

2025 4Q Lessons of Faith From Joshua Lesson 12

God is Faithful

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

What do you think of the title? Doesn't it sound encouraging? Doesn't it sound inspiring? But can anyone spot the danger in this title? The potential opening for exploitation by God's enemy?

If we asked the Jews who crucified Christ if God is faithful—what would they likely have said?

If we could ask the clergy of the Dark Ages who burned people at the stake and carried out the Inquisition and Crusades if God is faithful—what do you think they would have said?

If we could ask Islamic suicide bombers if they believe God is faithful—what do you think they would have said?

If we, in the future, are able to ask the worshipers of the beast of Revelation and Satan when he impersonates Christ, if the god they are worshiping is faithful—what do you think they will say?

If we could ask certain leaders today in the SDA church who publicly write and teach that God is the wielder of death and that justice requires God to use His power to torture and kill the unrepentant in the end, whether God is faithful, what would they likely say?

Won't those who worship the false Christ, the prince of this world, who is a creature, who makes up rules and uses external power to punish rule-breakers, say that the god they worship is faithful? And they will say that their god is faithful, because he is faithful, faithful to himself, his laws, and his justice—the justice that uses his power to inflict torture on people, he will faithfully carry out that torture as the execution that he promised.

So, I absolutely agree that our God, the true God, the Creator God who is love, truth, and life and who is perfectly revealed in Jesus is faithful, but so is Satan—Satan is faithful to himself, his methods, his principles, his character of fear, selfishness, deceit, abuse, coercion, and death—remember the Bible tells us it is Satan who holds the power of death and Jesus destroys both him and his power of death.

To me, the better title would have been God is Trustworthy. Satan is faithful to himself and his methods, and because he is a faithful liar, deceiver, abuser, exploiter, faithful to wielding fear, being selfish, seeking always to exalt himself above all others—we CANNOT trust him. He is totally, completely, utterly, fully corrupted and untrustworthy while being faithful to all he has chosen to be.

God on the other hand is completely trustworthy, because God is love and truth, God is faithful to Himself. God's nature, character, methods, principles, and government are those of truth and love,

which operate only in freedom—which is fully revealed in Jesus who though being by nature God, did not think equality with God was something to be held onto but surrendered that position, power, prestige, glory, and life and humbled Himself all the way to the cross for the purpose of saving others. God is faithful but God is faithful to truth, to love, to freedom and thus God is trustworthy.

As Paul wrote,

- 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 3:3-4 GNT.

So we trust God not merely because God is faithful, but because of God’s character and therefore what God is faithful to—truth, love, freedom!

And the lesson acknowledges this in the last paragraph of SUNDAY’s lesson,

- Indeed, emphasizing God’s faithfulness, Paul also wrote: “The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself” (2 Tim. 2:11–13, ESV). *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 97.

He cannot deny Himself, thus His faithfulness is all determined by His character, and thus our trust in Him, is not merely that He is faithful, but what do we believe His character to be?

Read the first paragraph in SABBATH’s,

- When John F. Kennedy addressed the United States at his inauguration, on January 20, 1961, his speech was only 1,366 words, but it left an indelible mark on the American mind. As he encouraged his country to focus on their responsibilities instead of their privileges, he said: “With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.” *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 96.

Would our nation be better if every person in our country took this to heart and applied it to their lives?

Be careful—doesn’t the view of God a person holds make all the difference?

Wouldn’t the Jews who crucified Christ, the Christians of the Dark Ages who burned people at the stake, the Islamic jihadists all embrace this statement and want to live up to it?

In fact, wouldn't the application of Shariah law be seen by those who value it to be, to them, an exact and perfect application of this statement by JFK?

So, what again, is the key? Who do we believe and understand God to be?

And what determines which God we are worshiping? How we understand God's law—that determines how we understand God's character, methods, and principles.

The common thread between the Jews who crucified Christ, the Inquisitors of the Dark Ages, and the Islamic shariah law proponents is that they all believe God's moral law functions like human law, imposed rules that require the use of external power to inflict punishment for law breaking in order for justice to be served.

