

New Covenant Inheritance: Lesson 12 – Discernment

This lesson looks at the tenth and final nation that was squatting on the Promised Land. **Genesis 15:21** identifies them as the Jebusites. They represent the bondage of blindness to spiritual things that came in with the curse. Praise God for the freedom we obtained from the “Jebusites” through Jesus. While Jesus has already done the work of releasing us from the Jebusites, most Christians still need to have their minds renewed to God’s way of thinking, in order to be set free from this bondage. Let’s explore this blindness and see how we need to change our thinking to live in our inheritance.

Jebusites – ‘yud bet yud samech yud’ [H2983] from root word ‘bet yud samech’ [H947].

Strong’s definition of H2983 is: Patrial from H2982; a Jebusite or inhabitant of Jebus: - Jebusite(-s).

H2982 is: From H947; trodden, that is, threshing place; Jebus, the aboriginal name of Jerusalem: - Jebus.

H947 is: A primitive root; to trample (literally or figuratively): - loath, tread (down, under [foot]), be polluted.

From these definitions we see that Jebusite bondage is about putting you down, polluting you, making you feel unworthy, and fostering self loathing. Interestingly, it is from the original name for Jerusalem, the place where Jesus was “threshed, trodden down and polluted” for our sake. He did this so that we could be released from this bondage, raised up, given worth, made beloved, and given His righteousness. Hence, this name represents the unrighteousness we were born in. The day we were born again, we received our inheritance of deliverance from the Jebusites – we were made righteous. While meditating on this, I heard the Lord ask “What does seeing through righteous eyes do for you?” His answer was, “It gives you the ability to discern real world influences on this natural world”. This is a vital part of our inheritance because discerning between good and evil is essential to exercising our dominion. Everything that happens on earth has its source in the real world. Knowing the source of things is key to knowing how to deal with them.

Discernment is a spiritual sense (one of our seven) that God has restored to us. The most basic level is discerning between good and evil. Unfortunately, a lot of “Christian” teaching has distorted many people’s thinking in this area. One obvious example is the wide held belief that God allows bad things to happen. By now you know how wrong such thinking is, but many Christians still believe this lie, which is rooted in human experience and reasoning. We must absolutely know that God has nothing to do with evil things; otherwise, we will not be able to use our dominion to reject them from our lives. When people think that “God must be allowing it”, they will not use their authority to declare the truth and reject it. The result is God’s power cannot work on their behalf. How sad it is that so many peoples’ lives are destroyed by the curse because of this thinking. The more we live in the gospel of grace, the clearer the difference between good and evil becomes.

The deeper levels of discernment come as we walk every day with Jesus. We start seeing into the root causes of the challenges and problems that face us and/or those around us. This seeing enables us to flow in the wisdom of Holy Spirit when dealing with them. We see that all mental, emotional, physical, social and financial problems come back to the operation of the curse. It enables God to change our thinking to agree with His and then, we get to use His word to loosen, dissolve and undo the work of the enemy. In this lesson, we’ll start with a look at our righteousness, and then we’ll go into how Holy Spirit gives us the discernment that releases God’s power.

The reason God is so strong on what we believe is because right believing leads to right speaking which results in right living. To be effective in our lives, we must believe the truth about our righteousness and our place in Jesus. Read **Ephesians 4:20-25** and answer the following:

Where is truth found (v21)? _____.

What have we put off (v22)? _____.

What are we to be renewed in (v23)? _____.

What are we to put on (v24)? _____.

What is the state of this character that we put on (v24)? _____.

What are we to cast off (or put away) (v25)? _____.

What are we to speak to each other (v25)? _____.

I would note here that man’s understanding of lying differs from God’s understanding. Hence, we need to receive and operate in our inheritance of discernment. For instance, humans see lying as declaring something that is not the facts. God sees lying as declaring something that is not the truth. Truth and facts often align, but there are times when they differ. Facts are subject to change, whereas truth is not. One aspect of our discernment is identifying this difference. We do not deny the presence of the facts, but we do deny their right to remain. We declare the truth about situations and command the facts to line up with the truth. The most common example of this is sickness. The fact may be that our body is being attacked by a condition of the curse, but the truth is we have already been healed by the body of Jesus. **James 3:13-18** discusses this condition.

What does a wise and knowledgeable man do (v13)? _____.

