

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

GREAT BIBLE LESSONS

“Great Bible Lessons: Lesson 5”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

The message of God came to the people of Israel saying, “Thus says the Lord, stand in the way and see, and ask for the old path, where the good way is, and then you'll find rest for your souls.” But they said, “We will not walk in it.”

God encouraged Israel through the great prophet, Jeremiah, to find the old path, to seek the good way, to strive to do what God wanted them to do, and really to go back to the word of God- back to the Bible- we might say, for God's authority in their life.

Friend, in a day when so many are clamoring for fun and entertainment and what may be new on the religious scene- let's realize that what God's people need more than anything else is to go back to the word of God and back to the Bible in an effort to strive and know Him and please Him to the best of their ability.

In the scripture there are a host of passages that call us back to the word of God to please Him.

For example, in Jeremiah 10:23, Jeremiah said, "Oh Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man who walks to direct his own paths." We can't make our own path to heaven. We can't determine what's right and what's wrong. Only God, through His word, can give us that plea.

Hosea 4:6 God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

Why did Israel go into captivity? Why did they eventually go into spiritual ruin? A lack of knowledge.

In the New Testament in Acts 17:11, there was a group of people known as the Bereans, and these were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica- in that they searched the scriptures daily to see if what Paul was telling them was true to the will of God.

Friend, that ought to be our mindset and our plea to go back to the Bible and see if what we're being told is true.

Do you remember the encouragement to Timothy? Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth." Paul encouraged Timothy to study and to study the word of God, because it is the truth of God's word that makes man free.

Today in our lesson, we're going to be thinking about specifically some areas that we need to go back to the Bible for so that we can be sure that we're right with God and pleasing to him.

First and foremost, Christians want to go back to the Bible as the sole source of authority.

Friend, there are a lot of folks who are going to say that this book or this man or this person or this place may have all religious authority, but that's not what the Bible says. The Bible says that Jesus still has all authority.

I want you to notice this scripture from Matthew 28:18. The Bible says, "And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." Who has all religious authority? Well, if I'm going to go back to the Bible, if I'm going to go back to the word of God as it relates to authority, I've got to realize, Jesus still has all. And friend, if Jesus has all, that doesn't leave any for us today. He has all authority, and we must follow his directives.

Do you remember Colossians 3:17? Paul wrote to the church in Colossae in the first century, and he said this, "In whatever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the

Father through him." We must act and do and speak by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Corinthian church, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:6 that they were not to go beyond that which is written. There's a great guideline. There's a great marker post as it were. Don't go beyond what is written. Unless it is specifically authorized in the scripture, we shouldn't go beyond that. This is very similar to the words of Revelation 22:18-19. We're not to add to nor take away from the word of God. This is why we simply want to preach the word, 2 Timothy 4:2. This is why Christians, as they're taught in 1 Peter 4:11, are to only speak as the oracles of God.

We ought to ask these great questions. The question of Jeremiah 37:17 was asked by an evil king, but what a great question it is. "Is there any word from the Lord?"

Paul repeated that same idea when he said in Romans 4:3, 'what does the scripture say?' When it comes to how a Christian ought to live, when it comes to what moral practices we ought to participate in and oppose, when it comes to salvation and worshiping God- the only thing that really matters is what the scripture says. We need to go back to the word of God for Bible authority.

Secondly, as we think about going back to the Bible, New Testament Christians want to go back to the Bible for worship. How does God want me to worship Him? That's the question that ought to permeate every Christian's mind. Not what's popular, what's the newest way to do that, what makes people happy- No, we ought to be asking: How does God want me to worship Him?

God is concerned about worship and the way we worship Him. John 4:24, Jesus said, "God is a spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." God has directives. He has a must for worship, and it must be done in spirit with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength, Mark 12:30 and it must be according to truth. Now we know God's word is truth. Jesus said, "Sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth." We want to worship God with all of our being and according to the truth of God's word.

