

# Youth Teaching Resources

September 16, 2018



## Doing, and Being (September 2-November 25)

Deuteronomy 4:1-15 (RCL 4:1-2, 6-9) – “Following Through”

Psalm 146 – “Trusting God”

**Isaiah 50:4-9 (RCL 50:4-9a) – “Standing Firm”**

Psalm 1 – “Living Wisely”

Psalm 124 – “Offering Praise”

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# Standing Firm

Isaiah 50:4-9 (RCL 50:4-9a)

## YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

### PARENT PREP

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How do you help your student withstand blow after blow after blow that they take growing up? Here's the hardest part: you can't take the blows for them? You can stand beside them as they are taken. You can help them back up when they have been knocked down. You can sit and cry with them as they lay on the ground, but you can't take all their blows for them. Literally you can't because you can't always be there with them. Figuratively, you don't want to because how will they learn to deal with them after you are gone if you try and take them all? So what do you do? Be present.

### TEACHING THE LESSON

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#### Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip "Get the Book!" From *Sharkboy and Lavagirl 3-D*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What do the bullies want?
- 2) Why does the bully always have friends? Why is it never one-on-one?
- 3) How does he stand-up for himself? How is he let down?
- 4) What does he learn about himself?
- 5) How does our faith help us stand up for ourselves?

#### Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Isaiah 50:4-9. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Who were these words originally written to? What was their context?
- 2) How was the writer publicly shamed?
- 3) What does the writer do with the suffering that has occurred to him?
- 4) How are hearing and obeying related? How is hearing different from listening?

## Information *continued*

- 5) What assurance is the writer given?
- 6) How is the assurance given to the writer turned into a challenge for other people?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the “Digging Deeper” portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) This passage is consider a “servant song”. Why would you consider it to be a song about servitude?
- 2) Why is “GOD” in all caps and “Lord” not in all caps?
- 3) How can you learn from suffering?
- 4) How does hearing lead to action?
- 5) What kind of confidence would the writer of this text have?

You may also want your group to discuss “The Hardest Question” if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as “The Hardest Question”: Did you say “Second Isaiah”?

## Transformation

Conclude your session by forming small groups of 3-5 students. When the groups have been formed, prompt your students to share a time when they suffered because of someone else. Encourage the students to not only share about what happened, but also what led up to the event and then what happened after the event? When the groups have had time to share their stories, bring everyone back together and facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Was there a thread of similarity that ran through your stories of suffering?
- 2) How did your stories turn out?
- 3) How did each person’s faith impact how they dealt with suffering?
- 4) Does suffering happen so you can learn from it? Explain.
- 5) Why is there suffering?

Close with a prayer thanking God for being present amongst us even through the times of suffering.

## Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

**Servant songs**—The “Servant Songs” are often identified as Isa. 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:1-11, and 52:13-53:12, but scholars disagree on their precise limits. Some, for example, consider the first song to be comprised of Isa. 42:1-4 only, while others see it as 42:1-7 and others stretch it to 42:1-9. The second song is often delimited as 49:1-6, but some scholars see it continuing through v. 13. Some identify the third song as 50:1-11, but others include only 50:4-11. There is little question about the limits of the fourth song, marked as 52:13-53:12. Some scholars interpret Isaiah 55 as a fifth servant song.

Who is the servant? At times, the “servant” clearly appears to be Israel in a corporate sense, but in other instances, as here, the servant is depicted as an individual. And, while he suffers, his pain appears to be for the sake of others, rather than for his own sin (compare the charges against Israel in Isa. 40:1-2, 42:22-25, 43:22-28, 47:6, 50:1 with descriptions of the servant in Isa. 50:5-6; 53:4-6, 9, 11-12).

Early Christian believers took Isaiah’s description of the “suffering servant” as prophecies of Christ, who suffered for others without complaint.

**Lord GOD**—Ordinarily, texts pairing these two divine names appear as LORD God, but here they are Lord GOD. Why? The most common dual expression is *Yahweh Elohim*. Since the divine name *Yahweh* is always rendered in all capital letters, and *Elohim* means “God,” it translates as LORD God.

Occasionally, however, some of the prophets preferred the expression *adonai Yahweh*. “*Adonai*,” which could refer either to God or to a person in authority, also translates as “Lord.” We wouldn’t want to render it as “Lord LORD,” so translators have conventionally chosen to spell “GOD” in all capital letters to indicate that it is a reference to *Yahweh*, resulting in “Lord GOD.”

