



2025 Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy Lesson 4 The Nations: Part 1

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read first paragraph,

- The book of Revelation shows us God’s solutions for our fallen world. In the final chapters, access to the tree of life is restored, the curse is lifted, and we are readmitted into the presence of God. Revelation, in some ways, is the book of Genesis in reverse, which is why Genesis remains an important key to understanding how the world’s problems developed in the first place. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy, p. 30.*

I had never considered there were multiple solutions. I wonder if this is a typo and they actually meant the singular, solution, but the use of the plural instead of the singular has made me take a moment and rethink things.

I always thought of the “plan” of salvation not the “plans” of salvation, but what do you think, are there different solutions being applied as history unfolds, or one solution applied in different times and places?

Isn’t Jesus the solution to the sin problem? And the Father so loved the world that He send Jesus as our Savior; and Jesus is the source of truth and love restored into humanity and truth and love are the attributes and principles of God’s character, His method, His design laws built into reality. So perhaps the solutions are truth and love brought back into humanity by Jesus and then applied into individual lives through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

We have the (1) Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who are love and truth and who forgive and who act in time to reveal the truth to us. We have (2) truth and love being restored into humanity by Jesus, who eradicated the carnal nature and replaced it with perfect righteousness. We have (3) the Holy Spirit revealing and convicting us of the truth and then reproducing the Spirit of Jesus in all who trust Jesus and open their hearts to Him.

Are these different solutions, or are they all the same solution?

Can you think of different solutions?

Perhaps someone is thinking of God unveiling His glory and the planet being restored to perfection with all defects in nature removed—but isn't that glory the infinite fires of love and truth?

The lesson states the curse is lifted and we are readmitted to the presence of God.

What is the curse and how is it lifted?

Is it the curse of sin? Which is what? Transgression of the law—which is what, rule-breaking or distrust, anti-love, fear, and selfishness, a condition of being which is in heart and mind no longer in union with God, and thus no longer able to live in His live giving glory?

How is the curse lifted? Through the restoration of truth and love into humanity and the removal or eradication of fear and selfishness. Jesus, who became a real human descended from Adam, did this for the species. And all who are won by the truth to trust Jesus and open the heart, receive from the Holy Spirit a new and right spirit of love and trust and we then choose to live motivated by love and trust and no longer live motivated by fear and selfishness.

What kept us out of God's presence and why are we readmitted now?

Our condition is such that without cure we would be overwhelmed with fear, guilt, shame in the presence of infinite truth and love. So God in mercy shields His full live-giving glory from us and works through the Holy Spirit of truth and love to present truth to us in ways we can understand and then leave us free to say yes or not. By choosing the truth we are transformed and when we choose to trust we receive a new animating energy of love that is not naturally in us, it comes from Jesus, it is His live being shared through the Holy Spirit.

What do you think about Revelation being the book of Genesis in reverse? I like this idea and think there are truths there to contemplate.

God makes a sinless world and places Adam and Eve in a garden and then things go bad. What happened? What went wrong?

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness (corrupt spirit, carnal nature)
- Fear and selfishness cause acts of sin
- Sins damage mind, body, relationships, character a terminal condition

What is the solution?

- Truth destroys lies and restores trust (metaphor flesh/bread)
- In trust open the heart and God pours His love into heart, i.e., receive the spirit of love, the new animating energy, life, of Christ which casts out the spirit of fear and selfishness. We are reborn.
- Love and trust built upon truth causes acts of righteousness, service, ministry, beneficence, witnessing the kingdom of God

- Acts of righteousness result in maturity and development of Christlike character

But it all starts with the truth about God that destroys the lies and wins us to trust.

Do we see this depicted and described in Revelation?

In our magazine the [Final Message of Mercy to the World: The Three Angels](#) we describe the eternal gospel that is to lighten the world and how the truth of who God is as Creator, whose laws are design laws, love, truth, freedom, destroys the lies and restores trust allowing people to make a right judgment about God and flee the false system of Babylon that has enslaved the faithful of God into a false legal system of rules and fear of punishment.