Now I know sometimes people will say, "Well, you know, as long as my heart's in it, as long as I'm striving to do it to the best of my ability, God really doesn't care about the rest. He doesn't care about this type of worship

or if we do this in worship. God just wants your heart to be in it." Friends, there's a couple of men in the Old Testament who would greatly object to that idea. Their names are Nadab and Abihu. Leviticus 10:1-2, their life and their example tells us that God is concerned about how we worship Him.

There were two young priests, Nadab and Abihu, and the Bible says they offered a strange and unauthorized fire before the Lord which God had not commanded them. Well, how well did that go over? Did God say, 'You know, I'm really not that concerned about whether it's what I asked for, that you did it properly, just as long as your heart's in it.' No. The Bible says fire rained down from heaven and destroyed them there that day. Why? Because they did something God had not commanded them.

God wants me to worship Him according to His authority and by the way the Bible teaches. We should worship the Lord our God, and Him only should we serve, Matthew 4:10.

I want to emphasize, as we think about going back to the Bible, that there is an acceptable and implied from that, an unacceptable way to worship God.

Look in your Bible at Hebrew 12:28. "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace by which we may worship God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear."

If I'm going to fear God and reverence Him and worship Him acceptably, then friend, I've got to have the attitude of I want to worship God how He wants to be worshiped. Worship is not about me, and it's not about you. There are some byproducts of scriptural worship that no doubt will encourage and uplift us, but worship is about honoring and glorifying God. To do that correctly, we've got to do it the way God has asked.

Now let's think about a third area where we need to go back to the Bible. We want to go back to the Bible to learn about the church of the New Testament. What do you know about the church that you read about in the Bible? Is every religious group a part of that group?

Listen to the words of Jesus, our authority, on the church. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

What do we know about the church? Jesus said, "I'll build my church." The church belongs to Christ. He's the head of the church. There's not man somewhere in the country, in Rome or in some other place that's head of the church. The Bible says in Ephesians 1:22-23, He put all things under His feet, Christ's feet. God gave Christ to be head over all things to the church. He's the head of it. The church belongs to the Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Listen carefully to what Jesus said about the church. Did Jesus say in Matthew 16:18 upon these rocks, I'll build my churches? No. That's not what Jesus said. Jesus said, 'Upon this rock. Upon this solid, foundational truth, I am the Christ, the son of the living God,' Matthew 16:17-18. Jesus said, 'I will build my church.'

Friend, it was never in the mind or the will of God for there to be thousands of manmade religious churches or denominations that exist today. The Lord built one church. Remember Ephesians 1:22 and 23? He gave all things to Christ for him to be head over the church, which is His body. Now, we notice from that text that the church is the body. Those are used synonymously for that same group. How many bodies are there? Ephesians 4:4 says there is 'one body.'

Now think about this for a moment. If the church is the body, and if there's only one body, the Christ only ever intended to build one church, and so the church is unique. It is that which belongs to Christ. It is that which brings honor to God. It is spoken of in the Bible as the church of the Lord, Acts 20:27-28. It is the church of God, 1 Corinthians 1:1-3. It's referred to as the church of Christ, Romans 16:17. It is the church of the living God, 1 Timothy 3:15.

Now, what's unique about all those descriptions? They honor God. They honor Christ- not manmade names or denominations. We want to go back to the Bible and let God tell us about the church, how to become a member of it, and what one must do inside the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now let's direct our attention to another idea as it relates to going back to the Bible. We want to go back to the Bible as it relates to God's moral teaching. What does the Bible teach about morality?

Friend, the Bible clearly teaches that certain things that men say are acceptable to God are not acceptable. Notice in your Bible 1 Corinthians

6:9-10. The Bible says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators or idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetess, nor drunkard, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." Think about these things that Paul recognizes, the Holy Spirit recognizes, as immoral practices that will keep people from heaven if they live in those. He mentions adultery. He mentions idolatry, fornication, homosexuality, revilery, and extortion. All of these immoral practices are contrary to the will of God.

