



2025 4Q Lessons of Faith From Joshua Lesson 8 Giants of Faith: Joshua and Caleb

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read the first paragraph,

- Every parent knows that their children learn by example, don't they? How many parents have fretted over seeing their children follow their bad traits instead of their good ones? Whatever our age, we find it easier to do wrong than to do right. It's just part of what it means to be fallen beings. "For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do" (Rom. 7:15, NKJV). Who can't relate? *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 64.

What do you think of the idea that whatever our age it is easier to do wrong than to do right?

Is this an absolute truth, a situational truth, or an untruth? If it contains truth, when is the truth?

Does this idea undermine victory in Jesus? Does it fit with the belief about sanctification, maturing in Christ, overcoming sin?

Is it the same as saying that throughout life we will continue to struggle with temptation?

Have you experienced any victories in your life, areas in your life that through God's grace you have overcome and, experienced a new motivation and today it would be more painful, more distressing to you to reengage that behavior than it was in the past? In other words, are there certain areas in your life where it is easier to obey than not to obey?

A simple example, for small children it is easier for them to disobey the rule to brush their teeth than to obey it. They need constant reminders and oversight to obey. But, what is actually easier for you today, what would be harder for you to live out and do, keep brushing your teeth every day or stop brushing them? Why?

Is there a lesson in this that applies to Christian maturity? Then back to what the lesson suggested, is it an absolute truth that "Whatever our age, we find it easier to do wrong than to do right"?

They quote Romans "For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do" (Rom. 7:15, NKJV).

What do we understand this to mean? Is this a person before conversion, during conversion, after conversion?

My view is that conversion is the experience of being reborn with a new Spirit, the Spirit of love and trust, the Spirit of Christ, which brings into the heart new desires, new motives, new priorities. And that is when the journey to spiritual maturity actually begins. We now desire to live out God's methods, and begin to choose to apply them, however, our new spirit with new motivation to love and trust is still operating upon the platform of a brain that prior to being reborn with the spirit of Christ, had habituated certain patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting and these wired in patterns (habits) established prior to conversion emerge reflexively and spontaneously when not actively thinking about it, and the writer is describing this.

An example of this process is deciding, because you have read studies on brain health, that changing the hand you brush your teeth with causes the brain to make new pathways, so you decide one day that you will do this. What is likely to happen that first evening when you are talking with your spouse or listening to a podcast when you go to brush your teeth? You will most likely brush with the same hand you always used. And then a few minutes later when you get into bed you will think, "Oh! I was supposed to brush with my other hand!" Do you then think, "I am a loser, I can't change, I am beyond hope. Why do I try?"

Or do you know that because you were not thinking about it, you would do what you had previously wired into your brain? And if you want to unwire the old habit and wire in the new, what do you have to do? Get up and brush your teeth again with the opposite hand. And this "stumbling" with the old behavior will recur for many days, you will be in the middle of brushing with the usual hand and then remember and change midway and then you will pick up the tooth brush with the usual hand, but remember and change, and so on until you finally wire in the new and stop using the old and that circuit slowly degrades.

Now, through this entire time of change, have you ever been in rebellion? No! Your heart was still committed to doing the new, but you were not yet capable of automatically doing it so without purposeful thought the old pathway activated and you carried out the old behavior. This is true whether it is teeth brushing or old emotional responses, negative thought responses, word or behavior responses, but, being converted with a new heart as soon as you recognize the old pattern your new heart says, "Oh, that is not what I intended to do." And you immediately go about doing it the new way, seeking God's grace, presence, forgiveness if necessary, and power to succeed. Such a person is not in rebellion against God, and that is why Paul a few chapters later in Romans 14 states,

- Everything that does not come from faith is sin. Romans 14:5 NIV84.

And it is why the Bible states,

- "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7 NIV84.

