



2025 4Q Lessons of Faith From Joshua Lesson 13 Choose This Day!

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

What does the title of the lesson mean to you?

What are we to choose? Salvation? What does it mean to choose salvation?

Does choosing salvation mean choosing to believe:

- We were created by God and did not evolve from nothing?
- That the Bible is inspired by God
- That Jesus is the Son of God and He is our substitutionary Savior
- That the Sabbath is the seventh-day
- And every other correct Bible doctrine?

Does choosing salvation mean choosing to believe the right Bible doctrines?

What does it mean to choose salvation? —to genuinely trust God, to open the heart, to let go of our life of fear and selfishness and cut away everything we have attached to our heart that is between us and Him and to trust Him with our everything.

And then, as we trust Him, He leads us, step by step, truth by truth, to make choices, specific to our lives, to our journey, that with every truth, every choice to follow Him in trust, we advance, mature, develop, grow, heal, and gain victory after victory—by choosing love, truth, and trust, over lies, fear, selfishness, and our old comfort habits. But it all starts with the choice to trust Jesus with everything.

Example—Job trusted God fully and was recognized as perfect—not sinless, but perfect in trust such that when tribulation came and he did not understand what was happening, when he still had many questions and frustrations, he continued to trust God. The one thing Job didn't do through it all is to distrust God.

The same with Joseph, Daniel, the three worthies—they never stopped trusting God.

And this trust, in the Bible is often called faith—it is a living, abiding, confident faith or trust in God with our inmost self. And this abiding, living faith—this moment-to-moment trust of God with our lives, futures, how things will turn out—is the key to victory. When this living faith is experienced it results in sinners *becoming the righteousness of God*. In other words, it is the righteousness by faith message, true transformation of a sinner into a righteous loyal friend of God, which happens only by faith or trust.

But the Bible teaches there is a false faith, a faith that does not lead to righteousness, a faith, a religion, a belief, a form of godliness that has no power and results in people functioning no different from the world, while they are deceived into believing they are righteous.

Jesus said,

- “Not everyone who **says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’** will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will **say to me** on that day, **‘Lord, Lord,** did we not prophesy **in your name,** and **in your name** drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, **‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’** Matthew 7:21-23 NIV84, emphasis mine.
- But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—**having a form of godliness but denying its power.** Have nothing to do with them. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Jesus and Paul are not talking about the atheist, agnostic, god-deniers. The people they are talking about have a form of godliness, claiming to be God-like, or Christian, but they deny the power of God and thus function no differently from the world.

And what does this false faith look like?

This is Christianity that is built on the lie that God’s law functions like human law, imposed rules requiring God to use power to torture and kill sinners for so-called justice sake.

In this false legal view, faith in this legal system is not restored in God, because the legal theology they hold so dear, teaches that God is the source of pain, suffering, and death that He inflicts upon any who break His law and do not propitiate or assuage His wrath by claiming the blood of His Son.

This false theology, rather than leading people to a living faith, genuine trust in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, divides the Godhead and teaches people to place their trust in the mechanics, the payments, systems, concepts, beliefs, that get applied through Jesus to placate or legally please the Father and these beliefs function to hide, conceal, separate, and protect sinners from God rather than reconcile sinners to God.

They will take the same beautiful words and metaphors of Scripture and pervert them to undermine living faith, to undermine saving trust and their very doctrines keep the spirit of fear alive in their hearts while they claim legal salvation. They teach people to trust in the blood payment, intercessory pleas and prayers to the Father, legal claims, adjustment in record books, erasure of records from books and minds, covering over wickedness with a white robe so the Father is blinded, prevented from

seeing reality so in heaven He makes a legal declaration of righteousness while the sinner remain unrighteous in reality.

Because this false legal model has no saving power, because it does not bring the life of Christ **into operation within the heart** of the sinner, what happens is that the sinner continues to be motivated by their inherited spirit of fear and selfishness. And this causes them to become very preoccupied with deeds, dos and don'ts, and ensuring they know the right doctrines and rules and rule enforcement.

They are falsely taught that salvation is choosing to believe the right doctrines, joining the right church, eating the right foods, resting on the right day, participating in the right ceremonies performed in the right way and reading from the right Bible. They feel secure in believing that they have identified Bible truths, are members of the remnant church, and obey the right rules—yet they are still unconverted and become ever more like the legalistic Jews who crucified Christ.

This legal approach with faith in the legal payments, from hearts motivated by fear and selfishness, leads to church members in constant conflict, constant debate, constant argument, and ever-increasing fracturing, division, and hostility. And what do we see in Christianity? In 2001 the WORLD CHRISTIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA reported that Christianity had divided into 34,000 separate groups, and by 2018, according to Center for Study of Global Christianity, Christianity was divided into 41,000 separate groups.