When we return to worshiping God as Creator, we recognize He is the builder of reality and all His laws are the laws that reality itself is built to operate and function upon, law of gravity, laws of physics and health, but also the moral laws. When we realize this we realize that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), sin when full grown brings forth death (James 1:15), those who sow to the carnal nature from that nature reap destruction (Galatians 6:8), and that Christ became human and by His death He destroys him who holds the power of death that is the devil (Hebrews 2:14), and that Jesus destroys death and brings life and immortality to light (2 Tim 1:10).

It is by returning to understand that all God's laws are design laws that we are then won to trust, open the heart to Jesus, are reborn with His Spirit, His life, and we become new beings who love God first and others as ourselves are willing to sacrifice self for the salvation of others. Thus we will not follow a leader who wants to use external power to coerce consciences and claim worship.

MONDAY

The lesson asks,

- What are the similarities between how the Israelites conquered Canaan under Joshua's leadership and the way Christians today can live a victorious spiritual life? *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 98.

Joshua led them to victory and we are led to victory by Jesus, whose Hebrew name was Joshua. We must follow the leadership of Jesus, like they followed Joshua. And Josuah followed the leadership of God, as Jesus follows the will/leadership of His Father.

What other lessons are there for us in this object lesson? These week's blog [Joshua Circumcises the Israelites Before They Can Occupy Canaan](#) unpacks the process of cutting away from our hearts anything that interferes with our connection with God—and how our natural selves, the natural spirit of fear and selfishness we inherited from Adam, causes us to attach all kinds of things to our hearts in attempts to comfort ourselves and resolve the fear—including all the false religions and penal legal

lies. It uncovers how the legal religious beliefs are the very things that keep people from trusting God and why we must call people back to Creator worship—it is so they can actually, in reality, be reborn with the Spirit of Christ and come the righteousness of God.

Read the third paragraph,

- God has given rest to Israel from its enemies, but there are some nations left that still have to be dispossessed. Victory is not an accomplished, unchangeable reality for Israel but an ever-present possibility by constant reliance in faithfulness on God's available help. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 98.

When we first surrender our hearts to Jesus and are converted, don't we experience an initial rest, peace, joy, comfort, His presence, the relief from guilt, shame, fear that had been controlling us?

What is that rest, peace, relief? Is it rest and relief from house chores? Is it rest and relief from schoolwork? Is it rest and relief from paying one's bills, going to their job, or dealing with difficult people? No, it is rest and relief from the fear of death, fear of failure, guilt, shame, trying to save ourselves. It is an internal rest for our souls when we are won to trust Jesus and surrender ourselves, our lives, the things we hold most precious to Him and trust Him with how things will turn out for us instead of constantly worrying and fighting to try and make things go the way we want them to go.

But, after that surrender to Jesus and the initial joyful rest in Him, are all our enemies gone, are all our battles over? Or, do we then find our life is an ongoing battle against our true enemy—the father of lies—Satan, and his methods of lies, fear, selfishness, and our own fallen nature of fear and selfishness? Do we find, after conversion, that we have both internal and external battles to wage? But isn't the most intense, the most crucial battles the internal battle against our old self, our old beliefs, habits, biases, assumptions, preferences, desires that tempt us?

And what is the key to victory as we follow Jesus?

Read the last paragraph,

- The victories of the Israelites could not be attributed to their strength and strategy. Similarly, spiritual victory over sin and temptation have been secured through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but God's people today must constantly rely on the spiritual supplies provided by the Holy Spirit in order to live a triumphant life. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 98.

This is true, can anyone explain what this means in reality, functionally, operationally, daily in our lives today?

What does Jesus' voluntary substitutionary sinless sacrifice provide us that is required for our victory?

- Truth that destroys Satan's lies and provides the basis for our trust.

- A new sinless life restored into humanity—Jesus is the vine, we are the branches. He is the one human being, in the aftermath of Adam’s fall, that was born with a new sinless breath of life, received by His humanity when the Holy Spirit came upon Mary and she became pregnant. And we receive this new life, this new spirit, from the Holy Spirit when we trust God and open our heart to Him—and that is when we are reborn.

