



2025 4Q Lessons of Faith From Joshua Lesson 9 Heirs of Promises, Prisoners of Hope

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

What do you think of the title *Heirs of Promises, Prisoners of Hope*?

Doesn't this apply to us? Aren't we heirs of the promises to Abraham and prisoners of hope, imprisoned in this sinful world, imprisoned in decaying bodies, but promised freedom from both? And haven't we already received the downpayment from God guaranteeing our full freedom and the fulfillment of the promises?

- If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29 NIV84.

The promises made to Abraham were made to him and his descendants, and repeated to Isaac, and then Jacob, so the promises are to pass down to their descendants as an inheritance, how do we become their descendants and heirs according to the promise?

The Bible records the time the Roman centurion came to Jesus and asked Him to heal his servant and when Jesus said He would go and do it, the centurion said He didn't need to go in person, just give the command and it would be done. And the Bible records Jesus' response to this:

- When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such **great faith**. I say to you that **many will come from the east and the west**, and will take their places at the feast with **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** in the kingdom of heaven. But the **subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside**, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 8:10-12 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Do Jesus words give us insight into who are the heirs to the promises?

Who are the subjects of the kingdom that are being thrown out? In John 8 the genetic descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob claimed they were the heirs of Abraham, children of God, and had the right to these promises, but notice Jesus' response and then theirs:

- "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things 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." John 8:39-41 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Jesus makes a condition an if/then statement, those who are considered children of Abraham do what Abraham did—and what is it Abraham did? He trusted God; he had faith in God and thus was reborn, transformed, and then followed God. Jesus is saying that those who are considered children of Abraham will resemble Abraham in this way, will carry the character trait of faith in God within them like Abraham did and thus resemble their father Abraham. But the Jews responded by saying:

- “We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.” John 8:41 NIV84

They claim to be children of God, which means they are claiming to be image bearers of God. These people are not arguing over the inspiration of Scripture, the state of the dead, the Sabbath day, tithing, health reform. They belief in the covenant given through Abraham, they belief in the advent of the Messiah. No, they did not disagree on specific doctrines. They disagree on who God is, His character, which is rooted in how they understand law. They understood God’s law to be like human law and they were supreme legalists, law enforcers, and they believe that their zealous loyalty to the laws they identified as God’s laws made them children of God—does it sound familiar? But notice what Jesus tells them?

- Jesus said to them, “**If** God were your Father, [**then**] 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**. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? **He who belongs to God hears what God says**. The reason you do not hear is that **you do not belong to God**.” John 8:42-47 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Jesus explicitly states that genetics does not make them children of Abraham. Additionally, Jesus makes it clear that being a member of God’s authorized church, covenant people, denomination, even leaders in that organization and believing correct doctrines does not make them children of God because they still believe the core lie from the father of lies, and that lie is that God is not like Jesus, that God is like Satan, that God runs His universe like a creature runs an earthly government, with made up rules that are enforced through externally inflicted punishments.

Jesus is stating explicitly that if you hold to this lie about God, you become like the false satanic god you worship, which is the unavoidable result of the law of worship, and no matter what words you claim about yourself, you become an image bearer of Satan, and he is your father. The Jews confirm this themselves by their own words, as stated in the very next verse in response to Jesus they say:

- The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” John 8:48 NIV84

What is revealed by their response? What can the Holy Spirit do for people who view Jesus, truth, love, freedom, as demonic and prefer lies over truth, are motivated by fear instead of love, and who prefer a god who uses imposed law and law enforcement to punish their enemies and they themselves use law and law enforcement for their own security, safety, power, and control?

So those the true heirs to the promises to Abraham are those who have the faith of Abraham, but the promises are also passed down through Isaac and Jacob, and the celebration feast is the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so we must be more than children of Abraham, we must be children of Isaac and Jacob as well—and what does that mean?

- A child of Abraham is the one who has the faith of Abraham, which is trust, in other words, open their hearts to Jesus in trust and when they do that, they experience a miracle birth—the rebirth by the Spirit and become a new child in Christ—a child of Isaac.
- A child of Isaac then is one who, because of having faith like Abraham, is a miracle child, miraculously reborn with a new life, the life of Christ.
- And a child of Jacob is one who, because they have the faith of Abraham and experience the miraculous rebirth, then together with God the Holy Spirit working within them, wrestle against their old spirit of fear and selfishness until they are victor, the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit and they receive a new name, the name, or character of Christ.