This happens because the unrenewed heart lives in fear, fear of making mistakes, forgetting something, not understanding properly, doing something wrong, and they are hypervigilant toward threats toward their own sense of safety. Thus rather than focusing on love for God and others, they focus on rules and rule enforcement, and are intolerant of others who don't practice their rules. They become thought police to maintain orthodoxy and those who stray too far and refuse to return to the proper way of thinking, must be removed from their positions in leadership, silenced, and eventually purged from the group.

Jesus sent another message through John for the church that exists just before the second coming:

- To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and **true witness, the ruler of God's creation**. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are **lukewarm**—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. **You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.'** **But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.** I counsel you to **buy from me** gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! **I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.** Revelation 3:14-20 NIV84.

What does this mean?

- Lukewarm—is the mixture of hot and cold: cold are the rejectors of God, those who deny Him completely. Hot are those who are on fire for God, who have been reborn and are animated by His Spirit. Lukewarm are the ones Jesus described in the passage above, those who are doing all kinds of things in Jesus' name, appearing by behavior and even their words to be on fire for the Lord, but with unrenewed, cold, hearts, hearts without the fire of the Holy Spirit that would make them hot for the Lord, in other words, they are still motivated by the spirit of fear and selfishness, promoting a legal religion.
- These church members believe they are rich because they have the truth, the right doctrines, they are the remnant—they have the right Sabbath, Bible, sanctuary message, understanding of the state of the dead, the spirit of prophecy, belong to the organization called by God with His special message—they don't need anything because they are rich with the truth.
 - This was the exact state of the Jewish leadership that crucified Christ 2000 years ago; they had right doctrines, the spirit of prophecy, Sabbath, dietary reform, sanctuary message, believed in the inspiration of Scripture, God as Creator—and they were unrenewed, unregenerated, hard-hearted operating from the spirit of fear and selfishness upon a legal framework of religion in which they believed God's law functions like human law. And they thought they were rich in righteousness just like our church today, but in fact,
- Jesus' message to the church is that the people are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked, we are unrighteous, unrenewed. Notice the message of Jesus **is not you have the wrong doctrines—it is your condition of being**, you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. You must buy from me gold refined in the fire, a white robe, eye salve. The gold is the love and truth of God that leads to trust and results in surrender of our life of fear and selfishness and rebirth so we receive the life of Christ, which is the white robe, the pure life and then we are enlightened and cleansed by the eye salve of the Holy Spirit.
- How do we buy this from Jesus? By barter, in other words exchange, we surrender our sinful life and receive His sinless life, we surrender our fear and selfishness and receive His love and trust, our guilt and shame for His grace and peace, our will for His will, our desires for His desires. **We cannot receive the life of Christ while we cling to our life of fear and selfishness!**
- So Jesus pleads with us, standing at the door of our hearts, knocking with truth and love via the Holy Spirit, *Won't you trust me, won't you let me in so I can give you life, cleanse the temple of your soul, remove all your guilt, shame, and fear, clear up all the confusion, doubts, and misunderstandings, and rebuild you perfectly in my image?*

This special end-time message is the message of the 3 angels of Revelation 14 that is to go to the world at this time in history—the message that calls people back to the truth of who God is, the eternal gospel, good news, that God is not an imperial dictator whose laws function like a creature. We are called back to worshiping God as Creator, which requires returning to design law understanding, and leaving the corrupt system of Babylon behind, a system that enslaves the righteous, a system built upon imposed law, law enforcement, domination over others; and then, when we do this, we see God in His true light, and are won to trust and we choose to open the heart to Him in trust and are reborn with His Spirit of love and trust and we are animated, motivated, brought to life with His living law

established within our being and we live lives of righteousness, we become righteous by faith. Again, this is the righteousness by faith message.

This message of real righteousness by faith, established upon the eternal good news, the eternal gospel of who God is as Creator, built upon the truth that God's law is design law and the rejection of the imposed law lies that prevents genuine trust in God, and calls people out of Babylon, of Romanism, the legal system of religion—was brought to the SDA church at the 1888 GC through Jones and Waggoner, and endorsed by EGW.

But the official church leadership rejected it and chose instead, like the Pharisees years ago, to reject Jesus and His true gospel and the organizational church has been wandering in the wilderness of legal religion without power and incapable of fulfilling its mission until the people repent and actually return to worshiping God as Creator, embrace the truth that His law are design laws, open their hearts in actual trust, and receive the outpouring of the latter rain, the Holy Spirit to seal them and empower them to take the true message of God as Creator to the world.