Why was this required? Because a sinless spirit, breath of life, animating energy that is pure love, truth, trust, is required to be in unity, at-one-ment, harmony with God and be able to stand in His life-giving glory. Fear, selfishness, lies cause beings to cut themselves off from God, to run from Him, hide themselves, close their hearts because they do not trust Him and thus they cut themselves off from life.

This is what Adam and Eve did to themselves when they believed lies and broke their love/trust heart motivation with God, and their spirits became corrupted with fear and selfishness. And immediately, they ran away from God, tried to hide from Him, and if God did not intervene, intercede, in love, in mercy, they would have cut themselves off from life and died.

But God loved the world and human beings too much to let us die. And the Godhead, in their foreknowledge, knowing what was going to happen, had already covenanted amongst themselves, that when Adam sinned, Jesus would be the Remedy, the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Jesus chose to voluntarily surrender His position and power and be born as a real human from a sinful mother and thereby partake of the very breath of life God breathed into Adam in Eden, and which was corrupted by Adam and is passed along to every single human being. That life, that animating energy, that spirit is the spirit of fear and selfishness, and Jesus partook of that life.

God breathed only one breath of life into humanity in Adam and every single other human is born from that same breath of life shared, passed down through the generations. We are all born in sin conceived in iniquity (Psalm 51:5).

In order for Jesus to save this species, the humanity He created in Eden, He had to partake of that same life and destroy, purge, eliminate the spirit of fear and selfishness and replace it with His Holy Spirit, His sinless Spirit, His life.

And thus, Jesus was incarnate, He partook of the life corrupted by Adam through Mary, but the Father to His humanity was the Holy Spirit, thus Jesus was born with a sinless holy spirit. And throughout His life, He was tempted in all points like we are yet without sin, because He chose every single moment, every single thought, every single choice, to live out perfect truth, love, and trust in His Father and at the cross the life inherited from Adam through Mary was killed, purged, and Jesus rose from the tomb in a purified and perfected humanity with only His sinless, holy life, spirit and became the second Adam, the new head of humanity. As Hebrews says,

- Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. Hebrews 5:8-9 NIV84.

He learned obedience through exercising His human faculties to think, reason, grow in wisdom and stature, and choose always to live out the spirit of love, truth, and trust and develop a perfect, sinless, human character and purge the spirit of fear and selfishness. This is objective, it is not merely demonstrating God's character of love, which was also necessary to do, but this was far more, it was reality-based accomplishment to fix humanity, purge and eliminate from humanity the cause of death and restore the cause of life.

And every human who returns to worshipping God as Jesus revealed and opens their heart to trust, receives the Holy Spirit who brings the life of Jesus and they are reborn with the spirit, life, of Jesus and can say as Paul did,

- I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 NIV84

It is as Peter described, we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

This is reality and it is only possible because of what Jesus accomplished. But this required that Jesus actually partake of the life corrupted by Adam. If Jesus did not partake of the life corrupted by Adam and replace it with His sinless life, then Jesus is not part of this species. If He is not part of humanity, then He is not able to save, because He cannot infuse us with a sinless human life that was tempted in all points like we are but without sin, a human life that eliminated the cause of death.

And there is a doctrine taught in certain segments of Christianity that denies what I just described, it teaches that Jesus did not partake of the life handed down from Adam, that Mary was not a sinner, but she somehow was a sinless being, and Jesus was born of a sinless mother and sinless father in order to be a sinless sacrifice who could have our legal sin-crimes placed upon Him and be punished and killed by God in our place to pay our legal penalty to God. And then go to heaven, and along with His mother, plead to God to be merciful, accept His blood payment and not kill us.

This is fantasy, it not only denies Scripture, it requires fantastical and reality-denying thinking and creates ideas that make God out to be completely arbitrary and untrustworthy.

For instance, how could Mary be born sinless? Who were her parents? Where did she receive her breath of life? And if her parents were sinful, receiving the spirit of fear from their parents all the way back to Adam as the genealogy of Mary recorded in Scripture describes, how was Mary born sinless, with a spirit not infected with fear and selfishness? And if God could cause Mary to be born sinless, why not every other human being? Why did David write that we are born in sin conceived in iniquity (Ps 51:5)?

