are depending on the LORD our God"—isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, "You must worship before this altar"? (NIV84)

What is the propaganda?

- We have a strong army and Egypt is weak, you can't rely on them to protect you
- You can't depend on your God, why? Because Hezekiah has removed the altars—do you see the propaganda? Hezekiah did go about removing the altars in the high places—all the altars except at the Temple in Jerusalem. They take this fact and spin it to say Hezekiah was offending God, Hezekiah was resisting God, Hezekiah was being unfaithful to God. Therefore God won't protect you—so be afraid of us, don't resist, surrender.

Consider this description by Ellen White of what someone did with her writings:

I have been made very sad in reading the pamphlet that has been issued by Brother Stanton and by those associated with him in the work he has been doing. **Without my consent, they have made selections from the Testimonies, and have inserted them in the pamphlet they have**



published, to make it appear that my writings sustain and approve the position they advocate. In doing this they have done that which is not justice or righteousness. Through taking unwarrantable liberties they have presented to the people a theory that is of a character to deceive and destroy. In times past many others have done this same thing, and have made it appear that the Testimonies sustained positions that were untenable and false. RH August 22, 1893, par. 1

What is it they were doing? Propagandizing—taking quotes and misapplying them to make it appear that Mrs. White said or supported a position she didn't actually support.

Do we see any examples of propaganda being used today? Do you see how the media has made an artform out of lies, falsehoods, distortions, manipulation of information all designed to get people afraid and get them to draw conclusions that the propagandizer wants? If you haven't read my blog this week about a listener concerned that I have been foolish, I would encourage you to do so. It examines the concerns, but while I don't use the word propaganda in my blog, you will see that the listener has accepted a lot of propaganda. In fact, most of the critical emails I receive are from people who have not separated facts from spin, from interpretations of the media that craft the stories in such a way to create a certain picture.

Here is an example, the propaganda around hydroxychloroquine and whether it is a safe medication or a dangerous one?

First the facts:

- hydroxychloroquine has been around on used for more than 65 years and was approved by the FDA for use in the US in 1955
- It is on the WHO's list of essential medicines
- billions of doses have been given
- it is so safe it is given to babies, the elderly, pregnant women and is routinely done so around the world
- it is an over the counter medicine in many countries of the world including France
- In many countries the citizens take a dose once a week to prevent malaria

Now the propaganda:

- In 2020 the US propaganda machine decided it needed to make people believe this is a dangerous medication, unsafe, deadly, and that taking it could kill you.
- Two articles were published in two of the world's most respected medical journals *The Lancet* and *NEJM* in 2020 both claiming that hydroxychloroquine is dangerous. The *Lancet* study claimed to have over 90,000 people from multiple countries. These articles were used by the media to blanket the country with story after story of how dangerous this medicine is and allege that the president is foolish for suggesting it could be used. Yet, when conscientious doctors began to investigate the veracity of these two articles it was discovered that they were fabricated, made up, false, a fraud and the both the *Lancet* and *NEJM* retracted the articles. Yet, the media did not report this, there was no media storm calling out the fraud and the



danger to the health of millions of Americans caused by these false articles. Instead, the media suppressed the retraction so the fear of this medication would remain. That is propaganda. Influencing the population to be terrified of a medicine with a long track record of safety—why? Just look at outcomes, impacts, consequences, what has happened in the past year with the propaganda machine in American promoting its fear messaging—are we seeing more unity or more division? Are we seeing more freedom or erosion of freedoms? Are we seeing more or less governmental power and control and coercion? Whose system is this?

Understand, there are facts and then there are interpretations of facts. Propaganda machines will take facts, like Hezekiah destroyed the altars in the high places, and then spin them or interpret them to say something false, like Hezekiah is disloyal to God or has offended God.

I could give you a long list of facts that have been propagandized in this country this past year, but I won't because inevitably some will accuse me of being political, when I am merely trying to free your minds from spin and get you to differentiate facts from interpretation of facts. I will leave it with you. In fact, I would give you this suggestion—make a list of five stories in the headlines and then separate the facts from the spin, the interpretation, and propaganda. This will be a very helpful exercise to train your mind to think for yourself.