The outward appearance refers to more than physical appearance it includes the deeds, behaviors, and words, what man looks at on how well one behaves, how well one performs a task. But God looks on the heart motive, the true desire of the heart, not the momentary lapses that occur after rebirth. Those are residual symptoms of the damage of sinful living that God wants you to recognize and be unhappy with so you will continue to choose to activate the new pathways and stop activating the old. But He does not want you to buy into the lie that this means there is no victory, that we continue to live in sin, which is distrust and rebellion, and do not mature or grow.

The penal legal view focuses on the externals, the outward appearance, the deeds and behavior, God is our Creator and He focuses upon the design law reality of what salvation is, on the heart, the motive, the animating spirit that drives the action. Are we living in love and trust, and in our healing journey when we fall short do we grieve and run to Jesus longing for and experiencing further development and maturing?

I can tell you in my life, this is how it works. I have had certain wired in ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, reacting, that have fired without my conscious intention in certain situations, and when that happens I have learned to say, “O what a wretched man am I who will save me from this weak biology that has these old patterns wired in?” And I go to Jesus and I experience His grace and over time He has worked in me and my brain is rewiring and change is happening and new automatic responses are developing and it is easier to do the right and harder to do the wrong.

And because this understanding of how reality works in harmony with God’s design laws this is how I paraphrased this section of Romans 7:

- I am frustrated with what I do! For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, my old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed. And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing. What is happening is this: I have come to trust God, and I desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses — which present almost reflexively in certain situations — have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do. I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness, which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So, I find that at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire. For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do: No! They are remnants of my selfish, unconverted mind. So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not myself that acts, but the vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed. And through God's grace, they will soon be removed.

So I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, my old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me. In my mind, I rejoice in God's methods and principles,

but I recognize that I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within. What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed? Praise be to God—for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust in God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior. Romans 7:15-25 REM.

So, do we anticipate victory, that right doing becomes easier than wrongdoing as we walk with Jesus or not?

What about Enoch, Elijah, Moses—yes Moses still had his momentary lapse at the rock, but overall, do you think day to day as these individuals walked with Jesus wrongdoing remained easier than doing right?

SUNDAY

What is faithfulness?

What does it mean to be faithful? How would you describe it?

If we could go back in time and interview Saul of Tarsus before his Damascus Road experience, and asked him, as he is persecuting Christians, “Saul, are you being faithful to God and His covenant with Israel?” What do you think he would have said?

Can people be faithful to something other than God and God’s cause?

Would faithfulness include loyalty, reliability, consistency? Would it also include integrity, faithfully fulfilling one’s duties, meaning to the standard or best of one’s abilities, not cutting corners?

Doesn’t God want our faithfulness—people who are both reliable as people, but who will be also will stay true to and stick with the cause, the mission?

And what is necessary for people to be faithful to God? Are we naturally faithful? Can we be faithful by simply saying, “I will be faithful”?

Isn’t faithfulness on our part the fruit of our first trusting God and being reborn with a new heart and right spirit? Isn’t it God living in us by His Holy Spirit that heals, renews, enlightens, empowers us to be faithful?

And what wins us to trust God? His faithfulness, as Paul wrote,

- God trusted his message to the Jews. But what if some of them were not faithful? Does this mean that God will not be faithful? Certainly not! God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” Romans 3:2-4 GNT.

What undermines trust in God? Lies about God, and what establishes trust in God? The truth of about God, His faithfulness and reliability, which is an outworking of His character, His being. He never changes; He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. And His laws, the protocols He, as our never-changing Creator God, built into the operations of reality, are the design laws of life and they are constant and reliable.

What undermines trust in God are the lies that He is not reliable, that He is not trustworthy and this lie is promoted most effectively under the lie that God’s laws functions like human law, made up rules enforced through inflicted punishment.

Thus our faithfulness requires our rebirth and that requires that we are won back to trust, which requires we understand, believe, God is truly trustworthy, and that requires we are won back to worshiping God as Creator, which requires we reject the penal legal lies about God and understand His laws are design laws.