Read the last two paragraphs,

- One of the key issues in both Daniel and Revelation is worldly government, a succession of human attempts to control a planet that rightfully belongs to God, who will—once this horrible episode of sin and rebellion is forever ended—ultimately rule in righteousness.

It is a very long process that leads to this moment, covering thousands of years of human experiments in self-government. They have never worked; even those expressing the highest ideals have always fallen short, often terribly short, of those ideals. So much of the sad history of humanity through the millennia is nothing but accounts of the tragedy that these failed systems have brought upon us. And it only will get worse until God's "everlasting kingdom" (Dan. 7:27) finally is established. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy, p. 30.*

Jesus is coming to establish an eternal kingdom and rule in righteousness, what does it mean to rule in righteousness?

And understanding this is the key to differentiating the true kingdom of God from the counterfeit; it is the key to differentiating the government of God from the government of Satan, from the pure woman and the harlot of Revelation, the saints from the beast. For both groups are pursuing righteousness, both are pursuing justice. The beast of revelation does not rise with the proclamation of seeking to do injustice, but the proclamation of seeking to do justice, it will claim to be doing God's will, but it will be doing injustice, unrighteousness. So, what does it mean that God will rule in righteousness?

What is righteousness?

Consider these texts from Romans, because Paul's dissertation in Romans is all about true righteousness that comes from faith, from trust, and false righteousness that comes from law. Consider these texts and consider what light do they shed on our study of Revelation and the kingdoms of the world and their rule and God's kingdom of righteous rule?

- For **no one is declared righteous before him by the works of the law**, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. But now **apart from the law the righteousness of God** (which is attested by the law and the prophets) **has been disclosed**—namely, the **righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ** for all who believe. For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God publicly displayed him at his death as the mercy seat **accessible through faith**. This was to **demonstrate his righteousness**, because God in his forbearance had passed over the sins previously committed. This was also to **demonstrate his righteousness** in the present time, so that he would be just and the justifier of the one who lives because of Jesus' faithfulness. Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded! By what principle? Of works? **No, but by the principle of faith!** For we consider that a person is **declared righteous by faith apart from the works of the law**. Romans 3:18-28 NET, emphasis mine.
- It was **not through law** that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but **through the righteousness that comes by faith**. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless. Romans 4:13-14 NIV84, emphasis mine.
- That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a **righteousness that is by faith**; but Israel, **who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it**. Romans 9:30-31 NIV84, emphasis mine.

What do these texts tell us about God's rule of righteousness? There is a righteousness that is pursued through law and a righteousness that is pursued through faith—only one path leads to righteousness why is that?

What is righteousness? Being right with God, having a new heart and right spirit, what does that mean? Being reborn, being set right heart and mind, having the law written upon the heart and mind. But what does it mean to have a right spirit?

It is what we already described, righteousness is being animated with the pure, holy spirit of love and trust and no longer being animated by fear and selfishness. Salvation is when our individuality, our identity, which comes into this world animated by a spirit of fear and selfishness that leads only to acts of sin, is won by the truth to trust in God and we surrender ourselves, our old lives of fear and selfishness in trust to God and open our hearts to Him and receive the Holy Spirit who bring us a new life, a new animating energy, a new spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

- Those **who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God**. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. Romans 8:14-15 NIV84, emphasis mine.

This is being set right, put right, justified, made right, reborn, recreated, renewed, and this cannot be accomplished by law and law enforcement. It can only be experienced by the individual surrendering

themselves in trust, which is also known as faith, and opening their inner selves, their hearts to God. Thus being saved, being healed, being righteous is only possible through love and trust built upon truth. It cannot be accomplished by law and law enforcement.

The false systems, the systems of this world, the beastly system is a system of imposed law and law enforcement. All the kingdoms of the world operate upon this method, and imposed law with external enforcement violates liberty, incites fear and leads to more rebellion. Thus, Satan deceives the world by getting them to believe righteousness is through law and law enforcement. And billions will accept this and pursue this method.

But Jesus sets up a kingdom of righteousness that reigns in the heart by truth, love, and freedom, it is built upon trust.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph,

- God's dealings with Israel provide rich insights into His dealings with the New Testament church. In fact, in many ways, the nation of Israel served to foreshadow the errors of the church. Far from being able to claim any kind of superiority to ancient Israel, Christians have been, and still are, very much susceptible to the same temptations. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025*, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy, p. 34.