- So Satan's first weapon is lies
- The Bible refers Mammon or money as one of Satan's powers, but it is not merely money or currency, **but human economics** that is part of Satan's kingdom. The kingdoms of the world are Satan's and they operate upon imposed law, which is made up rules, and they also operate upon economic practices that are made up and exactly opposite of God's kingdom.
 - What is the core reality, belief, foundational fact that all human economies operate upon?
 - The law of buying and selling and owning—nothing is free in this life we must pay for it; we must own it, we must purchase it with money, or labor, or trade, but there is nothing free. And the more we own the safer, more secure we are.
 - Is this how God's economy works? Or does God's economy work on free giving, everything that lives gives, gives freely without expectation of payment?
 - Mammon—the system of human economics is the system built where nothing is free, everything is bought and sold, and we are owners, we earn our way. The prices are also all arbitrary—money is an arbitrary construct. Property ownership is arbitrary—who can own, do you have mineral rights, can you drill or frack etc. all made up rules. This is opposite or unlike God's system where the CO₂ we give to the plants is exactly what we produce based on the metabolism of our bodies. It is determined by design laws of physiology that govern those processes. But human economics are not natural, are not free giving, they are artificial and arbitrary just like human laws.
 - And this has corrupted the gospel of grace. We teach that Jesus came to pay our penalty that grace is not free it must be purchased. Protestants argue that we have nothing with which to pay for our salvation so Jesus paid with His sinless blood. Catholics argue it is a combination of Jesus' sacrifice and our good



works that pay or buy our salvation. As always Satan sets up two false systems and gets people to pick one and neither is true.

- Interestingly Marxism identifies this evil of ownership of property as evil, and proposes a solution—that no one can own anything except the state. In that system, which is supposed to solve the problem of worldly selfishness and ownership, the property is all owned by the state and the state is supreme over everything including the individual and the individual is only useful as long as they serve the state. People become the property of the state instead of people owning property. It is even a grosser perversion of God’s economy than typical human economics. But again Satan sets up two false systems and plays them off each other.
- God’s economy is the kingdom of love and giving and grace and it is all free and no one pays for it. The metaphors of payment are not economic, they are objective achievement. If you donate a kidney to save your child you “pay a high price” but it isn’t an economic price it is the giving of love, of self-sacrifice that reality requires to save and heal. God and Jesus did pay a price, but it wasn’t economic, it was what love does to save, what the reality of our condition required be done in order to heal our hearts and minds and restore us to eternal life.
- It is fear and selfishness that causes people to want more money or more stuff to make them feel secure. It is fear that causes people to want to own or possess property because in so doing it makes them feel secure. It is fear that causes jealousy when we see others with more stuff than we have. It is fear that drives selfishness and the actions to get more for self.
- And the Assyrians used economics to try and tempt Judah:
 - “This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and fig tree and drink water from his own cistern...” (Is 36:16 NIV84)
- Satan exploits us with the fear of poverty—and this fear leads us to embrace his kingdom and methods to either avoid poverty or to remedy poverty in our society—his methods of taking through imposed laws rather than giving out of love, or by jealousy of not having as much as others, which leads to Marxism where people actually surrender themselves up to the control of the state so that they can take the possessions and liberties of others.

Consider this Bible text:

Give freely and become more wealthy;
be stingy and lose everything.

The generous will prosper;
those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. (Pr 11:24-25 NLT)

Do you see a law in this? What type of law?

Consider this historic quote from *Counsels on Stewardship*:



He who gives to the needy blesses others, **and is blessed himself** in a still greater degree... CS 13.4 [Why is it magic? Is it God divinely acting to miraculously give a blessing? Or is it how reality works? If you exercise you get stronger, if you act in love you experience greater love in your own character and more peace and joy?]