The lesson cites the names of the 10 unfaithful spies and asks if we remember their names, and after suggesting we probably don’t, in the THIRD PARAGRAPH states,

- Why? Because they are the names of the other ten spies sent by Moses to explore the land of Canaan. They are forgotten because their names were not worthy of being remembered. The report that they brought portrayed the Promised Land as impossible to conquer. They saw themselves as grasshoppers compared to the giants who inhabited some areas of the land, and their hearts melted with fear at the “impregnable” walls of the fortified cities in Canaan. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 65.

The people had reports from the majority of spies that the opposition was too great, the walls too high, the enemy too strong—and the people listened, and were defeated before even trying to occupy the land.

Is there in object lesson in this for us? Do we ever have leaders today who tell us sin is too great, the wall of wickedness too high, we can never overcome, we will continue to live defeated in sin until Jesus comes and our only hope is to claim the legal payment for our sins while we continue to live sinfully?

Is that the gospel message, that we more easily do wrong than right, that we cannot achieve victory here and now, that the enemy is too strong?

Here are two paragraphs from the book *The Desire of Ages*, what do you think of these, do you agree or disagree?

- The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. *The Desire of Ages* p. 671.1

Before I read the paragraph that immediately follows this one—what do you think of this one?

How is an individual changed or transformed? It is not by truth cognitively comprehended (remember the devils cognitively know the truth and are afraid, Luke 8:26-28; James 2:19), but by truth taken into the heart as building blocks to the individual, applied to the life. And as we choose truth, say yes and take it into our hearts as truths we identify with, cherish, prefer, and make part of our values, priorities, standards, our brains change. When we have an epiphany, an internalization and application of truth to ourselves, there is an immediate change in the substructure of our neurons.

The tubulin molecules that make up the microtubules within neurons and where memories are stored, change their polarity encoding the truth (or lie) we choose to embrace. This changes the resonate frequency, the harmonic quantum vibrations, of our consciousness, our spirit and we, by the internalization of truth come into every closer harmony, unity, resonance with the Holy Spirit.

And this saving truth is brought to us by the working of the Holy Spirit; it is not conjured, discovered, created by our fallen human ingenuity or imagination. In fact, our fallen hearts and minds cannot appreciate God’s truth without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Reading the Bible, which is God’s Word, without the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, will not result in comprehension of truth. Many people have read the Bible without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and used it to promote falsehood. The Spirit of Truth brings truth to our hearts and minds in ways we can understand and then leaves us free to choose, will we accept the truth and choose it for ourselves, or reject the truth and cling to the lie? We are literally transformed, first in spirit, second in mind, lastly in body.

But the converse is true, if we believe the lie, the ugly, the false, the perverse, it gets encoded in the substructure of our brains and our spirit resonates ever more closely with the demonic, the evil, and when we live and act out the evil we wire that into our brains and if we do not repent and choose truth, love, and trust we eventually cut ourselves off from the Holy Spirit and God by destroying within ourselves the faculties that respond to the Spirit of truth.

As we choose the truth, our brains change, and truth by truth, we are transformed and our spirits our cleansed, we become ever more in harmony with the Holy Spirit and our consciences become more sensitive to His movements. When we embrace the truth and say yes, we not only experience a real-time change in our brains that changes our spirits (we have all experienced this, the immediate peace, joy, presence of God in our hearts) we also receive divine power to succeed in living out that truth in

our lives. The truth comes from God, the conviction comes from God, the power to succeed comes from God—but the choice to accept or reject the truth come from us.

Then, as we make choices to live out the truth over time our brain circuits rewire, old circuits are pruned back and bad habits lose power, and new circuits are wired in and godly habits become easier to carry out. We are actually, in reality, being transformed into the image of Christ.

But the converse is true, if we choose the lie, the ugly, the false, the perverse, it gets encoded in the substructure of our brains and our spirit resonates ever more closely with the demonic, the evil, and as we live and act out the evil we wire that into our brains and if we do not repent and choose truth, love, and trust we eventually cut ourselves off from the Holy Spirit by destroying within ourselves the faculties that respond to the Spirit of truth. This is what Pharaoh did to himself when Moses brought truth upon truth, through the ten plagues, demonstrating that his gods were false. Every time he chose to reject the truth, he changed himself, taking himself further out of harmony with the Holy Spirit until he destroyed his conscience and no further amount of truth had any impact upon him.