This is what salvation actually is:

- One must first be won to trust in God and then
- One must be reborn with the life of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, brought by the Holy Spirit, and then
- One must choose to align their individuality, identity, personhood, with the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of love and trust and decision by decision, experience by experience, situation by situation, choose to do what the Spirit of Christ is motivating/leading/enlightening one to do and say no to the old spirit of fear and selfishness.

So, the promises to Abraham that we inherit are deliverance from sin and eternal life on the earth made new, not temporal life of physical war and abuse in Palestine. Remember the meek shall inherit the Earth.

But these promises are words, how do we know we can believe they will be fulfilled? Paul referenced an evidence, a proof, that guarantees that we will be set free from our imprisonment here in this sinful world and our imprisonment in these decaying bodies, what is that proof, evidence?

- And you also were **included in Christ** when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a **seal, the promised Holy Spirit**, who is a **deposit guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14, NIV84, emphasis mine.

Wow! Do you recognize what Paul is saying? The indwelling Holy Spirit that brings us the life of Christ, the new indwelling animating life of Jesus with the new motives, desires, wisdom, peace, love,

and trust—this is not natural to the human heart. Our natural spirit is fear and selfishness. Thus, when you experience God’s love and trust, His indwelling transforming power that is proof, that is evidence, that is the first deposit from God that His promise is real and will be accomplished.

And do you see how the infection of the lie that God’s law functions like Roman law, imposed law, human law undermines this evidence?

The imposed law lie teaches that salvation is not receiving a new life internal, empowering, victorious now, instead they teach that salvation is getting a legal adjustment in books in heaven with God declaring us to be legally accounted as righteous while we remain unrighteous.

Understand what that means, it means there is no evidence that we can point to that guarantees we will receive the future promises, that is one factor contributing to why so many legal Christians live in perpetual fear. They are taught a system of legal rules and legal promises without any power to transform and thus they have nothing but empty words to base their faith upon and so they claim it because they are afraid not to, but they really don’t believe it. And this turns their attention away from Jesus to themselves, their behavior, their doctrinal beliefs, their church affiliation, and such fear-driven religionists get very upset with anything that challenges their understanding, rules, or organization—they will crucify whoever calls their legal system into question, just like they did Jesus.

When we return to worshiping God as Creator, we realize that Jesus provides us an actual new life, a new spirit, a new animating energy, that is reality, right now today, we can experience a rebirth with a new identity through faith. This is righteousness by faith, as the Bible teaches, we become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

We can have absolute confidence that the promises of a future sinless world, where we are freed from the corruption of this world is going to be fulfilled. But notice again what the guarantee is that God has provided us that one day we will be free from the imprisonment of this old body:

- Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us **the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.** 2 Corinthians 5:1–5 NIV84

Notice the gift of the Holy Spirit is the deposit, the reality-based evidence in our lives today, the proof guaranteeing us that what God promised will happen.

Satan knows that without the work of the Holy Spirit **in our lives** that Christ’s sacrifice does us individually no good. Thus Satan, having lost his battle with Jesus, now focuses on interfering with the work of the Holy Spirit because that is the only way to stop sinners from being saved.

Imagine someone dying of a terminal condition and an enemy wants them to die, but a doctor is actively working on a remedy. The enemy first tries to prevent the development of the remedy because if no remedy exists, the dying person will die. But the enemy fails and the doctor creates the remedy, the only strategy left is to prevent that remedy from being administered, taken in by the dying person. The death-promoter seeks to cut the IV line that is transfusing the medicine. This is what Satan does today, works to get people to cut themselves off from God, by severing themselves from the Holy Spirit.

He does this in many ways:

- Rejecting truth and preferring lies which get encoded into their brains changing the resonant harmonic of their spirits, their quantum energy, which sears their consciences making it harder and harder for them to hear and be convicted by the Spirit of truth and love, and thereby solidifying in their being fear and selfishness.
- Distractions, entertainments, drugs, worldliness that numb the heart and mind so the still small voice of the Holy Spirit is not heard and if they don't repent and surrender to God in genuine faith and are reborn, they also eventually harden themselves in fear, selfishness, and self-comforting addictions.
- The lie that there is no Holy Spirit so people don't even ask for or open their hearts to the work of the Holy Spirit—or like the Jews did with Jesus as we previously discussed, see the attributes of the Holy Spirit as demonic and thus close their hearts to His work.
- Penal legal lies that teach people to believe salvation is legal adjustment in books not an internal rebirth and transformation with a new life received by the indwelling Holy Spirit, which causes people to place their trust in legal mechanics to protect them from the legal punishing god they do not trust. And via the law of worship, they become like that legal enforcing god and are not children of Abraham, but just like Jesus said to the Jews in John 8:44, they are of their father the devil.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph,