That man might not lose the blessed results of benevolence, our Redeemer formed the plan of enlisting him as His coworker... By a chain of circumstances which would call forth his charities, He bestows upon man **the best means of cultivating benevolence, and keeps him habitually giving to help the poor and to advance His cause.** By its necessities a ruined world is **drawing forth from us talents of means and of influence,** to present to men and women the **truth,** of which they are in perishing need. And **as we heed these calls, by labor and by acts of benevolence, we are assimilated to the image of Him** who for our sakes became poor. In **bestowing, we bless others, and thus accumulate true riches.** CS 13.5 [What did you hear in this paragraph? Did you hear any design laws at work? The law of love, the law of exertion, the law of sowing and reaping. What is God's goal for human beings? Restoration to His perfect design for life, a life of truth, love and liberty. What is Satan's goal for human beings? Destruction, to incite fear and selfishness and destroy the image of God in us, to cause division, hostility, and ultimately prevent our healing and salvation.

If God enlists human beings to be His agents to minister to others, to give, to share what we have whether it is food, clothing, money, or truth or healthy living practices, so that we not only bless others, but we ourselves are being transformed back into God's ideal as God's methods are assimilated into our hearts by practice, then what would Satan want to do? He would want to interfere with this economy, with this arrangement, with how God's design laws work. How?

What about taking the goal of helping the poor and instead of pursuing that goal through God's design laws where we practice love in benevolent giving, we instead pursue the goal through Satan's kingdom of human governments and human laws—we pass laws to tax people and take from people what they do not want to give and then we send checks out in the mail or deposit into accounts of the poor from the government.

What is the consequence? Temporal needs may be met, but do those who are taxed experience the growth in godliness of character, of practicing love and benevolence by being taxed? Do those who receive the government check experience the love of God being ministered to them by people of God who love them and care enough to help them? Are relationships formed between those in need and the people of God in Satan's system? Consider all the people Jesus healed or fed during His ministry on earth. If instead of people meeting Jesus personally, touching His robe, being touched by Him, if instead all these people received a government insurance card and went to a clinic and received a prescription would they have had the same life experience? Notice the contrast in the two economic systems—one gives freely, the other takes and seeks to control and the results on people are different.



We cannot achieve God's goals through Satan's kingdom or practicing Satan's methods. Social justice through human governments is a trap of Satan. Does that mean governments should not be benevolent, or should not have social programs—not at all. It is a false argument to suggest such a thing. We need to recognize the difference between the church and state, between grace and law, between giving and taxing. We are to live God's law in our lives and come out of Babylon.]

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There **God gave to human beings an unmistakable evidence of the love** with which He regarded them. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. The gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. It testifies that, having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. CS 14.1

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. Christ's self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that He had, and then gave Himself. The cross of Christ appeals to the benevolence of every follower of the blessed Saviour. **[But not if we misrepresent the law of God as imposed and that Jesus died to pay a penalty to a punishing God to buy our legal freedom. Then the gospel is perverted]** **The principle there illustrated is to give, give.** This, carried out in actual benevolence and good works, is the true fruit of the Christian life. **The principle of worldlings is to get, get, and thus they expect to secure happiness; but, carried out in all its bearings, the fruit is misery and death.** CS 14.2 **[Do we see this in the world? Do we see that we cannot get life, health, happiness through seeking to get more? The wisdom of God is foolishness to the world. The world's systems do not understand this. Socialism is a perversion of God's system taking the goals of sharing, of beneficence and running it through Satan's imposed law system, which in every case results in exploitation, abuse and never resolves poverty or brings economic equality. It is a grand fraud that appeals to the heart of compassionate people, but believing the lie that God's law works like human law and that justice is found in the right legislation, Satan carries millions off as his captives as they supposedly seek to improve society.]**

The light of the gospel shining from the cross of Christ rebukes selfishness, and encourages liberality and benevolence. It should not be a lamented fact that there are increasing calls to give. God in His providence is calling His people out from their limited sphere of action, to enter upon greater enterprises. **Unlimited effort is demanded at this time when moral darkness is covering the world. Many of God's people are in danger of being ensnared by worldliness and covetousness. They should understand that it is His mercy that multiplies the demands for their means. Objects that call benevolence into action must be placed before them, or they cannot pattern after the character of the great Exemplar.** CS 14.3

- Satan is the father of lies and the world's economy of buying, selling and owning.
- Satan is also the prince of this world—so worldly powers which is law, coercion and might