So what is described in this first paragraph is exactly how I understand reality works, how the Spirit of Truth frees people and conforms them to Christ. Now let's consider the next paragraph from the commentary,

- In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as **a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail**. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the **fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer**. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a **partaker of the divine nature**. Christ has given His Spirit as a **divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church**. *The Desire of Ages* p. 671.2, emphasis mine.

Do you agree or disagree?

Do you realize if this is true, this paragraph alone destroys the penal substitutionary model of salvation? The penal model is built upon the lie that God's law functions like human law, made up rules that require external enforcement through inflicted punishments. And in that false understanding, it teaches that all our sin-crimes were legally placed upon Jesus and punished by the Father, who it is claimed, killed Jesus for our sins. And then it is claimed that salvation is experienced when we claim Jesus' blood as our legal payment and the Father in the legal court system of heaven, then makes a verbal and legal declaration that we are not considered or reckoned or accounted to be righteous, even though we, in reality, in heart, mind, function remain unrighteous.

This legal model teaches that the effect of Jesus substitutionary sacrifice **does not** require the office work of the Holy Spirit to make it effectual in you or me, but the legal model teaches the effect of Jesus' sacrifice is legal and it is applied in the heavenly courts to effect or impact the Father so He won't kill us. This model, in function, rather than leading people to trust the Father, actually causes people to trust in the blood, the robe of righteousness to cover and hide them from the Father, the intercessory pleas of Jesus to His Father (or for some the added pleas of Mary and the saints) because they really do not trust the Father believing falsely that He will have to kill them if these interventions are not done.

But the truth, the reality, is that we must be reborn with a new heart and right spirit just as Jesus told Nicodemus.

The Bible teaches that,

- God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might **become the righteousness of God**. 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Through what God has provided in Jesus we BECOME the righteousness of God, and that is because we surrender our old life of fear and selfishness and reborn with the life of Christ, as the author quoted 2 Peter 1:4 wrote, we become actually partakers of the divine nature. This is the work of the Holy Spirit who brings us the life of Jesus and shares that life with us. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches, the Holy Spirit is the connecting link that infuses us with the animating energy, life, spirit of Jesus and we are reborn with new motives, desires, drives, and as we choose to live out that new life we are transformed.

Thus, as the author wrote, without the Holy Spirit coming into our hearts and minds and transfusing us with the life of Christ, His death on the cross does us no good, because salvation is not achieved through legal pardon, it is only achieved by actual, reality-based, healing, transformation, recreation, receiving a new life, the life of Christ.

What about the idea that the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to overcome every sin whether cultivated by ourselves or inherited—for instance we inherit the spirit of fear and selfishness that causes us to act contrary to love?

MONDAY

Read the last paragraph,

- Caleb understood that the territory each tribe would eventually possess was directly proportionate to the extent to which they dared to claim the promises of the Lord and how much land they were willing to tread upon by faith. God's promises are not self-fulfilling, in the sense that they come true irrespective of our will. Rather, they require faith accompanied

by resolute action. The Hebrew term 'ulay, “maybe” (Josh. 14:12), can express fear and doubt, but it usually denotes hope and the anticipation that something positive will take place (Gen. 16:2; Num. 22:6, 11; Num. 23:3). *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 66.

Have you ever struggled to move forward in faith, even when you knew God was leading?

I have thought a lot about this, how to know when to push forward and when to hold back, is God leading and I am following or am I running ahead of God and not waiting for His guidance?

What wisdom do you all have on this?

What kinds of things have caused you pause?

The hard ones are not the decisions that are clearly right and wrong decisions, but the ones that are in themselves neither right or wrong but are about following God’s plan, purpose, directions—like should one take this job or that job, go to this school or that school, etc.

In my life I have been caught in a certain type of doubt trap—it isn’t doubting God’s goodness, it isn’t doubting His faithfulness, it isn’t doubting His abilities, it is doubting the other people involved in the process when the decision is not solely my own.