And if some think God formed a new body out of dirt and breathed into that new body a new breath of life and created Mary in this way—then they are teaching Mary is not actually part of the creation God made in Eden, but a new species of similar humans, but not related to us, and then Jesus is not related

to us, and cannot be our Savior, and could not be tempted in all points like we are, did not purge the spirit of fear and replace it with the spirit of life. So, that doctrine, is insidiously corrupt because it undermines and removes the core truth, central reality, of what Jesus had to accomplish in order to save humanity. And thereby cuts people off from participating in salvation—which is being reborn with a new spirit, the spirit of Jesus brought by the Holy Spirit, and instead teaches that salvation is a legal process in courts in heaven.

So, how is Jesus' substitutionary sacrifice the key to our victory today in our warfare with self today?

Because of Adam's sin, we are born with spirits, the animating life energy, the breath of life inherited from Adam that is contaminated with fear and selfishness (Psalm 51:5; 2 Timothy 1:7). We come into the world fear-ridden, seeking to find things to comfort ourselves, to get for self, to make self feel better. We come into the world afraid and distrusting, and we form all kinds of attachments, coping skills, and belief systems to make ourselves feel safe, secure, good—and every single one of those things that stands, exists, operates, functions in between our souls and God, everything that we prioritize above God, must be cut away and put in its proper place so that our life is founded on God and God alone.

And this is taught in the object lesson of circumcision, the sign of the covenant, which is God cutting out of our hearts everything that interferes with our love and trust in Him and writing into our hearts His living law of truth, love, and trust. (Hebrews 8:10).

Thus we, when we are won to trust by the truth, open our hearts and become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4); it is no longer our old fear-based, self-centered spirit animating us, but the Spirit of Christ living in us, and we live to love God and others (Galatians 2:20). We are reborn with a new life (John 3:3), a new breath of life, the life of Christ that He gives us freely and it is only possible because Jesus joined His divinity with our humanity and became a real human being descended from Adam.

And then we have rest from our fight to survive by faith, by trust, we choose to trust Jesus and experience peace with God.

This is not a legal adjustment in books; it is reality, a real-world, internal power that indwells you through the reality-based pathways that God built into all creation. We live new lives, the life of Christ. And this is why we must cut everything out of our hearts and minds that interferes with our connection with God.

This is transformation; this is freedom from fear, guilt, and shame. This is the gospel, the true message to go to the world. This is righteousness by faith—that we become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is what we must experience to be victorious as we move forward to the heavenly Promised Land!

And this is the message that was brought to our church in 1888 and which sadly was rejected and replaced with the false penal-legal lie based on the lie that God's law function like human law.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph,

- The danger facing Israel is not the threat of the remaining nations' animosity but the risk of their friendship. Their weapons might not represent any challenge to Israel; however, their ideology and values (or counter-values) could prove to be more harmful than any military force. Joshua draws the attention of the leaders to the crucial fact that the conflict they have been involved in is first, and ultimately, spiritual. Therefore, Israel has to maintain its unique identity. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 99.

What is the object lesson for us today?

Has Christianity faced the same danger—friendship with the world?

What examples can we identify of how Christianity has been corrupted by friendship with the world?

Historically, many things have been identified by various groups as dangers to Christianity, but they are the ever-changing fruits of the core problem, but these many things include:

- worldly entertainment (theater, music, gambling, TV, sports)
- dress standards
- ingestibles of various kinds (food, drink, drugs, inhalants)
- modern technologies
- physical living spaces (don't live in communities not of your faith)
- marriage to someone not of your denomination
- sexual practices and beliefs of the world

But what is the core, central, number one corruption to Christianity that comes from the world?

The lie that God's law functions like human law, this is the bedrock lie beneath every single corruption of Christianity.

Are there any questions about that? Any confusion? Any place where it is difficult to see the various things we listed are all rooted in the lie about God's law?