- Assyria used this power against Judah marching their army to Jerusalem intending to destroy it.
- And this is the beast of Revelation, Babylon and all the little harlots who claim to believe in God but rather than promoting God's kingdom of love which is built on design law, accept Satan's kingdom of imposed law and advance justice through law and power over others.
- It is also the theologies of imposed law and imposed penalties such as penal substitution theology—this is part of the wine of Babylon and the system the remnant are to leave.
- It is fear that drives people to make up rules and use power to force others to comply with their rules—whether they are through actual governments or just the rules of the hood, it is the same dynamic, fear driving people to make rules to have power over others in order to make one feel powerful and safe.
- Satan exploits us with the fear of pain, torture, punishment, imprisonment, legal trouble and the righteous are tricked into embracing the methods of Satan and seeking justice through more law and more inflicted punishment and control
- Satan is also the accuser, so he uses accusation, allegation both internal (in our own minds) and external
 - Assyria used this power against Judah accusing Hezekiah of being unfaithful to God, accusing God of being powerless to help them
 - Satan uses accusation against us and gets us to embrace his method when we make accusations against ourselves and others
 - It is fear and insecurity in regard to our own weakness and sinfulness that causes us to project it out of ourselves and find fault with others.
 - Fear causes us to see others as threats to see the sin in others and ridicule it and attack others whether verbally or physically
 - Satan exploits us through fear of humiliation, shame, fear of ruined reputation, fear of not being loved
- He is also the devil, the tempter, the one who leads us to sin, to break God's law of love, which always injures others and results in division. So he is the author of division and hostility
 - Hezekiah was fighting against various divisions in his society, religious divisions that worshipped false gods.
 - Fear divides us economically with some getting richer by exploiting and taking from those not in power
 - Fear divides us into social classes, into political classes, into religious groups
 - Fear exploits cultural and racial differences as points of disdain where love sees cultural and racial differences as elements that enrich us and are to be celebrated
 - Satan exploits us with fear of rejection, broken relationships, abandonment, isolation, loneliness
- Satan also attacks us with the power of death—and thus Satan is the destroyer
 - Assyria threatened Judah and Hezekiah with death
 - Ultimately Satan exploits us with the fear of death both temporal and eternal—so fear of loss of health, fear of death of loved ones, fear of our own temporal death and fear of eternal condemnation, fear of hell



Do you see the object lesson of Assyria and Judah, how it is real history but it also exposes a larger reality? Do you see how today Satan surrounds us, the people of God, and attacks us on all sides with:

- lies about God, God's law and the idea we can pursue social justice through imposed law and human governmental enforcement
- worldly economics, that we can get more security, more safety by taking, hoarding, owning, buying and selling or we can make the state supreme and the owner of all—but it is still all arbitrary and imposed driven by fear
- worldly power—we can be secure with the right laws, judges, politicians or by might, coercion, force, the pressure of the state to fine, restricted liberty, imprisonment or sanction those that don't do it our way
- Accusations of all kinds but specifically accusations that God's people, those who don't embrace the propaganda, who don't embrace and promote the economics of the world, who reject the pursuit of justice through human governments will be accused of being rebels, insurrectionists, the cause of our troubles, and in order to “save lives” or “save the planet” those troublemakers must be eliminated
- Division—do we struggle with divisions in society and in the church?
- Fear of death—whether magnifying this fear through the threat from a virus, or lying about a medicine that could save lives, or falsehoods about hell and sin and the plan of salvation, it's all about inciting greater fear of death

Do you see how Satan surrounds God's people today and is attacking on all sides with his powers, just like he did with Assyria against Judah?

Was Judah able to fight Assyria with its own strength? Can we fight this battle on our own?

So, what lessons do we learn from Hezekiah?

SUNDAY

Read the last paragraph, “Just as important as military...” What is the lesson from Hezekiah for us today in battling Satan?

What are Satan's powers?

- Lies which result in fear and selfishness
- Human economics—love of money and need to own “it's mine”
- Worldly powers—human law and coercive control of others
- Accusations
- Temptation and Division
- Death and destruction

The Bible says about Jesus:



- And having **disarmed the powers** and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Col 2:15 NIV84).
- No, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through him who loved us**. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, **nor any powers**, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be **able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord**. (Romans 8:37-39 NIV84)

First point, most critical point, the central point—what is it that all of Satan’s powers exploit or magnify? Fear, and what is it that casts out all fear? Love! It is God’s love in our hearts that is the key, being loved and loving others. Satan wants to separate us from God’s love and truth—but if we remain in God’s love we are more than conquerors. But without love, real love, we will be destroyed by fear and all of Satan’s methods to try and cope with fear.