When I get counsel from someone, should I follow it? If I get encouragement to go a certain direction should I listen? And then I start thinking of all the angles, what if this, what if that, and I pray—and the question is never whether I trust God, it is whether I trust the other people and whether they will respond with fidelity, faithfulness, reliability, if I choose to engage with them in some employment or activity.

And then it struck me, when I was wrestling with this type of concern—God knows the future; He has already accounted for the decisions of the others and if I trust Him, am listening to His guidance, genuinely seeking to fulfill His purpose in my life, then the unfaithfulness of others will be incorporated into a greater plan for God’s glory, so I don’t need to worry about what they do.

When we trust God with outcomes, He incorporates the decisions of the wicked into the plan for the advancement of His kingdom. Consider Daniel and the lion’s den and the three worthies on the plane of Dura as examples, Joseph and his brothers etc.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on Caleb’s daughter’s pursuit of the land that God promised her father, and in the fourth paragraph we read,

- Indeed, the land is a gift from Yahweh to Israel, but Israel must appropriate it by claiming the promises of the Lord with faith and courage. Achsah's determination foreshadows the perseverance of those women in the Gospels who would not be turned away by the crowd or the disciples and would not give up until they received Jesus' blessing for themselves and their families. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 67.

Is there a lesson in this for us today? What does it mean to appropriate God's promises by claiming them with faith and courage?

Could someone miss out on the things God has promised because they do not claim them with faith and courage? Any examples?

How about the promise of salvation—is the promise of salvation one that we can confidently say is available to every single human being?

What does it mean to claim it by faith and courage and what would it mean to miss out by not doing so?

What is the core issue in being saved, the foundational requirement that every single saved person must and will experience?

- Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again... I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." John 3:3-8 NIV84

Would you agree that salvation requires a person to be reborn of the Holy Spirit?

How does one claim this with faith and courage? And what does it look like to miss out?

Why do sinners have to be reborn by the Spirit? Because there is something wrong with our first birth—what is wrong with our natural birth?

We are born, brought to live, enter this world,

- For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. Psalm 51:5 NLT.

When Adam and Eve sinned they corrupted their lives, their spirits, the animating motivating breath of life that moves to action from perfect, holy, sinless love and trust to that of fear and selfishness. And because God had already given them the ability to share their life and create new individuals in their own image, each of us are brought to life in the image of Adam and Eve, with their life shared, passed

down through the generations, and that life is corrupted with the motivating drive, energy, animation of fear and selfishness. As Paul wrote to Timothy,

- For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
2Timothy 1:7 NKJV

The spirit of fear is the life, the breath of life, we inherited from Adam and Eve, and it causes us to run and hide from God, to cover ourselves with our own fig leaves, excuses, defense mechanisms, comfort measures, anything we can find in this world to make us feel safe, including the multitude of destructive and ungodly worship practices—every single false religion is a manifestation of the spirit of fear seeking to find peace for the soul, to comfort self, but without the rebirth of the Holy Spirit who brings us a new life, the life of Christ.

So, we appropriate the promise of salvation by first being won to enough truth that we choose to trust Jesus. This is the faith portion, that despite our natural fear, we choose to open our hearts to Jesus in trust, in faith, and that always requires we confront our old fear-based life and the various attachments, comforts, security measures we have built into our hearts. And that requires courage, courage to stand firm in trust in the face of fear, doubt, insecurity, and the pain of dying to the old life and having our identity, our individuality, our personhood cut free of the various self-protective comfort measures that in reality keep us separated from God and from experiencing His promise of salvation, of being reborn, healed, transformed and renewed.

Claiming the promise of salvation requires every single person to go through the experience of Jacob's night of trouble where he, united with God, wrestled against his own fear and selfishness and overcame. Or like David after confronted by Nathan and who wrote Psalms 51. Or Peter after he denied Jesus; or Saul of Tarsus after Damascus Road.