Thus, the number one truth that must go to the world to prepare people for Christ's return is the truth that calls people back to worship God as Creator, and requires people to recognize that God's laws are design laws. And when that truth is embraced and accepted, that leads to a correct understanding/diagnosis of what sin is, why sin causes death, why Christ had to die, and why the wicked in the end suffer terribly and die eternally, but not at God's hand. All of this truth restores trust in God opening the heart for healing and transformation.

Another way that Satan tries to corrupt Christianity is by splitting the attributes of the Holy Spirit, and thereby introduce functional falsehood, operational lies, in other words doing things out of harmony with God, while speaking words that are true.

What are the attributes of the Holy Spirit? Truth and love.

And Satan splits the attribute of love away from truth, seen most extremely today from the godless left in our society who deny the belief in God but promote a toxic empathy, which is a corruption of love. Under such corrupt ideas and practices as:

- speaking truth that hurts another's feelings is unkind, cruel, mean, bigoted, transphobic, racist, xenophobic, anti-others
- that your truth is your truth by my truth is my truth and to challenge my truth is not showing love to me and if you love you will accept my truth
- that words that hurt feelings are acts of violence and deserve a violent response
- providing so-called safe spaces in public society where speech is censored under the umbrella of love and care, not to upset or hurt someone's feelings
- that the way to love a person with a mental health problem that is confused about their identity to the point they become delusional and believe they are a man in woman's body or vice-versa that the way to love them is to join them in their delusion and then mutilate them through drugs and surgery. But if you speak truth to them, that would not be love, because it would upset them, hurt their feelings, and that is harmful.
- That speaking truth which challenges someone's religious beliefs, say, that certain systems of belief and practice are beastly, the beast of Revelation, that is unkind, cruel, intolerant, mean-spirited, and unloving and becomes a hate crime to do such things.

The Bible tells us that love rejoices with the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6), and those who love others will not collude with lies, will not avoid the difficult conversations, but in love seek to have them because they want to save souls, souls that are trapped in layers of lies and fantasy.

But Satan also attacks from the others side, which is often from the political right. And that is by getting people who value truth to promote objective truths without love, without concern for others, from a position of authority, dominance, superiority, control, or pretentious righteousness that is intended to intimidate, crush, demoralize, and discourage struggling souls so they surrender their individuality and freedom to the control of those presenting such truth claims.

The beast of Revelation will rise, not to do away with the Bible, religion, the belief in God, law and law enforcement, but to merge them into a religious system that uses law and law enforcement as the means of promoting righteousness, worship, faith. There will be some truths promoted by that false system, just like the Jews who crucified Jesus had many truths—Sabbath day, inspiration of Scripture, God is Creator, etc.

But the central truth that is require to make all others fact truths functionally and operationally true, is the truth of God's character of love, which based upon the truth that God's laws are design laws. The

moment we take a fact truth, like the Sabbath, and set it in human imposed law understanding, we create the platform for religious conservatism to become beastly, because we divorce truth from functional love and will seek to advance our cause through law and law enforcement which eventually coerces consciences, and that destroys love, incites rebellion, and for those who stay, destroys individuality making people mindless followers of the one with power—which is Satan’s goal.

A couple of truisms:

- **Love without truth is not kind—it’s cruel;**
- **Truth without love is not healing—it’s destructive.**
- **Truth alone does the right thing for the wrong reasons** (driven by spirit of fear, fear of being wrong, fear of sin, fear of legal trouble etc.);
- **Love alone does the wrong thing for the right reasons** (toxic empathy—spirit of fear, fear of hurting others).

Godly people will speak the truth in love and leave others free to respond as they choose, and the Holy Spirit to take care of outcomes.

Read the third paragraph,

- The prohibition of invoking the name of a god, swearing by it, and serving or bowing to it has to do with idolatry. In the ancient Near East, the name of a deity represented his or her presence and power. Invoking or mentioning the names of foreign gods in everyday greetings or business transactions meant recognizing their authority and helped lead the Israelites to seek their power in time of need (compare with Judg. 2:1–3, 11–13). *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 99.

Is this an issue of language, spoken words, or something else?