Now, what I just said is a very strong indictment, but it did not come originally from me, I am only giving voice to it today. This indictment came from Jesus to the church of Laodicea and was further explicitly directed to the SDA church by none other than EGW who was at that meeting in 1888. This is what she said:

- On many occasions the Holy Spirit did work, but those who resisted the Spirit of God at Minneapolis were waiting for a chance to travel over the same ground again, because **their spirit** was the same... They pronounced in their heart and soul and words that this manifestation of the Holy Spirit was fanaticism and delusion. They stood like a rock, the waves of mercy flowing upon and around them, but beaten back **by their hard and wicked hearts, which resisted the Holy Spirit's working.** [remember she is speaking of the delegates to the SDA General Conference session, not just church members, but these are church leaders, pastors, conference presidents, publishing house directors] Had this been received, it would have made them wise unto salvation; holier men, prepared to do the work of God with sanctified ability. **But all the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been before them, they would have treated him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ.** E.G. White, 1888 1478.2, emphasis mine.

She also wrote:

- **An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions**, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones. [this truth, that the Ten Commandments were added, not eternal, that salvation is not legal, but actual transformation of sinners into righteous people by receiving the life of Christ through faith] By exciting that opposition **Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit** that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented

them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. **The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.** *Selected Messages, volume 1*, p 234, emphasis mine.

And she wrote:

- “But the **work that all heaven was waiting to do** (1888 Minneapolis) as soon as men prepared the way (Jones and Waggoner), **was not done. For the leaders closed and bolted the door against the Holy Spirit**” E.G. White, Letter 123 (1902) Battle Creek Letters pp 55, 56, emphasis mine.

The work that all heaven was waiting to do, if we accepted and advanced the true gospel message, WAS NOT DONE—so instead the organized church has been taking a false legal message to the world with the right doctrines, but the very penal legal theology they take, despite having right doctrines, closes and bolts the doors of hearts to the Holy Spirit—it prevents renewal, the very legal message being taught prevents salvation, while causing people to believe they are spiritual rich and increased in righteousness because they have the provable right doctrines.

The year following leadership’s rejection of the 1888 message, EGW immediately went about writing to advance the true message and calling the church to repent, to embrace the truth. Many books, *The Desire of Ages*, *Steps to Christ*, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, *Christ Object Lessons* which all teach this truth were written. She wrote many letters and articles trying to break through the false legal lies. And in 1890 an article was published in the *Review and Herald* that lays this out plainly. Let’s examine some portions, notice what she wrote:

- The **Lord has seen our backslidings, and he has a controversy with his people.** [Have you heard of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan? Did you ever consider that Jesus has a controversy with Seventh-day Adventists? And what is that controversy? The very same one He has with Satan—one of pride, selfishness, thinking we are rich and righteous, which is driven by the unregenerate spirit of fear and selfishness and is advanced by the means of a creature, upon the imposed law, and law enforcement as justice. The imposed law legal system of theology prevents renewal, rebirth, regeneration, it protects the spirit of fear and selfishness. Notice what EGW writes next.] Their **pride, their selfishness, their opening of the mind to doubt and unbelief**, are manifest in his sight, and grieve his **heart of love.** [Doubt and unbelief are the same as saying they do not trust, they don’t have living faith, and the pride and selfishness is the same as saying they are animated by the spirit of fear and selfishness. This is manifestation of people distrusting God, not aligning, choosing, or living a life of love and trust—why? Because of the root lie about God’s law causes God to be viewed as untrustworthy and they place their faith in the legal mechanics that they believe protect them from God.] Many gather darkness about their souls as a garment, and virtually say, “We want not a knowledge of thy way, O God; we choose our own way.” [What is our own way? These are not people leaving the church saying I want to walk in godlessness, or I want to walk in hedonism,

worldliness in the sense of alcohol, drugs, porn. No, these are church members saying I want salvation my way, me first, protect and save me, not surrender of self, but the protection of self driven by the spirit of fear and selfishness, which always leads to law and law enforcement understanding, the rule-keepers, the penal legal lies.] These are the things that separate the soul from God. **There is in the soul of man an obstacle which he holds there with stubborn persistency, and which interposes between his soul and God. It is unbelief.** [The spirit of fear and selfishness which incites distrust of God, doubt in His goodness, refusal to believe God could really love and forgive us without something done to pay Him for our horrible crimes, which is solidified by the imposed law lie.] **God gives sufficient evidence**, but man, with his unsanctified will, refuses to **receive evidence** unless it comes in his own way, to favor his own ideas. With a spirit of bravado he cries, “Proof, proof, is what we want,” and **turns away from the evidence that God gives.** [Integrative evidenced-based approach, design law, how reality actually functions is rejected by legalists who believe based on claims, proclamations, and statements, “God said it, I believe it, that settles it” without any comprehension, do it because you will get into legal trouble if you don’t and the claim *sola scriptura* to sustain the false legal view, and then the Bible becomes a rule book of deeds and sins.] He talks doubt, unbelief, sowing the seeds of evil which will spring up and yield their harvest. He is separating his soul farther and farther from God. *Review and Herald* December 23, 1890, par. 1, emphasis mine

I encourage you to read this entire article, it is fantastic, but a few paragraphs later she states,