- At Creation, God placed Adam and Eve in a perfect environment that embodied abundance and beauty. The first human couple met their Creator in the setting of a lovely living space that could provide for all their physical needs. In addition to the spoken word of God, the Garden of Eden served as a learning center where Adam and Eve gained significant insight into God's character and the life He intended for them. Therefore, when they broke the trusting relationship with their Creator, their relationship with the Garden of Eden changed as well, and as a sign of the broken relationship, they had to leave the garden. They lost the territory that God had given to them. Thus, the Garden of Eden became the symbol of abundant life, and we will rediscover its motifs in the theme of the Promised Land. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 73.

Have you thought about the Garden of Eden as a learning center? I like this idea, isn't nature today also supposed to be a learning center?

What kinds of things might Adam and Eve have learned from what God created in the Garden of Eden?

Adam was the one who gave all the animals their names—consider that. In the Bible names were more than a nice sounding verbal expression, they held connection to the character of the person. Do you think it likely or unlikely, that Adam, in naming the animals, first studied them to determine things about them and then gave them names that somehow fit their unique position in the created order?

Consider this Bible Commentary on describing Adam and Eve before the fall while still in Eden, from the book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, first question of course when reading any Bible commentary is what do you understand it is saying and then do you agree with it, is it consistent with Scripture, does it help us understand the Bible better?

- The holy pair [Adam and Eve] were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe—"the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)—afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The **laws and operations of nature**, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. **They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life.** With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. **God's glory in the heavens**, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds," the **mysteries of light and sound**, of day and night—**all were open to the study of our first parents.** On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, **God's name was written.** The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of **infinite wisdom and power.** They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 50.3

Is there anything you disagree with? Is there anything which is contrary to Scripture?

I love the reality that God is Creator and as Creator we can learn about Him through studying what He has made, the laws that govern the operations of all things, the reliability, consistency, expression of love and goodness built into the operations of nature. We can still see in this fallen world with all its suffering and sin the reliability of God's design laws such as the law of liberty.

Love cannot be commanded, forced, compelled, obtained through imposed law and law enforcement. And reality teaches us that while we are free to break away from God and His design laws for life, we are not free of the pain, suffering, and death such choices cause.

God told them the truth in the day they exercise their freedom, in harmony with the law of liberty, to deviate from the design laws life is built upon and distrust God, they will change themselves, infect themselves with fear and selfishness, cut themselves off from God, and if it wasn't for God's grace, interventions, intercessions, they would have died the natural result of cutting themselves off from life.

But in this commentary what really intrigues me is the sentence, **“They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life.”**

Our modern definition of the word means to hold an informal conversation with and that caused me to think, is the author saying the plants talked back to Adam and Eve? Which, if that was so, I would question the accuracy of that description, but this is another example of how words can have more than one meaning or change meanings over time.

The archaic meaning of converse, which was the meaning when the commentary was written, is “to maintain a familiar association” with something, which would be described to today as, Adam and Eve having a close connection in studying and interacting with the plants and learning their secrets and guiding their growth, which makes perfect sense to me.

The next paragraph in the commentary reads,

- So long as they remained **loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase.** They would be **constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge**, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 51.1

Do you agree? I was excited to read this commentary because I have been telling people in my programs for years that God is infinite and we are finite, and that when we enter into saving relationship with God we enter into a never-ending journey of growth, development, expansion of our insights, knowledge, wisdom, abilities—because we never become God. Even a billion years into eternity we are still not God, we are still finite and He is still infinite, which means a billion years from now we will be so much more developed, intelligent, wise, mature, knowledgeable than we are today, but we are still not God and there will still be an infinite amount more for us to discover and learn. In other words, life as God intends it for us is a never-ending adventure in discovery, deepening knowledge, love, connection, wisdom, maturity, ever growing to be more like God, but we never become God.

Do you agree with this idea?

