



## The Book of Romans Lesson 10 4Q 2017 Children of the Promise

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**January 19,20, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Tacoma Central SDA Church, Tacoma, Washington.

**March 24, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at the California Baptist University in San Bernadino CA, in conjunction with the AACC

**May 4-5, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Grace Fellowship, York PA, in conjunction with the AACC

**July 27-28, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentationat New Life Church, Colorado Springs CO, in conjunction with the AACC

**September 27-29, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Mega National Conference of the American Association of Christian Counselors in Dallas, TX

### SABBATH

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What do you think of when you hear the title? Who are the children of the promise?

What promise?

Was it this?

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Gen 3:15 NIV84

If this was the promise then to whom was it promised? –a promise to Satan that he would not win and to all humanity that a Savior would win!

Was it this?

In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” Gen 22:18 NKJV

If this was the promise then to whom is the blessing promised? –to all humanity! So who are the children of the promise? All those who accept and participate in the promise!



Read Memory Text: “Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.”  
Rom 9:18

What does this mean?

Is it similar to what many Muslims believe—fatalism—oh well it is God’s will, some He saves, some He kills, who are we to question?

Is it like Calvin—God predetermines some for salvation and some for destruction and who are we to question?

No, it is just the opposite in fact! Paul is arguing to racists and bigots who don’t want non-Jews to be saved, who believe only biological descendants of Abraham have been blessed by God that God wants to save everyone. So Paul is saying, who are you to argue with God—He can save any He chooses.  
Read Romans 9:6-8:

It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.  
<sup>7</sup> Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” <sup>8</sup> In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.

God, after Adam and Eve sinned, immediately began His plan to save the human race and eliminate sin from His universe. The promise of the Messiah, of God’s healing grace, was for all the children of Adam and Eve. God never made the promise of salvation exclusive to a certain ethnic group.

In Romans 9:13 Paul quotes Malachi “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated”, what does this mean?

Does God from His heart not love everyone? Did God not actually love Esau?

Is it talking about the feelings and attitude of God, or the function of love?

Can you love someone in your heart, but have that person close themselves off to you so that you are obstructed from showing them love, hindered in your ability to let your love flow into them, to actively love them?

Love is functional—thus Jacob received God’s love and was changed by God’s love and God was able to *love* Jacob, but while God had love in His heart for Esau, Esau did not trust God, open his heart to God and thus did not receive and experience God’s love. Thus God was not able to love Esau functionally—and I am sure God hated that. How many parents would hate it if your child would not allow you to love them?



## SUNDAY

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Read first paragraph, “God needed a missionary...” What was to be taught by Israel? The truth about God’s character of love, His methods, principles and design for life.

What happened that Israel failed to teach this and what did they teach instead?

They worshipped pagan gods—and what core features separate pagan gods from the true God? Would it be any of the following—as taught (not in actuality because we know in actuality pagan gods are not real so none of these would be true, so we are talking about what is taught about them versus the true God)?

- Power—are both the true God & pagan gods presented to have power?
- Creatorship—are both the true God and pagan gods said to be able to create?
- Life—are both said to have the ability to bring life?
- Just—are both said to bring justice?
- Protect—are both said to protect their followers?
- Bless—are both said to bless their followers?
- Heal—are both said to have the power to heal sickness?
- Punish sin—are both said to punish the disobedient?
- Fight evil—are both said to fight against evil?
- Die for followers—are both said to die while fighting evil?

Do you remember who Baal was? The son of El, creator god, who controlled weather, brought harvest, fought the great serpent Leviathan, fought Mot the god of death and died to rise again to bring us life.

What then is the core identifying feature that pagan gods hold that the true God does not—the point that separates them?

**Pagan gods have imposed laws, rules, that require the pagan god to punish those who disobey and thus pagan gods require sacrifice and offerings be offered TO them in order to propitiate their wrath and secure their blessing!**

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem were the Jews actively practicing open idolatry like that had in the past—Baal, Moloch, Ashtoreth and Dagon?

No! From all external appearances what were the Jews doing? Were they not keeping the script? But where they worshipping the true God or still practicing paganism?

Here is a historic quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, do you agree?

**While God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God**



**as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the sacrifices and the ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted to serve as means whereby sinners have vainly hoped to propitiate, with gifts and good works, the wrath of an offended God.**  
{PK 685.2}

Was this the problem that prevented the Jews from evangelizing the world?