- We would seek most earnestly **to know God’s way**; we would **work in an opposite direction from selfishness**, and our constant prayer would be that we might **have the mind of Christ**, that **we might be molded and fashioned after his likeness. It is in looking to Jesus and beholding his loveliness, having our eyes steadfastly fixed upon him, that we become changed into his image.** [Notice the emphasis is on our being changed, transformed, having the mind of Christ within us, that we are being fashioned into the likeness of Christ. This is righteousness by faith, real righteousness by faith, we become the righteousness of God 2 Cor 5.21, not legally declared righteous while we are not. This requires we trust God, not trust the legal mechanisms to protect us from God. And notice she describes design law, the law of worship, by beholding we become changed. This is not a legal process in a court, it is an actual process of healing, transformation, occurring in a living being by the power of our Creator God. And the legal model is designed to obstruct people from experiencing this. This is why we have a message that is to call people back to Creator worship.] He will give grace to all that keep his way, and do his will, and walk in truth. But those who **love their own way**, who **worship their idols of opinion**, and do not love God and obey his word, will continue to walk in darkness. **O, how terrible is unbelief!** [Love their own way—selfishness, driven by the spirit of fear, forming their own idols of legal religion, with a god who functions like them, with the laws of a creature, made up rules requiring enforcement through infliction of punishment, which cause distrust in God while they claim faith in the legal mechanics, the payments. Their problem is not failing to believe a certain doctrine or truth such as Jesus is the Son of God and our Savior, the state of the dead, or the Sabbath, but failing to trust God because of the lie about His law] **As well let light be poured upon the blind, as to present**

truth to these souls; the one cannot see, and the other will not see. *Review and Herald*
December 23, 1890, par. 4, emphasis mine.

She goes on,

- **I beseech you whose names are registered on the church-book as worthy members, [This is written to church members!]** to be indeed worthy, through the virtue of Christ. Mercy and truth and the love of God are promised to the humble and contrite soul. **The displeasure and judgments of God are against those who persist in walking in their own ways, loving self, loving the praise of men.** [His displeasure at their refusal to trust, their refusal to allow Him to heal them, is the displeasure a parent experiences when their child refuses correction, healing, saving; and His judgment is the accurate diagnosis of their condition. He judges they refuse Him, prefer their own selfish, legal religion, worshiping a god who is like them, and that there is nothing more He can do for them.] **They will certainly be swept into the satanic delusions of these last days, because they received not the love of the truth.** [This is the natural result of refusing truth, the only thing left for the mind to rest upon is lies and thus the lies become fixed—delusional And we see these lies being taught by many in leadership, just like Caiaphas and Annas and the Jewish leadership did 20000 years ago.] Because the Lord has, in former days, blessed and honored them, they flatter themselves that they are chosen and true, and do not need warning and instruction and reproof. [This is the message to the church at Laodicea—we are rich, we have the right doctrines, God has blessed this movement...] The True Witness says, [remember who the True Witness is—Jesus] “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” **The professed people of God have the charge against them, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.** Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” *Review and Herald* December 23, 1890, par. 5, emphasis mine.
- **The love to Jesus that once burned upon the altar of the heart, has become dimmed and nearly extinguished.** [The power of God is not primarily creation power, might and force, but the power of truth and love and this is the power that we need—it is gospel power, the good news about God that is obstructed by the penal legal lies who focus on physical power that they then falsely claim God will use to torture and kill His children, which undermines trust and obstructs salvation.] Spiritual strength has become enfeebled. **The displeasure of the Lord is against his people. In their present condition it is impossible for them to represent the character of Christ.** [Again, this is a message to the SDA church, and this is why the delay. The 1888 message was rejected, the lie that God’s law is imposed was retained and the organized system is promoting a false legal religion that has bolted the doors of hearts to the Holy Spirit.] And when the True Witness has sent them counsel, reproof, and warnings because he loves them, they have refused to receive the message; they have refused to come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. Jesus said, “I lay down my life for the sheep.... Therefore doth my Father love me.” “By taking your sins upon myself, **I am opening a channel through which his grace can flow to all who will accept it. In giving myself for the sin of the world, I have prepared a way for the unrepressed tide of his love to flow to men.**” *Review and*

Herald December 23, 1890, par. 6, emphasis mine. [Notice again, the purpose of Christ's sacrifice was not to do something to the Father, it was not legal, it was operational, functional, reality-based because of how God has built life to function—His sacrifice was so that His life, His love, could flow back into humanity and regenerate, cleanse, heal, save us and make us righteous. His sacrifice was never a legal blood/payment to a punishing god applied to records in heaven, but the channel for His life, love, spirit, to flow into us to renew and transform us]