When we claim the promise of salvation and genuine trust Jesus, He will initially lead us into green pastures still waters where we experience His presence, love, grace, forgiveness, peace, the joy of knowing He accepts and loves us. But very shortly thereafter, our heavenly Shepherd begins to lead us in the path of righteousness for His name sake, for the restoration of His name, His character into us which restores our soul, and that is when our Shepherd leads us into the valley of the shadow of death. This is not the valley of physical death, but the valley of the shadow of death, the valley where we must face our inherited life of fear and selfishness and choose whether we will surrender all, die to self, and be reborn fully with the life of Christ. If we do, the Lord prepares a table of spiritual resources to develop, nurture, and grow us in the face of our enemies and anoints our minds/hearts with His Spirit, and the goodness and mercy of the Lord is ours for the rest of our lives and we will dwell in God's house forever.

This is most clearly seen in the encounter between Jesus and Peter when Jesus explains His mission and plan to the disciples:

- From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

Jesus turned and said to Peter, “**Get behind me, Satan!** You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must **deny himself** and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to **save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.**” Matthew 16:21–25 NIV84, emphasis mine.

- And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and **when thou art converted**, strengthen thy brethren. Luke 22:31,31 KJV.

My understanding is that Jacob, David, Peter, Saul of Tarsus were all responding to the work of the Holy Spirit, wanting to be right with God, following Him but not fully surrendered in their early journeying with God. Jacob not fully surrendered when lying to his father, it was only later, the night of trouble where he finally stopped trying to save self through his various dealings and trusted his life fully with God and was reborn and that is why his name was changed from deceiver to Israel, one who with God overcomes.

Same with David, Peter, Saul of Tarsus, they were all cognitive believers in God, were all responding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and seeking to do what is right, but still holding onto their life of fear and selfishness, trying to obey through their strength, still protecting self while following Jesus. Only in these crisis moments, when they were confronted with fear that they could not handle did the true nature of their spirit of fear reveal itself:

- Jacob was afraid Esau was going to kill him and his family—and notice he sent his family ahead between him and the threat. It was then, he finally surrenders to God fully.
- David exercised faith with Goliath, with the lion, with the Philistine armies, but that faith is the faith that all naturally exercise when faced with threats beyond our own ability to handle. As the saying goes there are no atheists in foxholes. But it was when David was king, when the threats were not beyond his perceived ability to handle, that the spirit of fear and selfishness manifested in his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. And that was when he surrendered all and was fully reborn—as we read in Psalm 51.

Same with Peter and Saul, and the same with each of us. And as we are following the leading of our Shepherd, the impress of the Holy Spirit, He will lead us to those places in our own lives where we must face the things we have used to comfort and protect our life of fear and selfishness. And it will

cause emotional distress, anxiety, and of course intense fear, for the life we inherited from Adam is fear-driven. And it is frightening to let go of our security blankets. And it takes **courage** to exercise our trust in Jesus and say no to our fears, and it is when we do this that we then appropriate and experience inside of us His promise, His power, His life, His renewal and rebirth.

But, the journey for many people, like Jacob, David, Peter, Saul and myself, is that as we are following our Shepherd and He leads us into the valley of the shadow of death, and we face the fear, anxiety, emotional distress, sometimes we turn back to our old comfort measures. And then we find ourselves in some type of trouble, like Jacob and David, and we run to Jesus and He meets us with His love, grace, forgiveness, the green valleys and still waters and then begins to lead us back to that place in our lives where we must choose to die to that old life and be fully reborn.

And then when we are then there is a process of continual advancement where little things are slowly brought to our attention to be let go of and surrendered. Like Peter, who after he was fully converted, after he was reinstated by Jesus Himself, still had little things he had to surrender, like the security he found in religious ceremonies and his reluctance to associate with Gentiles. This ongoing struggles for Peter, and each of us, are not evidences of sinful living but evidences of the maturing, healing, transforming work of the person who has been reborn.