What lessons do we learn from Israel that are applicable to the church? Basically everything, but what has been significant for you?

- The symbolism of the sanctuary service teaching the plan of salvation: if you would like more on this, check out our [Sanctuary and Feast Days Seminar](#)
- God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, our deliverance from slavery of sin.
- God leading them through the wilderness, God leading us through the wilderness of this world
- God providing them bread from heaven and water from the rock; God providing us Jesus the bread of heaven and the water of life
- Despite God providing the bread of heaven, the people wanted the meat of Egypt; and in the church despite God providing the truth of His design laws, character, methods, principles that brings healing, people prefer the human imposed law legal religious systems that have a form of godliness without power
- The mixed multitude which caused continued problems and rebellion; the church with the wheat and the weeds growing up together causing ongoing problems
- Satan constantly attacked the Israelites both physically but more importantly with false prophets and false worship; Christianity was attacked physically but more importantly spiritually with all kinds of false doctrines and beliefs, the most significant that God's law functions like human law.

- They ended up seduced by the lies and captives in Babylon, the first nation with a legal code; Christianity ends up captive in Babylon, representative of a religion based on imposed law with imposed punishments.
- God called all the Israelites to leave Babylon and receive their inheritance and go to the land and rebuild the temple but only a remnant did; God calls Christians to leave the false penal/legal theologies and lies about Him that constitute spiritual Babylon and return to worshipping Him as Creator whose laws are design laws, but only a remnant does.
- The remnant who went back to Jerusalem before they rebuilt the temple had to repair the walls. They repaired the breach in the protective wall around the temple, and then rebuilt the temple; the remnant of God today are those who repair the breach in the wall, and after that protective breach is repaired then they will experience the rebuilding of their spirit temple into holiness and union with God. And that breach is the lie that God's law functions like human law. And today we are releasing a new pamphlet [Repairers of the Breach](#), which you can download a pdf of on our website, or if you have a US postal address you can order physical copies to be sent to you to share with others.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph,

- Outside of the Garden, humans were required to work hard to provide for their own continued existence. Life became harder; we had to live with pain and by the sweat of our brow (Gen. 3:16–19). Our first parents trusted that the rightful King would provide a path back into the Garden, and they brought sacrifices to the gates of Eden in faithful anticipation of the redemption that God, right from the start, offered the fallen world. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025*, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy, p. 31.

Why did things become harder outside the Garden? Is it because God used His power to make it harder as punishment, or is it that God's life sustaining presence was withdrawn and Satan had access to the entire planet, and nature began to have all kinds of mutations and deviations from God's design as a result of sin, not as a punishment inflicted by God?

Yet God permitted things to occur this way—in other words, God did not use divine power to prevent it, why? Was the increased work a curse or a blessing to them?

They were given work in Eden to do, to tend the Garden, but that work would have had nothing that we would have called toil, labor, no difficulty associated with it, much more like an artist enjoying painting a new painting.

But the work out of the Garden was different, harder, requiring more effort, more labor, because of sin, because nature itself was no longer under Adam's rule.

Just imagine for a minute—in Eden Adam wouldn't have had to water anything, but now he may find the need to carry water somewhere, new work. Before the fall, Adam as Regent of Jesus had full governing authority over the planet and could almost certainly wield powers that we see godly people and Jesus wielding occasionally throughout the Bible:

- Elisha and the floating ax head
- Philip being transported instantaneously
- Jesus walking on water
- The animals that came into the ark without fear and without attacking each other or Noah and his family

In other words, Adam, prior to sin, would have had powers over the operations of nature that were delegated by God to him as Earth's governor, but which were lost when he fell. If this is so, then life would be harder for Adam in multiple ways. Nature would no longer be responsive and under his guidance and control, but in rebellion against him as humankind were now in rebellion against God.

So work got harder outside of the Garden, was this harder work a curse or a blessing now that they were sinful? It was a blessing!