This is not an issue of language or words, but of belief, heart intention, attitude, mindset. God is instructing us that we are not to look to any other source than Him—He is the source of life, of truth, of love, of good, of salvation, of all blessings. The words are not the issue, but the heart attitude is.

This is important, because Satan would love to get Christians into the superstitious practice of incantations and magical thinking about words.

This can take various forms like:

- Prayers must be ended with the slogan “in Jesus’ name”
- But then some argue, “no, it must be in the name of Joshua”
- To which another argues, “no, it is in the name of Yashua”
 - all failing to realize the syllables are not important, the name means character and to pray in the name of Jesus means to pray with a heart and mind reborn with His life via

the indwelling Holy Spirit, such that we have the spirit of Christ in us leading us to pray with His motivation of love and trust in His Father.

- The name it claim it theologies, that our words, if spoken correctly, with the right Bible promises, and or phrases can speak our reality into existence, is another destructive idea.
- others?

WEDNESDAY

Read the last paragraph,

- At first glance, the biblical teaching on God's anger seems to be incompatible with the affirmation that God is love (John 3:16, 1 John 4:8). Yet, it is exactly in the light of God's wrath that the biblical doctrine of God's love becomes even more relevant. First, the Bible presents God as loving, patient, long-suffering, and ready to forgive (Exod. 34:6, Mic. 7:18). However, in the context of a world affected by sin, the wrath of the Lord is the attitude of His holiness and righteousness when confronted by sin and evil. His wrath is never an emotional, revengeful, unpredictable overreaction. The New Testament teaches that Christ became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), and through His death we have been reconciled with God (Rom. 5:10). Whoever believes in Him will not have to face God's wrath (John 3:36, Eph. 2:3, 1 Thess. 1:10). The concept of the wrath of God presents God as the righteous judge of the universe and the One who upholds the cause of justice (Ps. 7:11, Ps. 50:6, 2 Tim. 4:8). *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 100.

What is the key to rightly understanding God's anger and wrath?

What law lens one sees the world through—God's design laws or the imposed laws that creatures make up?

There are two systems God's and Satan's, led by two different beings, with two different governments/methods/laws and both God and Satan are described as having wrath.

In the book of Revelation, Jesus tells us the following:

- Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having **great wrath**, because he knows that he has a short time. Revelation 12:12 NKJV, emphasis mine.

Is there a difference between Satan's wrath and God's wrath?

Do we see God and Satan acting in similar ways, using similar powers, and causing similar outcomes?

Do we differentiate God's wrath and Satan's wrath only by motive—for instance, saying that God acts in justice whereas Satan acts in selfishness, but they both use power to inflict harm?

If we view the world through Satan's system of government, that of a creature who cannot create reality so, instead, makes up rules that are enforced through external punishments, then we understand wrath to be the use of power to punish—to inflict harm upon those whom one is wrathful toward. This is Satan's wrath, and it comes out as a result of satanic power.

Throughout human history, God has been shielding us from Satan's wrath, his evil use of power. God has been holding back the four winds of strife (Revelation 7:1); He has been warring against Satan and the principalities of darkness (Revelation 12:7; Colossians 2:15); and He has been sending angel armies to shield us (2 Kings 6:17–20). We see this happening all throughout Scripture.

Satan's wrath is the use of power to cause harm!

But God's wrath is the opposite—it is when He ***stops using power to protect us***. God is the Creator, the builder of reality whose laws are the template of health and life. Breaking His laws directly causes us harm, and God, in harmony with His character of love, must expend His power, His energy, His resources, to hold at bay the harm that results from breaking His design-laws and to impart the healing solution. While Satan uses power to injure, God uses power to heal, restore, recreate, renew, and rebuild.

God's wrath occurs when He respects the choices of rebellious people and gives them what they have insisted upon—freedom from Him, His design laws for life, and His merciful healing power and presence.