Were the Jews, who carried out the Levitical law from the viewpoint of propitiating God worshipping the true God or were they practicing paganism?

What did Jesus tell the religious leaders to their face?

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire.” John 8:44

What about Christianity today? Could Christianity be caught up in a similar form of idolatry—externally observing the proper rituals and behaviors, but holding to the imposed law construct with such a distorted view of God they are actually practicing paganism?

What is the essence of paganism? Worshipping wrathful, punishing God, who must be propitiated or appeased by an offering—including a human sacrifice.

How many Christians believe that God requires the blood of a sinless human sacrifice to propitiate His wrath so that He wont kill us for our sins?

Quotations from various sources cited in *The God-Shaped Heart*:

Roman Catholic theology:

What did Christ’s suffering and death actually accomplish that allowed the Father to provide the human race with salvation? . . . Scripture teaches only that Christ became a “**propitiation**,” a “sin offering,” or a “sacrifice” for sins. . . . Essentially, this means that Christ, because he was guiltless, sin-free and in favor with God, **could offer himself up as a means of persuading God to relent of his angry wrath** against the sins of mankind. . . . Anger against sin shows the personal side of God, for sin is a personal offense against him. **God is personally offended by sin and thus he needs to be personally appeased** in order to offer a personal forgiveness. In keeping with his divine principles, his personal nature, and the magnitude of the sins of man, **the only thing that God would allow to appease him was the suffering and death of the sinless representative of mankind, namely, Christ.**<sup>1</sup>

Evangelical theology:



We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, **propitiating the Father by paying for our sins** and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

Pentecostal theology:

The word "propitiation" properly signifies the **turning away of wrath by a sacrifice**. Thus it signifies **appeasement**. . . . According to Leon Morris: "The consistent Bible view is that the sin of man has incurred the wrath of God. That wrath is averted only by Christ's atoning offering. From this standpoint his **saving work is properly called propitiation**."<sup>3</sup>

Seventh-day Adventist theology:

Leon Morris writes that if God's 'wrath is regarded as a very real factor so that the sinner is exposed to its severity, then **the removal of the wrath will be an important part of our understanding of salvation**.' Of course, 'if we diminish the part played by divine wrath we shall not find it necessary to think seriously of **propitiation**.' Thus Morris comments in another connection, 'if people are to be forgiven, then the fact of that wrath must be taken into consideration. It does not fade away by being given some other name or regarded as an impersonal process.' **In other words, Gods' wrath must be propitiated or turned away from the sinner. That was one aim of Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross.**<sup>4</sup>

This is paganism—modern day Baal worship, for which God prophesied through Malachi that before the great and terrible day of the Lord, the prophet Elijah must come again...

Here is another historic quote from one of the founders of the SDA church:

**Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, **in nature, [design law]** or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

How is it that religious people come to worship a punishing god who requires sacrifice like this?

The root is they first believe the lie about God's law—that it functions like human law, imposed rules requiring imposed punishment. Once they believe that lie, then they cannot avoid drawing the pagan conclusions about God.



That is why we must come back to worship our Creator whose laws are design laws upon which reality is built to operate! This is the final message to the world—God is not like Satan has made Him out to be, but is our loving Father, Creator, and Healer!

And the Christian church, including the SDA church, is in many ways in the same position as the Jews 2000 years ago—believing in the Creator God, actively seeking to do His will, praying for the Advent of the Messiah—yet having the lie about God’s law so deeply imbedded few ever question it that instead of evangelizing the world with God’s true character of love, all the world wonders after the beastly view of God that comes from believing His law functions like human law—imposed rules that make God out to be the punisher.

## MONDAY

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Elected—what does the idea of election in the context of Bible salvation mean to you?

Here is one commentator’s take, from the book *Conflict and Courage*:

Esau and Jacob had alike been instructed in the knowledge of God, and **both were free to walk in His commandments and to receive His favor; but they had not both *chosen* to do this.** The two brothers had **walked in different ways, and their paths would continue to diverge** more and more widely. {CC 71.3}

**There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one's own by which any may perish.** . . . Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. **The provisions of redemption are free to all; the *results* of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions.** {CC 71.4}

Do you agree or disagree? Do you see the design law components in this? God provides remedy, the solution, the cure; we must choose to partake, to participate. Why? It is the only way for our hearts, minds, characters to be changed while still retaining our unique individuality.