I cannot tell anyone else where they are in their journey, only that for every single person to be saved they must be reborn, the experience of surrendering their old life of fear and selfishness and being reborn with the life of Jesus, the Spirit of love and trust, and then being motivated and animated by that Spirit they will advance, grow, mature, as the Holy Spirit leads them to decision points where they choose to apply God's truth in trust and let go of any unhealthy attachments that previously used to comfort themselves.

Sadly, there are versions of Christianity that put obstacles in the way of people experiencing this. Instead of teaching them what we just went through, they instead teach them that salvation is a legal process in a courtroom off in another dimension far removed from them, in which, having made a legal claim of Jesus as their legal payment, they believe Jesus is in heaven pleading His blood to His Father to pay their debt to God so God won't kill them.

This theology, functionally, teaches people to distrust God rather than trust Him. They place their trust in the blood, the payment, the robe of Christ's righteousness that covers them and hides them from God, or they trust the pleadings of Jesus to His Father begging His Father to be merciful. Some Christians trust in Mary and the other saints to plead to God, or in the ceremonies, sacraments, and rituals.

The legal religion also leads people to trust in, believe that salvation is found in believing the right doctrines and being able to prove them from the Bible, or belonging to what they believe is the right denomination.

My point is that the penal legal view, in which people falsely believe God's law functions like human law, leads people to focus on the externals, mechanics, behaviors, to protect them from God. It obstructs genuine salvation which requires a rebirth experience.

So, they will claim the promises of God as tokens or coins to drop in the heavenly vending machine to get out what they believe God is required to provide because they have claimed the legal promise.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points out that when the land was be apportioned to the people Caleb received his portion first, the rest of the tribes and people and Joshua was the last to receive his portion.

Read last paragraph,

- Moreover, Timnath-serah was located near Shiloh, in the vicinity of the sanctuary, which shows where Joshua's priorities lay and where his heart was bound. Certainly, after the newly born nation of Israel had been led into the Promised Land, and, with God's help, secured the inheritance of each tribe and family, it would not have objected to Joshua's demand for a more impressive inheritance. Yet, Joshua was content to live a simple life with a focus on what is most important, thus embodying the prayer expressed later by David: "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple" (Ps. 27:4, NKJV). *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 68.

What lessons do we learn from this?

In the Bible many of the people who are real historical figures prefigured or are types of Jesus:

- Joseph—who was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, tempted to sin, imprisoned falsely, but eventually elevated to rule next to the Pharaoh to save both his family and the Egyptians.
- Moses—confronts the enslaver and overcomes him to lead the people to freedom, talks with God face to face, leaves God's presence to bring the people God's law and build the sanctuary Jesus left heaven to bring God's living law back to humanity and restore it within the human temple where God intends for it to be and becomes the chief cornerstone upon which His true temple is built out of living stones. Moses represents Jesus in His preincarnate life planning the plan of salvation with His Father and then leaving the Father's presence to come to Earth to fulfill it.
- Aaron—who as high priest represents Jesus in His ministry as our heavenly High Priest directing all the agencies of heaven for the cleansing of His true sanctuary.
- Joshua—also represents Jesus. In fact, the name Jesus had as a human on earth was Joshua, the Greek form is Jesus. Joshua leads the people to confront the enemy and through trust in God

overcome their fears and experience victory. Jesus leads us to confront our enemies and through trust in Him overcome our fears and experience victory. Joshua put others first, taking his reward after all the others had received theirs.

- Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5–11 NIV84.

Jesus sacrificed His place, His glory, His power, His life in order to give us life, to provide us reward, and only after He has provided His life, His reward to us does He receive His reward.

Can you think of other ways Joshua is a type of Jesus?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph,

- Ellen G. White speaks about the importance of beholding the character of Jesus: “Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 355. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 69.

What is being described here? The law of worship, that by beholding, worshiping, meaning we find worthy of our time, heart, preference, identity, what we value and hold to and invest ourselves in, changes us. And if we worship God in truth in love then we are transformed by that process. This is a design law of how reality works.

But the question is, do you believe what is written here true? Is it biblical? Any Bible verses that support this idea?

- But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV.

- They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. Jeremiah 2:5 NIV84.