Drunkenness is a moral principle that God clearly speaks against. Should a Christian be a drunk? Should a Christian get drunk? Should a Christian participate in imbibing alcohol and social drinking? Listen to the words of Ephesians 5:18. "Do not be drunken with wine wherein is dissipation." The Bible clearly teaches a Christian ought not to participate in drunkenness. Proverbs 20:1, "Wine's a mocker. Strong drink is a brawler. Whoever is led astray by it is not wise." I don't want to participate in something that God says is immoral and unwise. Think about 1 Peter 5:8. "Be sober." There's a Greek word that means complete abstinence from anything that would inebriate or make one drunk.

Think about things of the flesh or the sexual nature, and that is such things like fornication and adultery and immoral, or unlicensed sexual actions- those are things that God has said are clearly contrary to His will. Think about Hebrews 13:4. Here is the specified place for relations between a man and a woman. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:4, 'marriage is honorable, the bed undefiled. But adulterers, God will judge.' God has created a specific place for the passions and desires that we've been given to be fulfilled- inside the bond of marriage.

I want to make sure as we think about these moral principles that we don't let these things creep into our lives-sometimes that relates even to things that the world doesn't think are that bad. Maybe the way we talk. A Christian needs to be careful the type of word that he says. We ought not to be people who speak like the world speaks. A Christian who curses, those things are diametrically opposed. Colossians 3:8 'Let no filthy communication come out of your mouth.' Ephesians 4:29, that same principle. Christians ought not to speak in such a way that is going to bring shame and reproach on the Lord's church.

In a day and age where so many are accepting of the alternative lifestyle of homosexuality-the Bible speaks very clearly on that subject. God does not at all condone that lifestyle. The Bible says in Romans 1:26-29, 'Men with men committing what is shameful, that's contrary to the will of God.' 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, concerning that lifestyle, the Bible says homosexuality and sodomy, those things are contrary to the will of God, and those who practice them and live in them will not inherit the kingdom of God.

We need to ask the question, in today and age when so many may be looking for alternative moral practices; we need to realize God has a set moral standard in the Bible. We need to go back to the Bible to understand that.

As we think about going back to the Bible, how Christians need to do that today as it relates to the home, God's most precious creation, God's design for the home is so wonderfully seen in Genesis chapter 2. God had created all the things that we now have in the world, and he'd made Adam. He'd made man. Everything was seen before Adam, and as he looked at all that, there wasn't a helper comparable found to him. God took a rib out of Adam, and he created woman. He brought her to Adam, and Adam said, "This is bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man." Genesis 2:24 says, "For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

The beauty, the wonder, the splendor of the home is seen in Genesis 2, and what a great help that was designed to be for man. Husband and wife could encourage one another, lift one another up, strive to live a life that honors God, worship God together, and ultimately bring a home and a family into the world where children are going to be raised in a way that honors God. Ephesians 6:4, 'Parents are to bring up their children. Fathers are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Friend, listen carefully, in a day and age where the home seems to be in shambles, where divorce is occurring more regularly all the time, where there are children whose parents are disinterested or whose parents are not involved in their lives- We need homes where God is put first. 'Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it,' the Psalmist said in Psalm 133:1.

We need homes where the husband and wife honor their God-given roles, Ephesians 5:21. We need homes where ultimately children are raised to know God, to prepare for eternity, and to live a life that honors him. Desperately today, we need to put God back in the home if it's going to be what God wants it to.

As we think about going back to the Bible, we also realize that Christians must go back to the Bible for how to live every day for Jesus Christ. Christian living is not about just coming to worship on Sunday or Wednesday, or reading your Bible a few times. All those things may be a part of it, but the real essence of Christianity is lived in the everyday life, every moment, and every second of how the Christian looks and conducts himself in this life. Jesus illustrated that's a daily endeavor. Do you remember Luke 9:23? Jesus said, 'If any man desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.' There's the essence of Christianity, denying self, taking up your cross, and living for Jesus every day. Romans 12:1-2, Paul said, 'I beg you by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living scarified, holy and acceptable to God which is your reasonable service, and do not be conformed of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is good and acceptable and perfect will of the Lord.' Our life is to be a living sacrifice, transformed from the old sinful, worldly lifestyle and renewed by the renewing of our mind to live for God in Christ each and every day. We should have the attitude of Paul in Galatians 2:20, "I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live. Christ lives in me. The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