- **There is a lack of moral and spiritual power throughout our Conferences. Many churches do not have light in themselves.** [Again, our churches] The members do not give evidence that they are **branches of the True Vine**, [Design law, we must receive the life of Christ infused into us to be reborn with a new animating energy, the spirit of Christ, but the false legal theology closes the door of the heart to the Spirit.] by bearing much fruit to the glory of God, but appear to be withering away. **Their Redeemer has withdrawn his light, the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, from their assemblies...** There has been a separation of the soul from God; **many have cut off the communication between him and the soul by refusing his messengers and his message.** [Jones and Waggoner, messages like this from EGW, and every person since who is taking this same eternal gospel about God to the world.] *Review and Herald* December 23, 1890, par. 9, emphasis mine.
- **In our largest churches the greatest evils exist, because these have had the greatest light. They have not a true knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent.** [Again, our churches! But they have the right 28 fundamental beliefs, and they are rich and feel good about themselves. What are they missing? The truth about God's law being design law. These deluded souls have all the right doctrines set in the wrong law, the imposed law, the law of a creature, and thus they have the wrong god. They are worshiping a dictator who is the wielder of death inflicted as punishment for law breaking. That is why we are called to reset all our right doctrines into design law, to worship God as Creator and then we will be won to genuine trust, open the heart, and experience the power of God for rebirth and salvation.] The leaven of unbelief is working, and unless these evils which bring the displeasure of God are corrected in its members, the whole church stands accountable for them. **The deep movings of the Spirit of God are not with them; the glorious presence of the King of saints, and his power to cleanse from all moral defilement, are not manifest among them.** [Again the focus is on cleansing people from sin so they love, they reveal in themselves the character, righteousness of Christ, they become righteous, but this reality is obstructed and prevented by the lie that God's law functions like human law.] Many come to the assembly as worshipers, like the door upon its hinges. **They understand not the true application of the Scriptures, nor the power of God. They have eyes, but they see not; ears have they, but they hear not; they continue in their evil ways, yet regard themselves as the privileged, obedient people who are doers of the word...** [the false legal theology]. *Review and Herald* December 23, 1890, par. 10, emphasis mine.
- **The Lord has sent a message to arouse his people to repent, and do their first works; but how has his message been received? While some have heeded it, others have cast contempt and reproach on the message and the messenger.** [The 1888 message, God's law is design

law, and righteousness is experienced within the believer, it is not a legal adjustment in record books that claim legal righteousness while sinners remain unrighteous.] **Spirituality** deadened, humility and childlike simplicity gone, a mechanical, formal profession of faith has taken the place of love and devotion. [The mechanical performance is the faith in the mechanics of penal legal theology, price paid, legal declarations, robe covering, blood erasing, no faith/trust in God, but faith in the mechanics, thus no regeneration because the heart remains closed.] Is this mournful condition of things to continue? **is the lamp of God's love to go out in darkness?** The Saviour calls; listen to his voice: "Be zealous and repent." Repent, confess your sins, and you will be forgiven. "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" Why will you try to rekindle a mere fitful fire, and walk in the sparks of your own kindling? *Review and Herald* December 23, 1890, par. 16, emphasis mine.

She has more to say—it is a powerful article and an accurate description of the state of affairs in the church because the truth of God's design law has been rejected and the people have been taught a false legal system with no power to save.

SUNDAY

The lesson title for the day is You Were There and focuses on the idea that we are all included in the promises of God, not just the ones who were alive when they were made.

Read last paragraph,

- The Lord's speech contains a shift that occurs five times between "you" and "they" (the fathers). The fathers and this generation at Shechem are treated as one. Joshua is seeking to show what Moses affirmed already in Deuteronomy 5:3, that the Lord did not make the covenant only with the fathers but with all those present at the moment of Joshua's speech. The vast majority there now had not experienced the Exodus. Not "all" of them were at Horeb. Yet, Joshua says that all of them were there. In short, the lessons of the past must be appropriated by each new generation. The God who worked for the ancestors in the past is ready to act on behalf of the present generation. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 105.

And then the lesson asks this question,

- What are the ways in which we can, as a church, have a better sense of corporate responsibility?

What are your thoughts on this? Do we have corporate responsibility?

Corporate refers to the organization or corporation that we are a member of.

We have corporate membership in:

- Any church in which we have chosen to become members
- The nations to which we are citizens
- If one is a member of the military while on active duty they are a member of that organization or corporation
- Or if one is a member of pathfinders or boy scouts or girl scouts
- A ball team?

If one is a member in any organization, do they have responsibilities to that organization? What are those responsibilities?

Would a person be expected to represent that organization in such a way that is consistent with the values, ideals, goals, mission of that organization?

Would they have a responsibility to fulfill certain duties? To work for the betterment of that organization, including helping others in the organization?

Satan is a deceiver and he wants to confuse and divide—one strategy is to blur the lines of responsibilities we have in various organizations, or get us to believe our responsibility is to one organization when, in truth, it is to another.