This is exactly what Paul describes in Romans:

The **wrath of God is being revealed** from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men **who suppress the truth by their wickedness**, since what may be **known about God** is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world **God's invisible qualities**—his eternal power and divine nature—have been **clearly seen**, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. Romans 1:18–20 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Paul then goes on to explicitly state three times and describe with outcome-based evidence that God's wrath is letting people go to reap what they have chosen when they break away from His protective care. In verses 24, 26, and 28, Paul says that God ***gave them up***, or ***let them go***, or ***handed them over*** to what they insisted upon—and the only outcome from breaking away from the Creator and Sustainer of life and health is ruin and death.

God is the God of reality—and His wrath is the exact opposite of Satan's; yet, sadly, billions believe that God's wrath is functionally no different than Satan's. Billions have been led to believe that God's wrath is when He uses His power to inflict pain, suffering, and torture upon His children. This is a lie!

And this lie is the fruit, the unavoidable result, of believing the lie that God's law functions like human law.

If one believes that any part of God's law is like human law, made up rules, then one always believes that God must use power to inflict punishment for rule-breaking, for if there is no punishment in this artificial system, then there is no "justice."

God's justice is God doing what is right and just according to His law of truth and love and that is, if people insist, setting them free to reap what they have chosen, separation from Him, the source of life, and they ultimately die.

The reason for this is reality—what God wants is our love, trust, loyalty, devotion, friendship with Him and this cannot be achieved by the use of external rules and inflicted punishments. In fact, punishing people who do not love and trust you for not loving and trusting you, causes more fear, distrust, rebellion, and selfishness, seeking to protect self from the one using power to inflict harm.

This is the fruit of the penal legal theologies, they lead to doctrinal beliefs that function to hide and protect people from a god who is the source of torture and death.

God is waiting today, for the truth about Him as Creator to lighten the world, to set hearts and minds free of the legal lies about Him and win people back to trust so He can heal and restore them to righteousness.

And restoration to righteousness is contrary to the legal theologies, they teach that we get a legal declaration of being legally righteous based on the merits of Jesus being applied to our legal registry in heaven, while we remain unrighteous upon the earth. This leads to a form of godliness without power, where Christians continue to live sinfully, failing and falling, and calling on Jesus for legal forgiveness, but not living victoriously because they are taught a lie about salvation.

In the paragraph we quoted, they referenced a text but then didn't fully quote it, instead they rewrote it to fit the false narrative, notice what they did—it perpetuates the fear of God by inferring a lie:

- The New Testament teaches that Christ became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), and through His death we have been reconciled with God (Rom. 5:10). Whoever believes in Him will not have to face God's wrath (John 3:36, Eph. 2:3, 1 Thess. 1:10).

Everything that is written here can be understood through design law to be true, however, if one reads this through imposed law, then they read that Jesus took out sins upon Himself, in order to be punished by God in our place, so that we could be reconciled to God by absorbing God's wrath and through His legal payment we can then be declared righteous, legally justified, and then we won't have to face God's wrath—the day God uses power to torture and kill.

This false way of understanding things is built upon the legal fiction of legal adjustment being righteousness declared, rather than righteousness experienced within the believer when we are reborn and actually, within us, receive the life of Jesus animating us through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

This legal fiction would have been exposed had they quoted 2 Corinthians 5:21 which reads,

- 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.

We actually become righteous, and only after we are reborn with the life of Jesus and are in reality righteous, does God, who always speaks truth, declare that we are righteous, because we have in reality become righteous, not by our works, but by trusting Jesus and receiving His sinless life animating us from within by the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph,

- The only way Israel will be able to avoid the temptation of idolatry and the wrath of God is not by constantly remembering the “don’ts” of the covenant but by fostering a conscious and consistent allegiance to the Lord. The same verb, “to cleave, adhere” to the Lord (see Deut. 4:4), also is used to describe the marriage covenant that was intended between wife and husband (Gen. 2:24) or the loyalty of Ruth to Naomi (Ruth 1:14). It is important to note that, according to Joshua’s evaluation, such faithfulness has characterized Israel as a nation “to this day.” Unfortunately, the same assertion will not be true for later periods of Israel’s history, as the book of Judges sadly demonstrates (Judg. 2:2, 7, 11; Judg. 3:7, 12; Judg. 4:1, etc.). *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 101.