Romans 1:18-32—they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and preferred images made with their own hands and their minds became darkened, depraved and futile.

This is why God says we are to have no other gods before Him, not because of a human law, a rule, that He must enforce through punishment, but because of design law, of how reality works. We are the highest created beings on planet earth, created in the image of God to be like Him, to bear His likeness, and there is nothing on earth we can worship that will ennoble, develop, advance us to be like Him. Anything on earth we worship degrades us and destroys the image of God in us. God says to worship Him the infinite one for when we do we enter into a never-ending experience of growth, healing, development, advancement, ennobling, for we never become infinite God, and even a billion years into the future we are still not God and there is still an infinite more growth for us to do. Thus, God's law is not a rule enforced through punishment, in fact if people view God that way they are not worshipping our Creator, but the corrupt creature who seeks to replace God in your worship so you install that corrupt abusive, murderer from the beginning, into your spirit temple. No, God's laws are the laws life is built to operate upon and through Christ we can be restored to harmony with God, to life and fulfill our high calling to be image bearers of our Creator.

Read last two paragraphs,

- In the summary chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul speaks about two antagonistic forces trying to shape our lives. On the one hand, the surrounding world, with its various influences, tries to force us daily into its own mold, effecting a conformation in us that works from the outside in.

To counteract this impact, the Holy Spirit is able to transform us inside out in a manner similar to the way a caterpillar metamorphoses into a beautiful butterfly. But for that process to happen, we need to consecrate ourselves to God and ask Him to continue the good work that He has started in us (Phil. 1:6). In the end, we have to make the conscious choice, moment by moment, to walk in the Spirit. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 69.

The lesson is correct that there are two antagonistic forces at work battling for every human being—how would you describe those two forces?

The lesson identifies the manifestation of one of those forces, but not the true force when they point to the surrounding world, which uses force, coercion, pressure. What is the true force of the enemy? The corrupt spirit of fear and selfishness which animates all human beings descended from Adam and Eve and all the fallen angels.

The Holy Spirit is the countering force which is the Spirit of truth, love, and trust.

Fear and selfishness leads to survival of the fittest methods, using power over others to control and coerce to get one's way, to make one feel safe, with the powerful rising up over the weak to take from

the weak and enforce their way upon the weak through threats of punishments. This is exactly how the creature Satan governs, and is how Satan the death dealer infected Christianity. He led Christians to believe God's law functions like human law and therefore God uses His infinite power over the weak to pressure through law and law enforcement compliance through inflicted punishment.

But the truth is God is the Creator whose laws are the protocols built into the operations of reality and life requires harmony with these laws. Adam and Eve believed lies, broke trust with God, changed themselves from beings who were animated with the spirit of love and trust, to beings animated by fear and selfishness and ran and hid from God. We are all born without spirit of fear and selfishness—it was the only life, spirit, animating energy Adam and Eve had to produce their children with. Eternal life requires eliminating that spirit of fear and selfishness and replacing it with a holy, sinless, perfect, spirit of love and trust based upon truth. Jesus became human and did that very thing—in reality. He took up that life through Mary, but through the Holy Spirit His humanity was born with a sinless, holy spirit. And in Jesus He faced temptation like all of us, but chose only to live sinlessly, animated by the spirit of love and trust and at the cross destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness.

When we are won to trust by the truth, we open our hearts and receive the Holy Spirit who takes the life of Christ and reproduces it in us. This is not legal adjustment in books, it is actual recreation, healing, restoration of righteousness into living beings. We are in reality reborn with a new life, we become partakers of the divine nature, we live Christ's life.

Thus the two antagonistic forces are the force of lies, fear, selfishness, against truth, love, and trust. The law and government of the enemy is the imposed law with coercive enforcement, whereas the law and government of God is design law and reaping the consequences of one's choice.

Salvation in reality is the healing and transformation of sinners, which requires them to be won to trust by the truth and to choose for themselves what they will believe, who they will trust, who they will worship and as they choose daily God and where the Holy Spirit is leading they are in reality changed and renewed to be ever more like Jesus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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