For instance, we can have membership in a church denomination and have responsibility to that organization, say as deacon to open the doors, or pastor to share the gospel, pastoral ministry to members, as treasurer to keep the books etc. But is it possible that people could come to believe that membership in a denominational or community church organization is the same thing as membership in the true church of God, the church invisible, the church that is made up only of people who are reborn, connected to Jesus, and are infused with His Spirit? Could people come to believe that membership in a denominational church is membership in the church invisible?

And if people believe that, could they then be fearful of speaking truth to church authority, challenging the orthodox views, for fear of having their membership revoked?

The Bible tells the story of the man who was born blind and the church leaders of the day not wanting to believe he was healed by Jesus, so they interrogated the parents, notice the parents response and why they answered the way they did:

- “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” His parents said this **because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.** John 9:20-22 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Had they confused membership in the true church of God with organizational membership? And did that confusion impair their ability to fulfill their duties to God, to the true church?

Does this happen today? Do people in our church refuse to believe the truth because the leaders in the corporate system are telling them lies and they believe that if what we are teaching doesn't agree with corporate headquarters then it isn't the truth? And are others afraid to speak because of fear of losing positions in the church, perhaps employees afraid for their jobs?

The Bible tells us that within denominations the wheat and the tares grow up together. There are many people in church organizations that are not part of the body of Christ, that are actually working for God's enemies. Just consider the religious leaders who crucified Christ.

So, Satan confuses people by getting them to accept a lie that belonging to a denomination is the same as belonging to the true church of God through Jesus. It is not. But having accepted this lie, then Satan can cause further corruption by getting his agents in the church to lead people to believe false things, practice false practices etc., just like the religious leaders who crucified Jesus, imprisoned the Apostles, and the leaders of the Dark Ages. The soldiers going with Saul of Tarsus to arrest Christians were Temple guards, they were fulfilling their duty to their church, but they were not fulfilling their duty to Jesus, to God, and were not following the Holy Spirit.

So, one method Satan uses to deceive people and divide, is to confuse them about their duties and loyalties to corporations and believe that the denominational church is the same as the true church invisible.

I can tell you with certainty, that God has many of His true saints, members of His body, throughout the world in all the denominations. Remember the Magi that came to honor Jesus were not Jews.

We have a responsibility to share the truth and love of Jesus as effectively as we can, in our homes, in our communities, in every organization to which we belong, and in our corporate churches. I used to think God wanted everyone who loved Him to leave their denomination and join ours, but I realize that was my childish thinking, God needs His true saints everywhere, He needs people sharing His truth and love in every group around the world and His Spirit regenerates, matures, heals, every single person who trusts Him.

And we need to be careful not to confuse salvation, membership in the true church invisible with organizational affiliation—we affiliate together for common mission and purpose.

Consider this Bible commentary:

- As the **light and life of men was rejected** by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so **it has been rejected in every succeeding generation**. Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the **religious leaders would not tolerate the light**, and those that bore it were forced to seek

another class, who were longing for the truth. **In our day** few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. **Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth** in whatever guise it may be presented. **Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God.** And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching **obliged to leave the church of their fathers**, that they may render obedience. *The Desire of Ages* p. 232, emphasis mine.

As members to any organization we keep our duty to God first and if conflict arises in the organization so significantly that one's duty to God is compromised by that organization then it is time to separate from it, otherwise, we do all we can, like Jesus did, to shine the light in the hallways and associations of that organization.

Another strategy employed by Satan when corporate responsibility is confused, is to get us to compromise our duty and responsibility as individuals to God for the greater good of the organization. For instance, the example of people covering up and protecting predators in the church to protect the reputation of the church; or as Caiaphas said,

- You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish. John 11:50 NIV84.

So what is the healthy balance to our relationship with organizations, corporations and God?

Do we recognize ourselves as part of the larger human family, all part of the same species, all part of the life God breathed into Adam and in need of rebirth, salvation, renewal through Jesus?

Is it this corporate love for others that Job manifested when he offered sacrifices for his children. He was not taking responsibility for his children's salvation or seeking to influence God to be merciful, but expressing his connection, empathy, love, concern for his children through the cultural conventions of his time. It is the same way parents today pray earnestly for their wayward children, not because they believe God doesn't care or needs pleading with, or that their prayers take responsibility for their child's sin, but because of love, corporate connection along the network of reality that God has built into our being. Which is also demonstrated when Jesus prayed earnestly for us in John 17, not because the Father needed to hear the prayer, but because of how hearts and minds and our connection to each other functions.

MONDAY

Read second paragraph,

- Joshua's appeal is twofold: Israel should fear the Lord and serve Him "in sincerity and in truth." To fear the Lord does not mean a life of perpetual trembling and emotional insecurity. It rather refers to the reverence and awe that stem from the recognition of the unfathomable

greatness, holiness, and infinity of God on the one hand and our smallness, sinfulness, and finitude on the other. To fear God is a constant awareness of the magnitude of His demands, a recognition that He is not only our heavenly Father but also our Divine King. Such awareness will lead to a life of obedience to God (Lev. 19:14, Lev. 25:17, Deut. 17:19, 2 Kings 17:34). While “fear” describes the inner attitude that must characterize an Israelite, the practical outcome of reverence to God is service. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 106.