With that in mind, then why is it for most of Christianity our understanding of God is not advancing like our understanding of medicine, physics, material science, technology? Do you see how rapidly our

understanding is growing in other aspects of reality? But do you see our understanding of God growing at the same rate or do you find, and it seems almost especially so within Christianity and other religions that claim to be representatives of God, that these organizations resist advancing truth and continue to teach old Dark Ages ideas like Reformation Theology, which may have been moving forward in its day, but would be either stagnation today or moving backward?

Why is this the state of things? Because of how reality works—truth cannot move forward when lies are clung to. If people in medicine still believed that fever was caused by evil humors and there are no such things as microorganisms that cause infection, medicine would not move forward.

And in Christianity it is stagnant because the lie that God's law functions like human law is orthodoxy in almost every branch of Christianity. And that lie obstructs advancement, development, intimacy with God as that lie causes people to believe in doctrines that purposely, intentionally, willfully, keeps them separated from God, hiding behind legal payments, intercessors pleading on their behalf, robes of righteousness etc.

Advancement in any field only occurs as people are lovers of truth and are willing to internalize, apply, and move forward in the truth. And the SDA church was given this truth in 1888 and it was rejected by official leadership and while EGW began writing profusely about the reality of God's law being design law, the leadership has consistently and actively rejected this and continued to teach Romanism, that God's law functions like Roman law, imposed rules enforced by infliction of external punishment—and the church spiritually has stagnated and failed, thus far, to fulfill its mission, just like the Jews did 2000 years ago.

Read the last paragraph,

- As Abraham entered the land God had shown him, by faith that land became the Land of Promise to him and his descendants. It remained the Land of Promise for 400 years. The patriarchs did not really own the land; it was not theirs in such a way that they were able to give it to their children as an inheritance. Rather, it belonged to God, as the Garden of Eden had belonged to Him. As Adam and Eve did not do anything that entitled them to the Garden of Eden, Israel had not contributed anything to deserve the land either. The Promised Land was a gift of God based on His initiative. Israel had no inherent right or claim to own the land (Deut. 9:4–6); it was only by God's grace that the Israelites could possess it. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 73.

Thoughts about this paragraph? What are the lessons for us today? What is the significance of the land of Palestine today in God's plan of salvation?

There are two covenants or agreements that people confusion, the eternal covenant of grace, which was the agreement made among the Godhead that when humanity fell into sin They would, among Themselves, handle it with each of Them taking different roles. It was Their agreement among Themselves that Jesus would become incarnate and be our substitutionary Savior—this is Their

covenant communicated to humanity after the fall in Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head. This is God initiated and God fulfilled.

And it is this covenant that was communicated to Abraham in the promise:

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

That “seed” is Jesus, the promised “seed” of Genesis 3:15.

And this universal promise was repeated to Isaac and Jacob:

- To Isaac: “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 26:4 NKJV.
- To Jacob: “In you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 28:14 NKJV.

This eternal covenant is based upon God's eternal design law, the laws that life and the operations of reality are built upon.

To fulfill this universal covenant God did need human beings who would trust Him and work with Him. Abraham was called to be the father of the biological branch of the human family tree through whom God would fulfill this universal covenant. And therefore, God made a **temporary covenant** with Abraham and his descendants which is a **mission covenant**, the mission of being the holders of the inspired written record, of the teaching tools of the Levitical system, of being evangelists to share the truth about God with others, and of being the biological family through whom Jesus would be born to fulfill the eternal covenant of grace.

In other words, God made a temporary, **mission-focused** covenant/agreement with the Jews for the purpose of fulfilling His **eternal global covenant/agreement**.

This temporary, provisional, regional covenant was the covenant for the Jews to possess the land of Palestine. And it included the temporary imposed laws, ordinances, rituals, ceremonies, and the **added** and **temporary** arrangement of the eternal design law in the form of the Ten Commandments, written for the need of sinful humans.

All of these laws were added for the purpose of establishing an organization in a sinful world, composed of sinful, unconverted people, with sufficient externally imposed structure to maintain organizational integrity long enough for the fulfillment of the global eternal covenant that would actually resolve and remove sin—meaning until Jesus was born and completed the eternal covenant of grace made among the Godhead and communicated to humanity in Eden.

God's promise for the local/regional fulfillment to Abraham's biological descendants included the temporary promise of a local parcel of land:

- 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.

But God also promised to Abraham that through his “seed,” meaning Jesus, the universal covenant promised in Genesis 3:15 would be accomplished.

- 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.