I like the lesson pointed to the marriage covenant as an example of what it means to cling or cleave to God. What does the clinging or cleaving that spouses are to have for each other teach us about how we are to cleave to God?

Does clinging to God, and to our spouses, require faithfulness, loyalty? What about obedience? What kind of obedience?

If we our relationship with God is from an imposed law, requiring imposed punishments upon us for rule-breaking approach—what is the result?

Ty Gibson beautifully illustrates the problem of a relationship based on law in the following story:

Linda was eager to be married, to have someone special to spend her life with, but there were not many prospects on the horizon. Then one day she met Herman. He treated her so nicely. He opened the door for her, held her hand as they walked, and pulled her chair out as she sat down.

After months of courtship, Herman proposed. Joyfully, she immediately said yes, and they were married.

For the honeymoon Herman took her to a very nice place. They had a wonderful time, but all too quickly the honeymoon was over. Their first morning home Linda was awakened early at 5 a.m. by a bright light. She opened her eyes and there stood Herman saying, “Rise and shine. The honeymoon is over, and we need to get down to real life.”

She noticed he was holding a piece of paper in his hand, and he presented to her the first of many lists to come. He had spelled out in great detail her responsibilities in two-week segments.

March 1–14:

5:30 rise and shower

6:00 begin breakfast; see attached menu

6:15 awaken Hermie-cuddles with a gentle kiss and turn on his shower

6:45 serve breakfast (do not forget grapefruit)

7:15 begin breakfast cleanup while husband brushes teeth

7:25 meet Hermie-cuddles at the door with appropriate jacket (be sure to pay attention to the weather), and say good-bye with a smile and a kiss

7:30 finish breakfast cleanup

8:00 free time

8:15 housecleaning; see attached cleaning supply list and detailed instructions

M—north rooms

T—east rooms

W—south rooms

TH—west rooms

F—the garage

11:00 balance checkbook

12:00 lunch, whatever you like except marked items; check list

12:30 miscellaneous duties

M—car maintenance and wash car

T—dry cleaning and banking

W—shopping

TH—wash windows

F—yard work

3:30 dinner prep; see attached menu

4:30 meet husband at door with kiss and hang up his coat

5:00 serve dinner

5:45 dinner cleanup

6:15 free time; see list of suggestions

6:45 draw Hermie-cuddles's bath
7:00 do next day's ironing
7:45 hand husband towel as he exits bath
8:00 neck and back massage for the man of your dreams
9:00 lights out, pleasant dreams sweetheart

Linda was given a new list with slight variations every two weeks without fail. As the years dragged on—and they were dragging—ten years into the relationship Hermie-cuddles dropped dead of an unknown cause. Linda's first reaction was to praise God! She didn't know whether to rejoice or grieve.

She made a vow that she would never, ever, get married again. But after three years of being single, she met a guy named Michael. He was like Herman in some ways. He opened the door for a lady to walk through. He was polite and courteous. He pulled out her chair as she sat and enjoyed holding her hand. And she kept telling herself, "No way, no way, no way." Then one day Michael popped the question, and she said yes.

They had a wonderful honeymoon. The first day back she woke up with a start at 5:30 a.m. and saw Michael standing at the end of the bed with a piece of paper in his hand. Immediately, she jumped into a karate stance, yelled "no way," and yanked the paper from him ripping it in two.

Michael, with a sad and surprised look, said, "Linda that was a poem I wrote for you after you fell asleep last night."

As his words sank in, she felt bad about her reaction. She picked up the pieces and read his beautiful expression of love, and it broke her heart. While she was reading, Michael came in and served her breakfast in bed. And no list was forthcoming. Ten years passed being married to this wonderful man. One spring day while cleaning in the attic she came across an old shoebox filled with lists given to her by Herman the horrible.

She pulled out one of the lists and began to read. The strangest realization came over her. She said quietly to herself, "Wow, I do all of these things for Michael, and I never think about it."

This is why the Bible teaches that it is the love of God that compels us—that love is the spirit, life, of Jesus that we only have through trust.