Let's consider our life as a Christian. Let's consider the everyday aspects of it. When I leave the home, when I go to work, when I go to my job, when I'm involved in whatever it may be, recreation or social activities, and when I come back home- In every waking minute of my life, am I striving to do my best? I'm not saying we're all going to be perfect. That's not the idea. Am I striving to really do my best every day to live for Jesus Christ?

Then we want to illustrate this idea that is so essential for going back to the Bible. Friend, we've got to go back to the Bible and study it like we've never studied it before.

Again, I want you to remember or think about the words of Hosea 4:6. God said, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge."

In a day and age where the Bible is so readily available, where most homes have a Bible, where most people can have a Bible on their phone or their tablet or their computer, where you can get the Bible in so many different venues- I wonder how God feels about our study of the Bible today. Are we really studying the scriptures for ourselves? I'm not talking about somebody telling you what the Bible says or sitting and listening to somebody. I'm talking about are you getting your Bible and checking it for yourself? Are you studying the Bible regularly for yourself? John 8:32 Jesus said, 'you've got to know the truth.' You know it for yourself, and then that truth can make you free. You see, God's word needs to be studied regularly by every person. 'Study to show yourself approved unto God,' 2 Timothy 2:15. 'Search the scriptures daily to see if what you're being taught is true to the word of God,' Acts 17:11. Check what you hear and what people say about God and the Bible by the Bible. It's the perfect guide.

I have and you have the command from God prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Friend, we've got to go back to the Bible and study it like we never have before.

Then lastly, we need to go back to the Bible to learn about sin and its cure. The Bible teaches this. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23. If all have sinned, I have sinned and so have you. The wages of that sin is death, Romans 6:23. The Bible says the soul who sins shall surely die. Sin is something every person of an accountable mind has to deal with.

How do we do with that? Well, the good news is we deal with the sin problem only through Jesus Christ. 'You will call his name Jesus. He will save his people from their sins,' Matthew 1:19-21. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for my sins and for yours. Listen to these words. Peter said, "He himself, Jesus himself, bore our sins in his own body upon the tree that we, having died to sin, might live for righteousness by whose stripes we are healed."

Jesus paid the price for sin on Calvary. Have we obeyed the gospel? Have we gone back to the Bible to learn what we must do to be saved?

Here's what Jesus said. Jesus said 'unless you believe that I am he, you'll surely die in your sins,' John 8:24. Do you believe Jesus is the son of God? Are you willing to repent of sin? Jesus also said in Luke 13:3, 'unless you repent, you'll all likewise perish.' Will you acknowledge Jesus as the son of God? 'If you confess me before men, I'll also confess you before the Father,' Matthew 10:32-33. Would you do what Jesus said to be saved? Jesus said, 'he that believes and is baptized, will be saved.'

Friend are you a child of God? Have you obeyed the Gospel? Have you gone back to the Bible to make sure? Have we gone back to the Bible to make sure our lives are right with God?

If not, the encouragement today is go back to the Bible and make sure that you're right with God while we have time and opportunity.

Study Questions for: “**Great Bible Lessons: Lesson 5**”

1. According to Jeremiah 10:23, what does scripture tell us about man and his path?
2. Why were the people destroyed in Hosea 4:6?
3. According to Acts 17:11, why were the Bereans more fair minded?
4. Why should we study the Bible according to 2 Timothy 2:15?
5. According to Matthew 28:18, who has all authority?
6. How should we conduct ourselves and complete things according to Colossians 3:17?
7. According to 1 Peter 4:11, what are Christians only to speak of?
8. How should we worship according to John 4:24?
9. Why did Nadab and Abihu die in Leviticus chapter 10?
10. According to 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, who won’t inherit the Kingdom of God?