Read third paragraph, “In the end. . .” Salvation is absolutely freely available and offered to all—is that the same as our election? The lesson seems to suggest it—that all have been elected—I don’t quite see it this way. It seems to me salvation is offered to all but only those who *elect* to partake of it are elected. In other words, not all are elected, just those who exercise their power of choice and elect to accept and partake. Thus the elector of our salvation is ourselves, only possible because God has chosen to provide what is necessary for our salvation. Thoughts?



From the book *Christian Education* I read the following, what do you think about election from this passage—does it add to how we make our election sure?

**He is a Christian who aims to reach the highest attainments for the purpose of doing others good. Knowledge harmoniously blended with a Christlike character will make a person truly a light to the world.** God works with human efforts. **All those who give all diligence to make their calling and election sure,** will feel that a superficial knowledge will not fit them for positions of usefulness. Education balanced by a solid religious experience, fits the child of God to do his appointed work steadily, firmly, understandingly. **If one is learning of Jesus,** the greatest educator the world ever knew, he will not only have a symmetrical Christian character, **but a mind trained to effectual labor. Minds that are quick to discern will go deep beneath the surface.** {CE 51.1}

Has your Christian experience been to strengthen your mind, to improve your ability to think discern, understand God and His methods, to be what Jesus said to His disciples, not a slave, but an understanding friend? Jn 15:15

## TUESDAY

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Read memory text, ““For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup> “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Can you give example of how God’s ways are higher than our ways?

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> 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. Mt 5:43-45

What do you hear? Do you hear God’s design law, the principles of love? Notice what example Jesus gave after He said to love our enemies—sun and rain, which are physical examples of giving without discrimination—the law of love in action.

What kinds of laws to humans make? Imposed—but God’s laws are higher; they are the protocols reality is built upon.

Yet, many Christians teach God’s law functions no different than ours—which is the infection of thought contaminating the world.

What about justice—what is God’s justice? Based on design law, healing, delivering, restoring!



What is human justice—based on imposed law? Inflicting punishment.

Which version of justice is the common view taught in Christianity? Again, we see how the lie has infected the church.

Other examples?

How do we understand the passage about hardening Pharaoh's heart?

#### **Bible Description #1 - God hardening Pharaoh's heart**

- But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. Ex 7:3,4
- But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said to Moses. Ex 9:12

#### **Bible Description #2 – Pharaoh's heart became hard**

- Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said. Ex 7:13
- Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. Ex 7:14
- But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. Ex 7:22

#### **Bible Description #3 – Pharaoh hardened his own heart**

- 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
- But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. Ex 8:32
- When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had said through Moses. Ex 9:34,35

We gain insight from another story in Scripture, what transpired after the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant in battle. They took the ark into the temple of their god Dagon.

Initially, Dagon was found on his face in front of the ark – and what did the Philistines do? They ignored the evidence and put Dagon back on his pedestal in front of the ark.

The next day Dagon is found on his face in front of the ark but this time his hands and head were broken off. What did the people do? They again ignored the evidence and made the spot where the broken hands and head of Dagon were found a holy place.





Then the people developed tumors which they could not ignore so they called a counsel to try and decide what to do, notice the discussion:

- The Philistines asked, “What guilt offering should we send to him?” They replied, “Five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers. Make models of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and pay honor to Israel’s god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land. **Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did?** When he treated them harshly, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way? 1Sam 6:4-6

The wise men asked, “Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did?” What were the Philistines doing? What did God do? How did this result in hardening of hearts? What is similar to what happened in Egypt?

God provided evidence exposing the impotence of the Egyptian and Philistine gods. Each of the 10 plagues that fell on Egypt demonstrated the powerlessness of the gods of Egypt. Dagon prostrated in front of the ark and then having his hands and head broken off demonstrated his powerlessness.

God was acting in both these countries to demonstrate He is the only true God, that the gods they worshiped were not God. God was responsible for presenting the evidence, but then God left Pharaoh and the Philistines free to decide how they would respond to the evidence. Would they repent and humble themselves before the Lord or would they reject the truth and *thereby* harden their heart?