What are we not to lie against (v14)? _____.

What does the earthly wisdom of envy and strife produce (v16)? _____.

Verses 17 and 18 describe the nature of heavenly wisdom and righteousness. The operation of these two gifts in our lives is what gives us discernment. As we let these gifts renew our thinking, we grow in discernment. Let’s briefly look at the Hebrew and Greek words that are usually translated as discern.

Nakar [H5234] - *A primitive root; properly to scrutinize, that is, look intently at; hence (with recognition implied), to acknowledge, be acquainted with, care for, respect, revere, or (with suspicion implied), to disregard, ignore, be strange toward, reject, resign, dissimulate (as if ignorant or disowning): - acknowledge, X could, deliver, discern, dissemble, estrange, feign self to be another, know, take knowledge (notice), perceive, regard, (have) respect, behave (make) self strange (-ly).*

Anakrino [G350] - *From G303 and G2919; properly to scrutinize, that is, (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine: - ask, question, discern, examine, judge, search.*

Greek Diakrino [G1252] - *From G1223 and G2919; to separate thoroughly, that is, (literally and reflexively) to withdraw from, or (by implication) oppose; figuratively to discriminate (by implication decide), or (reflexively) hesitate: - contend, make (to) differ (-ence), discern, doubt, judge, be partial, stagger, waver.*

Both of these Greek words are from the Greek word Krino [G2919] which Strong’s defines as follows:

Krino [2919] - *Properly to distinguish, that is, decide (mentally or judicially); by implication to try, condemn, punish: - avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to (sue at the) law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, think.*

Krino appears 98 times, most of which are translated “judged”. Examples include **John 16:11** “... of judgment [G2920] because the prince of this world has been judged [2919]” and **Matthew 7:1-2** where four times it is used as judge. All of these Greek and Hebrew words relate to correctly evaluating things to make decisions. There are three aspects of discernment found in scripture: 1. Discerning between good and evil. 2. Discerning internal motivations and beliefs. 3. Discerning of spiritual things. All three play an important role in our lives.

Good and evil. The ability to differentiate between good and evil is the first and most basic aspect of our inheritance of discernment. Read **1 Kings 3:9-14** and answer the following:

What did Solomon ask for (v9)? _____.

What did God give Solomon (v12)? _____.

What else did God give Solomon that he did not ask for (v13)? _____.

What else could Solomon have had if he had continued walking with God (v14)? _____.

In **Ezekiel 44:23** a task of the Levites (priests) was to teach the people to “discern [nakar H5234] between the clean and unclean, between holy and profane”. Holy Spirit does this for us by revelation (study and preaching).

In **Luke 12:56** Jesus criticizes the people for being able to “discern face of the sky” but not being able to “discern this time”. They did not discern that Jesus was there to destroy evil and release good into the earth.

In **Hebrews 5:13-14** we see that baby believers are those who are unskillful in the word of righteousness; meaning they don’t see themselves as righteous and don’t operate from a righteous mindset. Therefore, mature believers must be those who are skilful in righteousness and are able to enjoy strong meat (deep revelation and truth from the word). Part of this maturity results from exercising our spiritual sense of discernment.

What does **Hebrews 5:14** say mature believers discern between? _____.

Now read **Malachi 3:16-18**. Notice that the truths we share with each other (**Ephesians 5:19**) are recorded in a book of remembrance (v16) and when we keep our eyes on Jesus and follow Holy Spirit, God fashions us as jewels (v17). Then, in verse 18, it is prophesied that we are able to discern between the righteous/mature (those who serve God as sons) and those who don’t serve God – i.e. those serve self (babes and unbelievers).

Internal motivations & believing. Read **Hebrews 4:9-12** and answer the following.

What do we as God’s children have available to us (v9)? _____.

How do we enter into this rest (v10)? _____.

What would cause us to miss out on entering rest (v11)? _____.

What must we accept in order to prevent unbelief (v12)? _____.

What three things characterize the ‘word’ (v12)? _____.

Verse 12 tells us that this awesome word penetrates to the core of man, separating between soul and spirit, bone and marrow; for the purpose of discerning (interpreting and revealing) between the thoughts and motives of our psyche (our soul and spirit). It is the revelation of the Word that identifies where our thinking is wrong – where it differs from God’s thinking. God gives these revelations to enable us to accept His truth and change our thinking to agree with His. This is how He puts his thoughts in our minds and writes them in our hearts (**Hebrews 8:10**). The Word is not given to bring guilt or condemnation. It is given to remove doubt and enable us to enter into and enjoy the rest and refreshing that He has provided for us in Jesus and His completed work.