As image bearers of God, we have a desire to create, produce, invest our energies to build, and as we engage ourselves in activities that are productive, whether they result in an income or not, we experience joy, fulfillment, and as finite beings we also experience expansion in our abilities by application and exercise of those abilities—the design law of exertion. We grow healthier and more capable as we apply ourselves and expend our energies to useful outlets.

Regular work has multiple benefits:

- **Improved self-esteem**, from actual accomplishment and achievement
- **Better physical health**, from increased physical activity and the reduced firing stress pathways as we experience satisfaction with completing tasks, or fulfilling our life goals, aspirations, and dreams.
- **Development of our brain circuits** that control physical movement, which in turn improves our thinking and reasoning
- **Blesses and benefits those around us**, resulting in improved relationships
- **Reduces burdens on others.** By staying active, we reduce the likelihood of our own disability and the need for others to care for us.
- **Harmonizes with the law of love**, which is the principle of giving. The more we give, the more we receive...
- **Reduces the opportunity for temptation.** This is perhaps one of the greatest benefits of useful work. Any time spent in usefulness not only produces all the blessings above, but is time unavailable for engagement in destructive and harmful activities. You've heard the old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." When we are not engaged in useful activities, we are more vulnerable to temptations that result in harm to ourselves and others.

When we divert our energy, our mind, and abilities away from useful engagement—activities that may or may not generate income, but are beneficial (housework, lawn care, gardening, sewing, painting,

sculpting, building, writing, playing musical instruments, drawing, developing systems or programs of education, parenting, coaching, and so many more)—and instead use the majority of our energies on entertainments, diversions, and indulgences (video games, TV, amusement parks, playing games), we undermine our physical and mental well-being.

We become internally restless, lose our sense of peace, don't have a healthy sense of self, identity, purpose, and meaning in life and become vulnerable to emotional manipulation by others. Because we don't have a purpose for ourselves that is godly, we are vulnerable to being caught up in various factions in society, various crusades or causes to fill the void in our lives because we haven't applied ourselves to the work and calling God has for us.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on God's original plan for them to follow Him as their leader, but their request/demand for kings and despite God's warning against it, because they insisted, God permitted them to have kings with all the subsequent problems that resulted.

Can you think of another example of something God added, like the kings, because of the people's demand, their insistence, their lack of faith, and which, like the kings has caused all kinds of problems for believers, including for many Christians today?

- When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. **They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."** Exodus 20:18-19 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Where did the intermediary ministry of priests come from? Was it God that wanted it this way or the people?

Is there evidence beyond this one text in Exodus 20 that God was desired to talk to the people and would do so directly?

- Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and 70 of the leaders of Israel went up the mountain and **they saw the God** of Israel. Beneath his feet was what looked like a pavement of sapphire, as blue as the sky. **God did not harm these leading men of Israel; they saw God, and then they ate and drank together.** Exodus 24:9-11 GNT, emphasis mine.

And is there evidence in Scripture that the people knew they could talk to God directly and they would be safe, but their own fear led them to reject this truth that they acknowledged and instead request a go-between, request that God not talk to them directly?

- When **you heard the voice** out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leading men of your tribes and your elders came to me. And you said, "**The LORD our God**

has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him. But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and **we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer.** For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? **Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey.”**
Deuteronomy 5:23-27 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Despite the evidence, the reality, that they had seen and heard God for themselves and were not harmed, despite the fact that God demonstrated His desire to talk to the people directly, as He had been doing with all the faithful since the fall—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (God even talked directly to Cain), the people chose to reject this evidence and request not to talk to God and request an intercessor. So God, not wanting to lose contact with the people, met them where they were and added the intercessory priestly ministry. But God’s design was that all believers, like Abraham, were to be a His priests, His friends, His advocates, envoys, representatives, ambassadors in this world of sin. God wants to talk to each of us directly, individually, for us to be reunited in friendship with Him and go to Him directly and have conversation with Him.

But the people were afraid of God and requested an intercessor that has resulted in the entire fiction **that God needs an intercessor in heaven to plead to Him in our behalf.**

How much of church history has been corrupted by the false belief that God can’t or won’t or isn’t able to talk to us directly?