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 did, 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—but Pharaoh rejected it and hardened himself.

Do we see the beautiful harmony to all the Scripture that we get when we apply design law instead of imposed law?

read last paragraph, “The crucial point...” This is well said, and why we advocate never arriving at *the* truth, but being a lover of truth who is willing to grow, advance and move forward in understanding as more truth is revealed.



The lesson talks about becoming people of God—who are the people of God today?

Would this describe them? “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” Rev 12:17

So who is this group that Satan hates? What does it mean to obey God’s commandments?

Did the Jews 2000 years ago, who crucified Christ, want Him off by sunset to keep the Sabbath?

So is keeping the commandments the same as keeping the Sabbath?

No! This refers to those who have the law written on their hearts, such that they love God and others more than self. They live in harmony with God’s law of love, they live truth, love and practice freedom. This is true Sabbath keeping.

What about the testimony of Jesus?

This group not only has had their hearts renewed so they live in harmony with God’s design laws of truth, love and freedom but they also give the same testimony about God that Jesus gave. Jesus said: “If you seen me you’ve seen the Father” If we are not presenting God in the exact same light as Jesus presented Him, then we are not giving the testimony of Jesus!

Those who teach the Sabbath as an arbitrary test, or that God will punish if not given the blood offering of a sinless being—are not members of this group end time people of God.

## **THURSDAY**

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Read top dark section, “What shall we say then...” What was the mistake of Israel? They refused to believe the truth about God and actually trust Him!

- Did the Jews become atheists?
- Did the Jews reject Scripture?
- Did the Jews reject the Sabbath?
- Did the Jews reject church attendance?

What about today? Are we making the same mistake? Is it not the same as them, that we have rejected the truth about God and His character and designs of love?

From *The Remedy* Hebrews 4:1-8:



<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since the Remedy is still available, and the promise of complete healing and perfect rest still stands, let us be careful that none of us be found to have rejected it.<sup>2</sup> For we also have had the good news of God's healing truth presented to us just as they did; but the message of truth had no value to them because they did not believe it nor did they trust the one who gave it.<sup>3</sup> But we, who have trusted God on the basis of the truth Christ provided, experience healing and enter that rest, and our minds are at peace. As God has said, "So I granted them their persistent choice and said, 'Since they refuse the truth—the Remedy I freely offer—they will never be able to enter my rest and get well.'" It was not because God's perfect rest was not available—for it had been ready since his work of creation was complete—<sup>4</sup> as the Scriptures say elsewhere regarding the seventh day: "And on the seventh day, God rested his case. He had finished all his work of providing the evidence needed to refute the lies of Satan."<sup>5</sup> And yet in another passage he says, "If they refuse the truth, if they reject the evidence I have provided, their minds will never find rest and they will not get well."

<sup>6</sup> The opportunity to find God's healing and rest still remains, even though those who formerly had the good news of God's healing truth presented to them did not get well or find rest because they refused to believe the truth and trust God.<sup>7</sup> Therefore God again and again presents his healing Remedy, and he set a certain day which he called "today," when much later he spoke through David in the same Scripture as before: "Today, if you hear his voice offering healing and restoration, do not reject the true Remedy and darken your minds."

<sup>8</sup> For if Joshua had already given them healing of character and rest for their minds, God would not have spoken later about another day of rest still to come.<sup>9</sup> There remains then a Sabbath-rest—a rest in the evidence and truth of the character of God—which heals and transforms the people of God;<sup>10</sup> for anyone who rests in the achievements of Christ rests from working to save himself, just as God rested from his work.<sup>11</sup> Let us therefore make every effort to rest in the truth about God as revealed by Christ, so that no one will fall by following the example of distrust and refusal to accept the truth.

## FRIDAY

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Read and discuss questions

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Sungenis, *Not By Faith Alone* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship, 1997), 107–8, emphasis mine. Sungenis is the founder and president of Catholic Apologetics International Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> D. Neff, "A Call to Evangelical Unity," *Christianity Today* (June 14, 1999), emphasis mine

<sup>3</sup> Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: LIFE Bible College, 1983), 188, emphasis mine.

<sup>4</sup> Knight, George, *The Cross of Christ*, (Review and Herald Publishing, Hagerstown MD 2008) p. 64.