Now read **1 Corinthians 11:29-31**. Verse 29 tells us that if we “don’t discern (diakrino) the Lord’s body” we bring condemnation upon ourselves. If we don’t see that Jesus body paid our punishment for sin and delivered us from the curse, then we will live with a guilty conscience and condemnation will cause the curse to operate in our bodies. This is the reason Paul gives as to why Christians end up sick, weak and die prematurely (v30). Verse 31 (KJV) says “*For if we would judge (diakrino) ourselves, we should not be judged (krino)*”. My paraphrase of verse 31 is “if we correctly discern (Diakrino) ourselves as righteous and forgiven, then we will not suffer the destructive results of guilt and condemnation (krino)”.

Here are some verses about discerning our motivations and beliefs that use the words diakrino and anakrino. Using a concordance, write out the phrase that uses either of these two Greek words.

Mark 11:23: _____.

Acts 17:11: _____.

Romans 4:20: _____.

1 Corinthians 10:25 & 27: _____.

James 1:6: _____.

This aspect of our inheritance is what enables us to renew our thinking to think like God. It enables us to discern when our thoughts are wrong so that we can reject them and start believing the truth.

Discerning of spiritual things. This aspect of discernment is the ability to see the things of the real world and how they affect this natural world. There are two aspects of this discernment. Firstly, the ability to see the things of God; secondly, to see the evil powers that are at work. The first is part of our inheritance (every Christian is given this ability) and the second is a gift of Holy Spirit given to individuals as Holy Spirit chooses.

Read **1 Corinthians 2:12-16** to gain an understanding of the first aspect; the one that is part of our inheritance.

What does Holy Spirit want you to know (v12)? _____.

Why can the natural man not receive the things of God (v14)? _____.

What does the spiritual man do (v15)? _____.

In verses 14 & 15, 'krino' is used 3 times and translated in KJV as *discerned*, *judgeth* and *judged*. God wants us to know what we have been freely given; to see (discern) His way of operating and thinking. To truly operate as his body here on the earth, we need to see things the same way God sees them. We need to see that the completed work of Jesus has already loosed, dissolved and undone the results of the curse. We need to see the power of God enforcing our declarations of truth. Discerning the things of God (love, grace, righteousness, Holy Spirit promptings, life, health, provision, protection, fruits of the Spirit, our inheritance, etc.) is how we are renewed in our thinking. Seeing the things of God (**2 Corinthians 3:18**) is what transforms into the image of Jesus.

What does verse 16 say that we have? _____.

This mind is what God has given to us to enable us to see and declare the truth, so that it manifests in our lives.

The second aspect of discerning spiritual things is a gift of Holy Spirit, and not part of our inheritance. The reason for this is that our inheritance is always with us, so being focused on Jesus (the things of God) is how we live. Whereas, discerning what the forces of darkness are up to is only needed when Jesus' (our) victory needs to be enforced. The gift of discerning of spirits is what enables us "to see" what real world forces are behind what happens in this natural world. Knowing this enables us to specifically target the demonic forces with the truth. The truth destroys and undoes the work of evil forces and the curse. This is an important gift for helping others who are being oppressed and controlled by demonic powers; but is only needed as and when Holy Spirit leads.

Read **1 Corinthians 12:4-11** and answer the following.

Who is the constant among the diversity (v4-6)? _____.

Why are the gifts of the Spirit given (v7)? _____.

How many gifts are given to the church (v8-10)? _____.

Who chooses the distribution of the gifts (v11)? _____.

This passage is telling us that while our full-time focus is on Jesus, there are specific times where Holy Spirit needs us to enforce the victory over specific demonic forces and results of the curse. All the gifts are part of this activity. The important thing is that we don't focus on the evil forces; we just deal with them when the gift of discerning of spirits gives us specific insight, at specific times, for the purpose of eliminating what they are doing. Our dominion (declaration of truth) enforces the victory (deliverance, healing, provision, guidance, etc.) that has already been won. Our focus on Jesus enables our inheritance of discernment to benefit us and those around us.