Do we still suffer from distortions about the idea of intercession today? How?

Are we today to have various intercessors between us and God or are we to be a priesthood of believers who go to and talk with God directly? Didn’t Jesus open a new a living way into the presence of God where we can go boldly in faith and talk to God?

What about Jesus as our heavenly High Priest—if God wants to talk to us directly, how do we understand the role of Jesus as our Mediator and High Priest? What is He mediating?

Is there something wrong with God that Jesus needs to fix? Is there something wrong with humanity that Jesus needs to fix?

Does God need truth presented to Him to free God’s mind from Satan’s lies? Do humans need truth presented to us to free our minds from Satan’s lies?

Does God need a new spirit of love in order for Him to become a trustworthy God?

Do humans need to be reborn with a new spirit of love, the spirit of Christ, in order for us to become trustworthy friends of God?

So, where is Jesus mediating, where is He applying His merits—to God or in our hearts and minds?

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on the call of Abraham, and asks, Why did God call Abraham out of his country?

Wasn't it the outworking of the promise given to Adam in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of the woman would be born and crush the serpent's head?

Do we see the promise to Abraham as a global promise, a promise to all humanity, or do we see it as a promise only to his genetic descendants? Any biblical evidence for either view?

What about the promises for the land, how do we understand those promises?

God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land was part of the covenant God made with Abraham. But was the covenant that God made with Abraham a new covenant, a new promise, or was God, in making the covenant with Abraham, simply carrying out the covenant that He made with Adam in Eden?

The covenant of grace, the promise that God would save sinners, was given immediately after Adam sinned:

- And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. Genesis 3:15 NKJV.

This covenant contains God's promise to send Jesus, the Seed of the woman, to overcome and destroy Satan and sin and redeem humanity. The entire Old Testament is the outworking of this promise.

The promise to Abraham is the recommunication of the promise made in Eden, that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head.

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

And this promise was repeated to Isaac:

- Live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Genesis 26:2–4 NKJV.

And God repeated this promise to Jacob:

- And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.” Genesis 28:13–15 NKJV.

There is no doubt that God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob promising that that region of land would be given to them and their descendants and that through them the promised Messiah would come.

So God called Abraham to leave his homeland and go to a new land for the purpose of bringing through his descendants the Messiah, who would save the world from sin.

What about today, is that small strip of land in the Middle East the complete and total fulfillment of the promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or is the purpose for that geographic region in the promises fulfilled and God is today carrying forward His Genesis 3:15 promise in a grander, larger, more global way?

Have you considered the possibility that the promise to Abraham and his descendants is a dual-fulfillment prophecy and we have not fully appreciated its larger application?

The Bible is filled with dual prophecies and promises:

- Joel’s prophecy about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit before the second coming of Christ (Joel 2:28–32) is also applied by Peter to the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–21).
- Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 both start out referring to an earthly king and then transition to the fall of Lucifer.
- Jesus’ prophecy about the second coming is also blended with the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24).

In all these dual-fulfillment prophecies, there is a lesser application and a greater application—**the lesser is regional; the greater is global.**

The promise given to Adam and Eve is the promise given to the entire human race, for all humans were in Adam and Eve. The promise given to Abraham was a *regional* promise of that *global* promise. It was the promise that through Abraham’s family the earlier promise would be realized; that through Abraham’s genetic family, the Seed of the woman that will deliver the descendants of Adam from sin and death will come.

And what was the promise given to Adam and repeated to Abraham? That a Descendant of theirs, a real human, would come and destroy sin and Satan and save the human race from eternal death, not merely occupy one region on the planet.

The covenant with Abraham is the same covenant that was given to Adam, but with Abraham we now have the identification of the specific branch of the human family through whom the Messiah would come. And with the recommunication of the covenant to Abraham, God gives a dual-fulfillment prophecy concerning the land:

- 1) A smaller, local, regional promise that Abraham's genetic descendants would inherit the land of Canaan in order to fulfill their mission to be the genetic family through whom Jesus would be born; and
- 2) the larger, global, spiritual fulfillment, that the true descendants of Abraham, those who are like Abraham in faith and character would inherit the entire earth!