**Learning from suffering**—On a cold morning in January of 1994, a drunken driver crashed into our car as I was driving my seven-year-old daughter back home from a visit with her grandparents. The wreck killed Bethany instantly, and left me with a large collection of broken ribs and bones.

That experience taught me many things about pain and sorrow that I would rather have avoided – but also much about hope and strength that I would not have learned otherwise, or at least so quickly. I never thought God caused the crash to teach me a lesson, but I did believe that God expects all of us to be good stewards in everything, including our suffering, to learn from it and to pass those lessons on to others.

## Digging Deeper *continued*

In a variety of ways, I have sought to do that, and many who read these words also know what it is to suffer and learn and use those learnings to encourage others. All of us have the potential – and the obligation – to do the same.

**Turning and hearing**—Isaiah spoke of hearing God and not turning away. We hear best when we're looking at the person who's talking to us. I feel this acutely, because a multi-year bout with Meniere's Disease in my 30s left me mostly deaf in my right ear. In a large space, if someone calls my name and I can't see them, I have no idea where they are. If there is noise in a room, I can't begin to keep up with a conversation if I don't look directly at the person speaking. I have to be conscientious about using my ears: if I turn away, I don't hear.

**Confidence**—Isaiah's trust in God inspired Baptist educator Page Kelley to point out years ago that the servant's "sublime affirmation of faith reminds one of the later words of the Apostle Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31, KJV; "Isaiah," *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5 [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971], p. 334]).

# The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

## Did you say “Second” Isaiah?

Readers commonly assume that a single author was responsible for the entire content of a biblical book attributed to Isaiah. One might argue that the first Isaiah simply had God-given foresight, and during times of meditation, wrote oracles to address issues that would not arise for more than 150 years. The most likely explanation, however, is that there were at least two, if not three prophets who contributed to the compilation of prophecies that became known by the name of its primary author, Isaiah of Jerusalem.

During the eighth century, the Israelites lived in two separate kingdoms: a northern realm called “Israel,” and a southern one known as “Judah.” The first Isaiah, often called “Isaiah of Jerusalem,” spent most of his life in Judah’s capital city but spoke to the people of both nations. He lived in an age of relative peace and prosperity for the Israelites as a whole, but a time of oppression for the poor as wealthier Hebrews bought up property, often leaving the poor homeless and forced to work as indentured servants. The false security of peaceful times led many to think of religion as a system of required rituals, with no demand for personal righteousness and justice. Isaiah joined the prophets Micah, Amos, and Hosea in decrying injustice and launching verbal barbs designed to deflate Israel’s false sense of security.

Isaiah understood the political scene as well as the economic, social and religious aspects of life in Palestine. During Isaiah’s ministry, the northern kingdom was defeated and carried into captivity. As the prophet predicted, Judah also fell under the power of Assyria, living as a vassal state. For the most part, Isaiah 1-39 describes this period in Israel’s life.

With chapter 40, however, the scene shifts from eighth-century Judah to sixth-century Babylon. Judah fell to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BCE. Many Judahites were marched to Babylon that year, and many more were forced into captivity following the destruction of Jerusalem 10 years later.

God used Isaiah of Jerusalem to afflict the comfortable and warn them of the coming captivity. More than 150 years later, as the people languished in captivity, God raised up another prophet who spoke comfort to the afflicted. We often speak of him as “Second Isaiah.” This prophet spoke words of encouragement and hope to a defeated and downhearted people. His work appears in Isaiah 40-55. As he preached in God’s name, this Isaiah envisioned a coming “servant” who would suffer in behalf of his people.

Following the exile, the Hebrews who returned to Jerusalem faced different challenges, which are reflected in Isaiah 56-66. It is possible that Second Isaiah returned with the other Hebrews and continued to speak in that context. It is more likely, however, that yet a third prophet arose in Jerusalem to preach in the spirit of Isaiah. He is typically known as “Third Isaiah.”

## The Hardest Question *continued*

The possibility that multiple prophets contributed to the book called “Isaiah” does not take away from the Scripture’s authority, but testifies to God’s interest in providing the message people need to hear in the time they need to hear it.