How does Jesus give us victory over each of these?

- Lies which result in fear and selfishness
 - truth destroys lies wins us to trust and in trust we open the heart and receive God’s love, His indwelling presence and love casts out fear, then we begin to practice that love in how we treat others
 - The ultimate truth is about God and God’s law being design law
- Human economics—love of money and need to own “it’s mine”
 - We reject from our hearts the value system of the world and we seek to give to others without seeking to get
 - We surrender our sense of ownership to God and anything that the world recognizes as our property we recognize as God’s property and we are His stewards managing it for Him
- Worldly powers—human law and coercive control of others
 - We reject worldly powers as godly, we recognize they are all part of Satan’s kingdom, using Satan’s imposed law and Satan’s methods of force and coercion and thus we do not seek social justice through human governments or law
 - We also reject the worldly system in our theology and reject the false penal legal theories of salvation and instead worship the Creator whose laws are design laws and intelligently cooperate with Him to practice His methods in how we deal with others
- Accusations
 - We do not accuse others but recognize accusations are what the enemy uses to incite conflict, discourage and divide.
 - We see other people, including those we think are evil, as children of God, as sin-sick, but sinners whom Jesus loves and died for, “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”



- So we don't accuse, but we also don't deny truth, we diagnose accurately, we understand with whom we are dealing and if we are dealing with God's enemy we don't accuse, but we also don't trust them.
- Temptation and Division
 - "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (1Cor 10:13 NIV84)
 - Rejecting the lies, rejecting fear, rejecting selfishness and instead applying God's principles of truth, love, freedom we are peacemakers, we have unity with all those who also love God's methods—but we will not have unity with the selfish world
 - We reject the divisions of the world, racial, economic, social, cultural and we see every human being as a descendant of Adam, part of the human family, with worth and value invested by God as a child of God and all dying of the same terminal condition and in need of the same free Remedy offered in Jesus
 - So we seek to separate ourselves from the false value system of the world and have fear and selfishness cut out of our hearts
- Death and destruction
 - We trust God with our lives, health, and future—both temporal and eternal.
 - "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).

In this warfare we are fighting today, as we enter into the final days of earth's history, as Satan's end-time forces advance their cause increasing the pressure, working to incite fear—what lessons can we learn from Hezekiah, and what is the balance between what we actively do and when we trust God?

Consider this historic quote

Our faith requires us to elevate the standard of reform, and take advance steps. **The condition of our acceptance with God is a practical separation from the world.** The Lord calls upon us as a people, "**Come out from among them, and be ye separate,**" "and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." The world may despise you because you do not meet **their standard**, engage in their dissipating amusements, and follow their pernicious ways; but the God of heaven promises to receive you, and to be a Father unto you. "Ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18. {Counsels on Health 51.1}

What does it mean to come out from the world and be separate? In Revelation we are called out of Babylon—is that a call out of a geographic region or something else?

It is severing our minds and hearts from the systems, methods, practices, beliefs, views and actions of the world. We come out of the world by coming out of the pursuit of justice through human governments, by rejecting penal substitution theology, by rejecting the views of God as imperial dictator and source of inflicted pain and death, by having God's law of love written into our hearts and



minds so that we live God's economy, we live to give and bless others, we speak truth in love and leave others free.

The beastly system is going to advance its agenda through some claim of justice but it will do it through human governments, laws, and coercion. We are to separate from all such actions in pursuing justice.

TUESDAY

If you read all of Isaiah 36 you will hear how the representative of Assyria not only spoke of the power of Assyria and the futility of trusting Egypt and God, but turned to the people and undermined Hezekiah's leadership. He said to the people:

Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you! 15 Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD when he says, 'The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'

16 "Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and fig tree and drink water from his own cistern, 17 until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

18 "Do not let Hezekiah mislead you when he says, 'The LORD will deliver us.' Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? (Isaiah 36:14-18 NIV84)

If you were Hezekiah, how would you have responded?