The covenant with and promises to Abraham focus on two promised lands. The local application is the one in which Abraham's genetic decedents are the branch of the human family through whom God accomplishes the promise of Genesis 3:15 and through whom the Messiah is born. This local regional promise to Abraham informs him that his children would inherit the land in Canaan **for the purpose** of fulfilling their mission of being the avenue through whom Messiah would come **so that** Jesus can fulfill God's greater promise, the covenant of grace given in Genesis 3:15, and crush the serpent's head **so that** the "meek will **inherit the earth.**" Matthew 5:5—**the true Promised Land.**

- The *genetic* descendants inherited Canaan *in order* to be the avenue for Jesus our Savior to be born and fulfill the covenant given to the entire human family in Genesis 3:15 so that ...
- ... the *spiritual* descendants of Abraham—all those who have faith like Abraham—will inherit the entire planet, the earth made new.

Here is the biblical evidence for this position:

- The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." Genesis 12:7 NIV84.

This is the regional promise for the genetic descendants to occupy Canaan for the purpose of being the branch of the human family through which the Messiah would be born.

- The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look **north and south, east and west.** All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." Genesis 13:14–17 NIV84, emphasis mine.

This is the larger, global, promise—that the entire earth (east, west, north, south, all points of the compass) will be given to the people of God; the earth will be made new, and those who are like

Abraham in character, in faith, whose hearts have been circumcised from sin, will be heirs to this promise and inherit the earth.

The apostle Paul, a former Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin and a highly trained Jewish theologian of the first century, wrote:

- You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.** Galatians 3:26–29.

Jesus Himself explicitly told the Jewish leaders of His day these very truths, that genetics did not determine who is considered an heir of Abraham and who would inherit the promise. We find Jesus' explanation to the Jewish authorities in John 8:34-45; my comments are in red:

- Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a **slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.** [If we don't experience freedom from sin through Jesus, then we are not part of the family of God—that is, not part of Abraham's family.] So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what **you have heard from your father.**" [Jesus tells them plainly that even though they are genetic descendants of Abraham, God doesn't see them as being children of Abraham, but children of a different father. Note, the Jews, to whom Jesus was speaking, understood this point and protested, claiming their genetic heritage.]

"Abraham is our father," they answered. [Jesus' response disallows their genetics as being a valid basis for being considered a descendant of Abraham.]

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did." [Those recognized by God as children of Abraham are those who have the same faith in God as Abraham did and who act on that faith as Abraham did.] As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the things your own father does." [Jesus again tells them that their heritage is not determined genetically but characterologically. They have embraced another father, but again, they protest and claim a higher father than Abraham.]

"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." [The Jews claimed God as their Father because God created humanity. But Jesus disallows this claim as well, for we are born in sin (Psalm 51:5) and Jesus already said that those who remain slaves to sin have no permanent place in the family of God. Only those who, through Jesus, are freed from sin become part of the family of God and are considered children of Abraham. Note Jesus' answer.]

Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. **You belong to your father, the devil**, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:34–45 NIV84, emphasis mine. [Jesus unequivocally destroys the idea that genetics determines who is an heir of Abraham, and He makes it clear that it is all about faith, character, love, and trust like Abraham.]

The dual-fulfillment promise to Abraham had two starting points and two ending points. The starting point of the global promise was in Eden, in Genesis 3:15; the starting point of the regional promise was with Abraham when he was called out of Ur. The ending point of the global is when Jesus recreates the earth and the meek inherit it; the ending point of the regional promise for the genetic people to be the avenue for the Messiah was when they crucified Christ and Jesus said to them,

- “Your house is left to you desolate.” Matthew 23:38 NIV84.

Jesus masterfully weaves these two covenant promises together in His prophetic description of the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming as described in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. The destruction of Jerusalem occurs because the regional fulfillment of the promise has ended. The genetic descendants kept open the avenue, Messiah had come, but they rejected Him and now there is no further purpose for a regional land to be occupied by them. The gospel must now go to the world. It is time for the global application, which culminates in the second coming and the meek inheriting the earth.

The promise to Abraham that his descendants would be a great nation is fulfilled in the global application whose ruler is from the line of David. As the angel said to the virgin Mary about her Son,

- “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.” Luke 1:32, 33 NIV84.