I really like how the lesson emphasizes the truth that to fear God is not anxiety, worry, dread, fright, terror, what we commonly think of as fear—because perfect love casts out fear. No, it is awe, admiration, respect, reverence, being humbled by the majesty of God so one is willing to listen and learn.

And when we return to worshiping God as Creator and realize His laws are design laws, our admiration, respect, awe, love, reverence increase. But the imposed law lie teaches that God is the source of death and He uses His power to torture and kill and this will always incite fear and distrust, which undermines actual salvation, because it undermines trust in God.

But the lesson rightly points out that the awe, reverence, and respect will lead to a life of obedience and service to God—what does that look like?

What is the difference in the obedience that stems from love and trust because we know God and are in awe of Him, versus the obedience that stems from fear and law because people have believed the legal lies about God?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph,

- As a true and faithful leader, Joshua respects the free will of his people and wishes that Israel would serve the Lord out of free choice rather than compulsion. That was exactly the point made by the deliberate use of the verb “chosen” (see Josh. 24:22). In other passages baħar, “to choose,” describes Yahweh’s election of Israel (Deut. 7:6, 7; Deut. 10:15; Deut. 14:2). Israel is free to say “no” to Yahweh after their divine election, but that would be nonsensical and absurd. Israel can say “yes” to God and continue to live, or they can turn their backs on Him and cease to exist. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 107.

Why is it important that we serve God from a free choice rather than compulsion?

Why can God not use more external power to save people from sin?

What is the root cause of sin? Distrust of God which causes fear and selfishness, which is why Paul wrote in Romans 14:23, whatever is not from faith or trust is sin.

Can trust be established by using external power, force, threat, or inflicted punishments upon people?
In fact, if one does that what happens to trust?

Consider this Bible commentary, take note of what is being described, think through the design law elements, of how hearts and minds function, how love works, what destroys love and causes rebellion and decide, do you agree with this commentary or not?

- God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** The Lord's principles are not of this order. His **authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love**; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** *The Desire of Ages* p. 759, emphasis mine.

It was **God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security**, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that **time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government.** He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe. *The Desire of Ages* p.759, emphasis mine.

Do you agree? And what are the principles of Satan's government? External force, compelling power, which is imposed law and law enforcement which are is how all the kingdoms of this world function, and why Satan is prince of this world and Jesus said that His kingdom is not of this world.

God's kingdom is the kingdom of truth and love which exist only in freedom. His laws are design laws and breaking them cut people off from life and cause death unless the person is saved, healed, reconciled to God, by having God restore in them His living law, which means we receive the Holy Spirit who brings into us the life of Christ, the sinless animating, motivating, spirit of love and trust that Jesus perfected as a human and restored into the species.

Understand this very clearly, the penal legal theologies that teach that God makes up rules that function like human laws, and therefore God must use power to inflict pain suffering and death through force are promoting Satan's form of government. It is how the Satan is going to be able to successfully impersonate Christ because the masses will believe the lie that justice is the use of power to punish lawbreakers.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph,

- The threat of idolatry is not a theoretical one. Earlier, on the plains of Moab, in a similar context, Moses asked for the same decision (Deut. 30:19, 20). The gods that are in view now

are not the ones of Egypt or those beyond the river, but they are found “among them.” Therefore, Joshua pleads with his people to incline their hearts to the Lord. The Hebrew term used here, *natah*, means “to stretch,” “to bend.” It describes a God who is expected to bend down and listen to prayers (2 Kings 19:16; Ps. 31:2, 3; Dan. 9:18), and it is also the attitude required of Israel later by the prophets (Isa. 55:3, Jer. 7:24). It is employed to indicate the apostasy of Solomon when his heart inclined toward foreign gods (1 Kings 11:2, 4, 9). The sinful human heart does not have the natural tendency to bend and listen to God’s voice. It takes conscious decisions on our part to incline it toward fulfilling God’s will. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 108.

What about us today—is idolatry a problem for Christians today? What about SDA Christians?

How is idolatry manifested in the church today?

- Money, power, prestige
- False concepts about God?

Is there a difference between worshiping a false god and worshiping the true God but be mistaken about certain ideas or facts? In other words, can a person be worshiping the true God but believe some wrong doctrines?

What is the difference between worshiping a false god versus the true God?

Did EGW and the founders of the SDA church have a time in their life when they believed many things they themselves later acknowledged were wrong? And while they were in error of those doctrines were they worshiping the true God or not?