What did Hezekiah do?

Hezekiah tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, went to the temple and sent his agents to the prophet Isaiah asking him to implore the Lord in their behalf.

Is there a lesson for us when we see the forces of evil marching to destroy us?

We are to humble ourselves before God and ask for His cleansing of our hearts and minds, the cleansing of the Spirit temple.

God sent a message to Hezekiah:

"Isaiah said to them, 'Tell your master, 'This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Listen! I am going to put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report, he will return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.' " (37:6-7 NIV84)



What does it mean to blaspheme the name of God?

What would that look like today?

- Where is God?
- There is no God?
- God is a God of supreme justice and will punish lawbreakers?
- Justice requires we pass the right laws, get the right officials and advance God's cause through human governments?

Is there a lesson for the end time people of God in this?

Consider this description of the beast of Revelation 13:5-10:

And he was given a mouth speaking great things and **blasphemies**, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in **blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.** [What is God's name? His character—which is love. What is blasphemy? To lie about, mispresent, and how does this occur? By taking the name of God and misrepresenting God to function in character like Satan. How? By infecting the minds of people with the lie that God's law functions like human law, imposed rules. Thus God is construed to be an imperial dictator, inflictor of pain and suffering, and death, someone whom we need to pay in order not to kill us.] 7 It was granted to him to **make war with the saints and to overcome them.** [What kind of war? 2Cor 10:3-5. And according to Daniel this power is winning the war until the Ancient of Days does something—gives judgment or discernment to the saints. In other words, the war is the war of ideas, Satan the father of lies infects the minds of people with lies about God and is winning until the saints recover the truth about God and His design laws and begin to worship Him as Creator and they are equipped with judgment to judge the lies about God for what they are. They are able to give Him glory by revealing the truth about Him because the hour of His judgment has come.] And **authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.** [Authority in other versions is translated as “power,” power was given the beast over all the people of the world, how? By accepting imperial law as the means to pursue justice. All the world believes this to be true. All the world will unite together in passing laws and enforcing those laws for the betterment of the planet and the world, but those laws are arbitrary rules and will require coercive enforcement. There will be erosion of liberty, there will be propaganda against those who stand up for truth, there will be economic sanctions, and the righteous who won't comply with the world's laws will be labelled as troublemakers, super spreaders, and neighbor will snitch on neighbor and people will be punished] 8 All who dwell on the **earth will worship him**, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. [They worship by adoring, believing, embracing, and practicing the methods of the beast, the methods of imperialism and coercion] 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 **He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword.** (Revelation 13:5-10 NKJV) [Those who insist on holding others captive, using coercion will remain captive to sin and fear and selfishness, those



who are willing to use the sword, the power of the state to force their way will die from unremedied sin when the sword of truth is fully wielded and their own guilt and shame destroys them]

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “By rejecting signs offered by God...” So Judah is surrounded by enemies and doesn’t have power in itself to defeat its enemies and God provides a sign.

What is the purpose of this sign? The sign is to provide Hezekiah with evidence of God’s existence, God’s ability, God’s faithfulness, God’s promise, God’s active participation in resolving the crisis—in other words the sign is to help strengthen Hezekiah’s faith in the face of threat—yes or no?

These stories are for us—real history but object lessons. We have examined how we are being surrounded by Satan’s powers, as we go to God like Hezekiah, humbly, realizing our inability to defeat these worldly powers, God gives us a sign also, have you seen it, do you recognize it, a sign given us to strengthen our faith and confidence that we will be victorious?

Consider this passage in light of this idea about God giving signs:

Also I gave them my Sabbaths **as a sign** between us, so they would know **that I the LORD made them holy**. (Ezekiel 20:12 NIV84)

What is the Sabbath here? A sign—of what? What is the purpose of this sign? Why is it given? It is a sign that God will heal us, make us holy, deliver us from fear and selfishness and restore us to righteousness.

Do we better understand Jesus’ words? “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27 NIV84).