And the writer of Hebrews agrees with our assessment. Hebrews tells us that the faithful of God in Bible times—Abel, Enoch, Noah, along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who lived “in the promised land” (Hebrews 11:9)—“did not receive the things promised” (Hebrews 11:13), that they were “looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10). “All of these people” of faith “did not receive the things promised; they saw them and welcomed them from a distance. ... They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one” (Hebrews 11:13, 16).

The Bible says that “*all* of these people” did *not* receive the things promised; note who is included on that list—Enoch, who was taken to heaven! Enoch, who has already received eternal life, a glorified body, who currently lives in heaven with Jesus, surely he has received the promise, hasn’t he? Not in its complete and fullest sense. What was Abraham promised? That his spiritual descendants would inherit the earth. This promise will not be realized until Jesus comes again, all sin and sinners are

eliminated, the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, and the earth is made new to be the home of the righteous. Then the promise will be realized and we, who have faith like Abraham, will receive our inheritance of a goodly land, a beautiful home, perfect and flawless that God intended Adam and Eve to possess. It is true that the meek will inherit the earth, for what God has promised He will fulfill.

And what does it mean to be a descendant of Abraham and heir of this promise?

- If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29 NIV84
- This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 3:6 NIV84.

So what does it mean to be an heir of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

- Abraham was a man of faith. To be a child of Abraham means that we have the same faith in God that Abraham had.
- Isaac was the son of the promise. To be a child of Isaac means the focus of our Abraham-like faith is upon accepting Jesus, the Promised One, as our Savior, which results in us, like Isaac, surrendering our old life, as Isaac did in faith at Mt. Moriah, and receiving a new life from our substitutionary Savior Jesus Christ—we are reborn with the life of Christ.
- Jacob was a flawed human, just like us. His name means “deceiver,” and he lived dominated by fear and selfishness. But Jacob trusted God and, in union with God, wrestled against his own selfishness and overcame. Thus, his name was changed to Israel – one who with God overcomes. We become a child of Israel when we have the faith of Abraham to accept and trust Jesus as our Savior and die to our old life and are reborn, and then in unity with Him, we wrestle with self – overcoming the evil habits, unholy desires, fear, insecurity, and selfishness – develop mature Christlike character. Then our names are changed because our characters are changed. We become children of God – Israelites.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph,

- The primary purpose for which God established the nation of Israel was not to condemn the rest of the world but to save it. Certainly, most of us feel condemned when we are confronted by righteous behavior in someone else; so the existence of Israel also served to highlight the sin and selfishness of the nations around it. Believers living in harmony with God highlight His righteous character, which naturally leads to conviction. Ideally, the lives of people who “keep the commandments of God” (Rev. 14:12) should showcase His character. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy*, p. 35.

From what is God seeking to save humanity? Is God seeking to save humanity from His own punishment, anger, and wrath, or from sin?

What is necessary to save sinners from sin?

- A solution or remedy to the sin problem
- Trust in the one who has the solution
- But also, conviction of the sinner that there is something wrong in them that needs fixing,

So the plan of salvation is the plan of truth, love, and freedom taken to the world, the truth about God, His character, methods of love and truth and freedom, His trustworthiness. The truth about what sin is, deviation from God's design for life operating in the heart, which is distrust, rebellion, fear, selfishness, which causes acts of selfish exploitation and destroys. Thus, part of the plan is to reveal the truth about both God and our sin condition to contrast the two so that those in sin-sickness will be convicted and long for healing. But also to communicate God's trustworthiness and Jesus as our Savior, our Healer, our Remedy to sin. That when we are won to trust we open the heart and receive from Jesus, via the Holy Spirit, a new life a new spirit of love and trust which casts out the fear and we live new lives, we are in our hearts and minds being freed, delivered, healed from sin through the work, merits, of Jesus Christ.

From where does the condemnation come when we feel condemned by the righteousness of others?

When Adam and Eve sinned and ran and hid because they were afraid, where did that fear come from? From within themselves, it is the fruit of breaking love and trust and believing lies.