Yes, the worship of the true God doesn’t mean we know all things, it means we have hearts and minds that respond positively to the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and Love. Thus the true worshipers of God are not identified by knowing all doctrines correctly, but by the Spirit of God manifested in their life. They love God, they love others, **they love truth** and are willing to move forward in truth applied to their lives as they are able to comprehend it, and in this process they become more and more like Jesus, manifested in traits of character, the fruits of the Spirit, not in a list of doctrines.

But the worshipers of a false god, may attest to the correct list of doctrines, consider the religious leaders who crucified Christ. But they do not love the principles of God, they are not lovers of God, of others, or of truth, and they will not move forward in truth applied to themselves, which would bring conversion. They love self, they are motivated by fear and desire to lord over and control others and they prefer a god who is like them, a rule-making god, who will use power to dominate and control, and ultimately punish those who disagree with them, just like they did Jesus.

Thus the worshipers of a false god also manifest themselves as such, not primarily in a doctrinal test, but in a functional test, what methods and principles do they practice, and what character do they develop.

The lesson rightly pointed out,

- “The sinful human heart does not have the natural tendency to bend and listen to God’s voice.”

But I do not believe the next sentence is the most helpful, or accurate.

- “It takes conscious decisions on our part to incline it toward fulfilling God’s will.”

If one holds a legal model, one could read this and think I have to choose to obey, to do like the Israelites and make a public choice to be a Yahweh worshiper, to make a public stance and claim Jesus as my Savior, to claim His blood as my legal payment to receive the legal pardon for my sins. It takes a conscious choice to do this and serve God.

Consider Saul of Tarsus before Damascus Road, would he have argued this point? Or would he have affirmed that he was making a conscious choice to fulfill the will of God by hunting down Christians?

So, to me it would have been slightly better had the lesson read,

- “The sinful human heart does not have the natural tendency to bend and listen to God’s voice. It takes conscious decisions on our part to surrender ourselves to God and be reborn with a new Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, so that our hearts are animated and motivated by love to trust and then we are enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit to fulfill God’s will.”

Read the last paragraph,

- Even after the people’s threefold promise to serve the Lord, which implies, as Joshua commanded, the removal of foreign gods from among them, there is no report that it actually happened. Throughout the entire book, it became customary to report on the fulfillment of Joshua’s commands (or those of Moses) as examples of obedience. The lack of it now at the end of the book leaves the plea of Joshua open-ended. The central appeal of the book to serve the Lord is not only for Joshua’s generation but also for each new generation of God’s people who would read or hear this message. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 108.

Why were the Israelites not faithful after promising they would be?

Were they lying when they promised to be faithful?

When Peter, in the upper room, promised Jesus he would be loyal, and Jesus said to him, that before the cock crows he would deny Jesus three times, was Peter lying to Jesus?

If Peter was sincere, if Peter meant what he said at that time, then why couldn’t Jesus trust him?

Because while Peter loved Jesus, he still loved himself more, hadn't fully surrendered the spirit of fear and selfishness and when his life was threatened his spirit of fear, the survival drives took over, and he acted to protect self and betray Jesus.

This was not a doctrinal problem, it was a spiritual problem.

THURSDAY

Read the last paragraph,

- In fact, the church is always one generation away from extinction, and so it was with the Old Testament people of God. A great chapter in the history of Israel comes to an end. Its future depends on what kind of answers it will give to the many questions that concern the future. Will Israel be loyal to the Lord? Will they be able to continue the unfinished task of possessing the whole land? Will they be able to cling to Yahweh and not get entangled in idol worship? A generation under Joshua has been faithful to the Lord, but will the next generation maintain the same spiritual direction that has been traced by its great leader? Each successive generation of God's people, reading the book of Joshua, must face these same questions. Their success depends on the nature of the answers they provide in their everyday lives and how they relate to the truths they have inherited. *Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2025, Lessons of Faith From Joshua*, p. 109.

What of this idea of inheriting truths? Obviously, this isn't talking about biological inheritance through the DNA, it is talking about what passes down from parents to children, from one generation to the next.

What do you think of this idea? Is it suggesting that we must accept the teachings of our forefathers, that we should believe based on traditional teachings passed down to us?

Is there a religious organization, a religious system in history that did not become corrupt? While the Bible is the inspired Word of God and we can trust it, can we trust what church leaders tell us it teaches? Did the Jewish leaders 2000 years ago teach the truth contained in Scripture to their people?

Did Peter have to be corrected by Paul?

So, I understand the point, when truth is being shared with subsequent generations, it doesn't do those generations any good until they have assimilated it and applied to their own lives. In other words, until they know the truth experientially for themselves.

But my concern is that this could lead to traditionalism, indoctrination, and beliefs that others have thought through but the new generation hasn't.

And what is the problem in believing something that you haven't been persuaded in your mind is true—even if it is true, but you only believe it is true because the pastor, elder, or some other authority told you and that is your method for knowing truth?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The God of Reality: Separating Truth from Fiction Seminar: August 13-16 2026 Orlando, Florida—More information coming soon.

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.

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