Do we recognize the weekly Sabbath as a sign, an evidence that:

- God exists and is real
- God governs reality including time
- God is Creator and Recreator—meaning healer
- God’s laws are design laws
- God is faithful
- God keeps His promises
- God is active in healing us, in making us holy

Understand the weekly Sabbath is evidence a sign of all of this—how and why? The 7-day weekly cycle exists only because of God’s construction of time. All our other markers of time are astronomic:



- Years marked by Earth rotating around the Sun
- 24-hour days marked by Earth's rotation
- months marked by the Moon's orbit in relation to the Earth
- seasons marked by the Earth's axis tilt in its orbit to the Sun
- But the 7-day week exists only because God created it and every culture in the world has it—no naturalistic godless explanation exists for it.
- And what does the Sabbath day itself signify in this weekly cycle that reveals our Creator?
- It is a sign that God is Creator; His laws are design laws, the supreme law being love; that truth is revealed by God with evidence of action and history—God created; that God's economy is the economy of giving, love built into nature; that God's government is built upon truth, love and liberty, God gave evidence during creation week of His power revealing truth, but on day seven God rested from using power and created a time for intelligent beings to think freely without coercion—historic evidence or truth revealed in action. The Sabbath was constructed, created, built as a day to remember and see truth, as a sign of God's methods, principles and character.
- the Sabbath is also the memorial of Christ's victory over sin and death so we know that those who trust Him are freed from our fear of death.
- We are to remember the Sabbath as a sign that our Creator God is real, powerful, but equally gracious whose character is love and whose laws are love, who gives us real freedom and who will defeat all our enemies if we resist the fear, embrace the truth, open our hearts to Him and surrender our lives, fortunes, and eternal existence to Him! Remember the Sabbath as a sign that God will heal us and make us holy!

Do you see the weekly Sabbath as a sign that God has given to humanity of His promise to heal us, save us, make us holy? Or do you see it as an obligation, a rule you must keep in order to be holy? And if you see it as a rule you must keep what system are you part of?

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, "In response to Hezekiah's..." Do you think God was boiling with molten fury? What do you think God's attitude toward the Assyrians was?

Who was Naaman? He was a Syrian general who got leprosy and whom God healed and became a worshipper of God—how? Wouldn't God hate Naaman and have boiling fury against him?

Does God love the Assyrians less than the Hebrews?

Do we find in the record of the Old Testament that the people of Israel and Judah were more righteous in how they lived than the pagans around them?

Or is the history that the descendants of Jacob were just as wicked as the nations around them?



Then why did God intervene to protect Judah?

Read the last paragraph, “The God of the Hebrews...” this is the key—the entire OT is focused on the coming Messiah—God working to fulfill His promise to have Jesus come and Satan working through his kingdoms to destroy the avenue for Messiah.

The Assyrians were being used here by Satan to try and destroy the final branch of the family tree through whom Jesus would come. Notice, God did not stop the Assyrians from assimilating and dissipating the 10 tribes to the north, because Jesus wasn’t coming through one of those. It was only when the last branch was threatened that God acted to protect that family line so the entire world could be saved.

How do we understand God using power to kill in this story? Is God the source of death? No! God does not kill—yet we find God doing so here—or do we?

Does it make a difference to remember the difference between first and second death? This is sleep in the grave, not eternal annihilation, and God doesn’t call first death, death, He calls it sleep, just like your computer going into sleep mode. It isn’t operating, but it also isn’t destroyed or dead. So too all humans who have died have died the death of sleep and will arise again. Thus God has killed no one for sin, that death happens after the 1000 years and after judgment.

Consider you had a 19 y/o son who was high on drugs and in that state had your other 5 younger children cornered and poured gasoline over them and was about to light them on fire. You have a tranquilizer gun and can shoot your 19 y/o with a strong tranquilizer and put them to sleep or you could do nothing and stand by and watch 5 of your children burn to death what do you do?

This is a metaphor to what God did in OT times. He at times put some of His children to sleep for the purpose of saving all those who will let Him.

FRIDAY

read and discuss questions

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

February 13 we will do two lessons: Lesson 9 at 9:25 a.m. and Lesson 10 at 10:35 a.m. and will not meet on February 20.

Healing the Mind in a Broken World, videos, mp3s, podcasts power point slides are all now available on our website!



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