The covenant with and promises to Abraham were dual—a local, regional one *and* a global, eternal one. These covenants had two laws, two promised lands, two applications, two purposes, two starting points, and two ending points.

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.

Paul confirms this:

- 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, emphasis mine.

The dual-fulfillment promise to Abraham had two starting points and two ending points. The starting point of the universal promise was in Eden, recorded 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 universal is when Jesus recreates the earth and the meek inherit it; the ending point of the regional promise for the genetic people was when they rejected and crucified Christ and said, “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15 NIV84). This is confirmed by Jesus when He said, to them, “Your house is left to you desolate” (Matthew 23:38 NIV84).

Two Covenants

Grace	Law
Eternal/Universal	Temporary/Provisional/Regional
Design law	Law written on the heart
Imposed law	Law written on stone ¹
Entire world	Palestine
All humanity	Jews
Started with Adam's fall	Started with Abraham's call
Purpose: Eliminate sin from universe	Protect Written Word/Avenue Living Word
Applies to all the universe	Applies to Jewish nation in Bible times
Never ends/completes at end of 1,000 years.	Ended at Jesus' crucifixion/resurrection.

So the universal covenant is only completely fulfilled when the earth is made new after the 1000 years and the meek inherit the earth.

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.

¹ This does *not* mean that Ten Commandments were done away with or are no longer binding, but that in the new covenant the complete aspect of the law of love (love for God and man), which are codified by the Ten Commandments, are no longer externally written upon stone but are internally written upon the heart (Hebrews 8:10).

MONDAY

Read the last paragraph,

- Even if Israel received the land as a gift from Yahweh, in the ultimate sense, God Himself remained the owner. As the true owner of the whole earth (Ps. 24:1), Yahweh has the right to assign the land to Israel or to take it away. If God is the owner of the land, the Israelites and, by extension, all humans are strangers and sojourners, or in modern terminology, we are all God's long-term guests on His land/earth. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 74.

Just as the lesson states, the Bible teaches:

- “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.” Psalm 24:1, 2.
- “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Colossians 1:16, 17.
- “For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine.” Psalm 50:10, 11.

And what does knowing and believing this protect people from in the world today?

Marxism, Socialism, and Communism—all three of these governmental systems are built upon two core lies: There is no God and the state is the rightful owner of everything.

The argument of these godless philosophies is that the core to human evil, exploitation, injustice, unfairness, is private ownership, and that by replacing private ownership with state ownership then the state can manage all things in a fair and equitable way.

As long as people believe Bible truth, that there is a Creator God, who is love and He is the rightful owner of all things and we are His stewards who are to manage all He puts in our hands with His principles, integrity, honesty, benevolence, for the advancement of His kingdom, which is the benefit of our fellow humans, leading them to salvation and the abundant life, then societies are protected from this godless and destructive form of government.

But when people reject God and His methods, when they choose selfishness, hedonism, fantasy rather than reality, which is another way of saying lies rather than the truth, then they will make choices in which they will reap painful consequences. They will not have the peace, the joy, the love, the wisdom of those who are walking with God. And they will be filled with envy, jealousy, hatred, and seek to take from others what God has placed in their hands.

I am not saying that all those who receive earthly blessings are converted in heart and reborn to God's kingdom, I am saying that those who are reborn and members of God's kingdom trust God with their lives, their position, their station, their mission, purpose, and are not envious of others and do not get inflamed with envy and manipulated into forming forces to take what others have to make themselves feel better.

The righteous are like Joseph— who when unfairly treated, trusted God with his situation; and Daniel, the three worthies, and David after he was anointed and knew God had chosen him as king, did not seek to overthrow Saul, but trusted God with his advancement.

The godless are fear-driven and selfish and will work to inflame envy, jealousy, and fear in those who are disadvantaged from the world's perspective, some disadvantaged by objective wrongdoing from others, like Joseph, Daniel, David, but many are disadvantaged by their own choices to walk away from God and pursue advancement through the methods of the world. But without God they have no peace, no real joy, and they hate seeing others having what they do not, so they are easily manipulated by the forces of this world to join with causes that proclaim a plan to lift them out of their disadvantaged situation and to put the government in the place of God, and give the state authority to take from those who have more and give it to them.

But this philosophy is a violation of design law, how reality works, if a person refuses to exercise and eat healthy foods and ends up overweight, deconditioned, with diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, etc., and they see others who live healthy lives, eat healthy foods, exercise regularly, it is not possible to pass a law to take health, vitality, wellness from the healthy and give to the unhealthy, strength comes from exercise, the law of exertion, and this is true in mental and spiritual development as well.

- One grows stronger physically by increasing the weight, which is stress, that they push against and overcome.
- One grows stronger in musical skill by ever increasing complexity of musical composition and diligent practice until mastered.
- One grows stronger in mathematics by ever increasing difficulty of problems to be wrestled over until understood.
- One grows stronger in character, wisdom, understanding by ever increasing problems and difficulties in life that humble us, remind us of our human finiteness, weakness, unfairness of life outside of God's design, and our complete dependence upon our Creator:

As the Bible teaches,

- Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. Romans 5:3-5 NIV84.

It is in the times of life where things are not fair, when things don't go our way, where life is too much for us, that we find the greatest opportunity for growth in faith, in trust in Jesus, in being set free from

the spirit of fear and selfishness with which we were born and become sealed with the Holy Spirit to shine ever brighter for Jesus.

As Paul wrote,

- But he [Jesus] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NIV84.

We must remember that all we have is God’s and we are His stewards. The evil one wants us to forget this and to believe we are the owners and then he wants us to believe that this is evil and justice and righteousness is found by making the state the owner because he wants to displace God from our hearts and minds. As long as people believe God and worship Him, these godless philosophies have always been rejected, so you can discern wherever you see socialism, Marxism, communism rising it is evidence that the people are not under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

But, if I read Bible prophecy and symbolism correctly, Satan has two grand forces on Earth that he has pitted against each other throughout human history in his attempt to get the righteous to join his side. The one side are the forces of godlessness, paganism, animism, evolutionism, scientism, atheism, socialism, communism, Marxism, wokeism, today’s political left—all the forces through history that deny the existence of God.

But he has always had the other side, the side of religious imperialism, those who claim a belief in the God of the Bible but teach their understanding of God and the Bible through the lens of human imposed law, which results in their god being Satan himself, a creature who uses law and law enforcement to advance their religious agenda. We see this in history with the Jews who crucified Christ. They didn’t have wrong specific core doctrines, they had set them in the wrong law setting and ended up with Satan as their god, or as Jesus Himself told them in John 8:44.

We see this same satanic force in the Dark Ages church, as they supposedly were promoting the Bible and the God of the Bible, but through the lens of imposed law they ended up doing all kinds of abuses, burning people at the stake, the inquisition, the Crusades and more all under the guise of promoting the God of the Bible. But in truth, they were worshiping and promoting the god of this world—and today we see this in various elements of the political right (but this can also be seen in certain Islamic factions on the political left, as they claim the belief in the Bible but want to use Sharia law. My view of this is that the Islamic forces on the political left today are advocating the policies of anarchy for the purpose of undermining Christianity in America so they can step in and advance Islam through imposed law).

These two satanic systems are in operation in the world today, with a third group, the truly righteous, who do not join either of these two sides. And Satan is marshalling his forces, for the purpose of establishing his beastly system, which as I understand it, will crush the forces of the godless left and

establish a soul destroying religious imperialism designed to do justice, do what is right by their legal standards, but it will be the justice of imposed law with imposed punishments that ultimately coerces consciences, and once established, it will turn its attention upon those who are not submissive, obedient, or compliant with its rule—which will ultimately, right before Christ returns, be the saints of God.

And this leads us right into Tuesday's lesson, which points out that while Israel could only possess the land through God's grace, at the same time they were required to apply themselves to fulfilling God's calling, as the lesson states, "God's initiative must be matched by human response."

This truth will be applied by some to the rise of the beastly system, that in order for God's grace to be experienced in our lives today, in order for God's will to be done in our communities and nations, we must rise up and seize the government, the laws, the schools, the military, courts, police, and as Israel did, establish a government in which God is central and first.

What is wrong with this thinking? Why is this a misapplication of the Bible lesson?

In Old Testament times God established Israel as a nation for the purpose of keeping open the avenue for the Messiah who provides actual salvation. There was no salvation in the ancient government of Israel, in their laws or law keeping, in their religious ceremonies and rituals. Just look at the Jews who killed Christ who were keeping those rules and rituals.

Salvation is only in Jesus. Thus the purpose of the ancient government of Israel was not to establish God's heavenly government on Earth, but, as we said earlier, was mission covenant for God to fulfill His eternal covenant—which is Jesus.

And Jesus said that His kingdom is not of this world—He didn't say it His kingdom is not of this world except for Israel, no, He included that system as not being part of His kingdom. Because His kingdom does not operate upon imposed rules with imposed punishments, but is the kingdom of reality, of truth, love, and freedom, which cannot be commanded or externally enforced.

There is an object lesson application to Israel's conquest of the ancient promised land however, and what is it?

The lesson states in the third paragraph,

- This complexity of the conquest illustrates the dynamics of our salvation. Similar to Israel, we cannot do anything to earn our salvation (Eph. 2:8, 9). It is a gift, just as the land was God's gift to the Israelites based on their covenantal relationship with Him. It certainly wasn't based on their merits (see Deut. 9:5). *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 75.

After we receive the free gift of salvation through trust in Jesus, do we then engage in warfare? What kind of warfare? Spiritual warfare—which is what? And where is the daily and primary focus of our efforts in this war?

- For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV84.

This is the battle we are to engage; our hearts joined in trust with Jesus through His representative the Holy Spirit we are to battle in our own hearts and minds against the spirit of fear and selfishness and live out the new life of Jesus we receive through the Holy Spirit. So we battle with the lies, distortions, beliefs, methods, practices of this world which we have embraced in times past that we used to bring us security, make us feel safe, comfort us, and we cut those out through the spiritual application of the sword of truth and love guided by and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

WEDNESDAY

God directed that the land was apportioned all the way down to individual families and the land could never be permanently taken or sold from the family, basically the land could be leased for a number of years, but when the jubilee year came all land was returned to the ownership of the family.

What is the object lesson in this?

The Earth is God's and was created to be the home of humanity. Adam sold the Earth through his sin to Satan who claims it as his own, but in truth Jesus is the true owner of the Earth. Jesus came and redeemed Adam's loss and in the great jubilee at the end of the 1000 years the Earth will be returned to its rightful occupants, human beings, and the meek will inherit from Jesus the Earth made new.

Read third paragraph,

- The allotment of the land becomes a window into God's heart. As our heavenly Father, He wants His children to be generous with those who are less fortunate and to allow their lands to feed them every seventh year. The sabbatical year applied the principle of the Sabbath commandment on a larger scale. Besides valuing and encouraging hard work, ownership of the land also calls for respect and kindness to those facing financial challenges. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 76.

What is the principle of the Sabbath that is being referenced here?

I like how they said principle, because principles are another way of saying design law, they are not rules, imposed laws. So what is the principle of the Sabbath being applied to the jubilee?

It is one of resting our lives, ourselves, our security, our welfare, our futures, our estates, our fortunes, into the hands of God.

The weekly Sabbath is an evidence built into time by God of His character and methods of governing. It was created at the end of creation week when God, instead of using power to enforce His law and government, instead of using power to force Satan and the rebellious angels to bow and submit, instead of using power to punish Satan's rebellion, instead God stopped using power, God ceased using power, God rested. The Sabbath was built into time by God as a proof, demonstration, evidence, validation, reality-based expression of God's character, kingdom, methods, and law. God is the God of reality and He rules on truth, love, and freedom. He does not rule on imposed law, force, coercion, and law enforcement. That is Satan's kingdom.

Thus the Sabbath is God's holy day as it reveals God's holy character. Our rest on Sabbath is our opportunity to exercise trust or faith in God, to say no to the spirit of fear which tempts us to fear that if we don't work all seven days that we will fall behind or our crops will fail or we will lose what we have. Our resting and putting away our pursuit for our own protection, promotion, advancement is a weekly opportunity to grow in faith, love, and trust in God. The jubilee was also an opportunity for this, for people to trust their futures, their livelihoods, their very lives that they will have enough food if they don't plant one year.

And of course this is exactly right, allowing the land to rest restores the important nutrients into the land bringing maximum harvest but not allowing the land to rest depletes the soil resulting in every diminishing returns and eventually the crops fail.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Pamphlet: *The Trap of Perfectionism and The Fear of Making Mistakes*. These are available for free shipped to any US Postal address, they will also be in our resource section under the publications to print and share. You can read this online, download pdf, share with others, print your own. If you are not in the US, we anticipate our various hubs (Australia and South Africa) will eventually get this in print also, but until then, please use the online resource.

New Come and Reason Distribution Hub in England: If you are interested in connecting with our team in England you can contact Michael Dragoyvich and his wife Billie Jordan at uk@comeandreason.com