

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

GREAT BIBLE LESSONS

“Back to the Bible”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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

Let us go forward by going back to the Bible. This sentiment expresses our desire to go back to the Word of God in order to be what God wants us to be. In an age where, in the name of “progress,” things are being done that are not approved by God and that are not found in the Scriptures, we need to be a people who are concerned about going back to the Bible as our only guide, our only way of worship, and the only way a person can be saved. Welcome to our study today. I hope you will take Bible in hand as we search the Scriptures to see what God has to say on the matter of “back to the Bible.”

A passage that illustrates that need is found in Jeremiah 6:16, where Jeremiah expressed his desire, and, he hoped, the desire of the people, to return to God’s way. Jeremiah said, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.’ But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” Jeremiah called for the people to stand in the way and “seek the old paths” so they could return to those proper paths. But the people said, “No, we will not go back to the old way. We want to do it our way—a new way!” This is often the case today. Instead of being satisfied with simply accepting what the Bible says and accepting God’s teaching, many want to do newfangled things that make them feel good. But the question we need to ask is this: Are such things true to the will of God? There are several passages in Scripture that call us back to the Bible. In Jeremiah 10:23 Jeremiah wrote, “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” We cannot save ourselves. We cannot make our own way. In fact, every time we think we have it “all figured out,” we end up in a world of hurt. Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 state, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” Every time we fail to place our full attention on God’s Word, we find ourselves in a state of destruction. In Hosea 4:6 the Bible says, “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge.” In Acts 17:11 we read of how noble the people in Berea were because they “searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were true.” They went back to the Bible to see if what Paul was saying was true to the Word of God. Paul encouraged Timothy to be a man of the book when he said in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study to show yourself approved unto God.” I also appreciate the passage in 2 Kings 22:8. Josiah the king is ruling. Hilkiah the high priest and Shaphan the scribe find the Book of the Law in the house of God, and you can almost hear the joy in their voices when tell the king what they have found. From the king on down, the people changed their ways and returned to God’s Word. Nehemiah 8 is another important passage about returning to God’s Word. All the people stood up and listened to the Word of God being read from morning to evening, and all the people cried out with one voice, “Amen!” The people realized the need to go back to God’s Word.

But what does it really mean to “go back to the Bible”? In what specific areas do we need to go back to the Bible? First, we need to go back to the Bible for authority in matters of religion. There is only one book by which we will be judged. When that book is opened on

the Judgment Day, we will be judged by the words of God. In John 12:48 Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” It is God’s Word to which we will be held accountable. We will be held accountable regarding how we have lived our lives, and by how well we have obeyed the Word of God (which is to be our only authority in matters of religion). In Matthew 17 (and Mark 9) Peter, James, and John have gone up on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus. Christ is transfigured before them. Moses and Elijah appear, and Peter blurts out, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tabernacles—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” But the text tells us that a voice suddenly came down from Heaven saying, “This is My Son. Hear Him!” We today need to be sure that Jesus and the Word of God are our sole authorities. We can “go forward” by “going back” to the Bible for our authority. In Colossians 3:17 Paul wrote, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” What does it mean when it says, “in the name of”? If a policeman says, “Stop in the name of the law!,” we understand his statement to mean that it is the authority of the law (as vested in the policeman) that permits him to command us to stop. When we do all things “in the name of” (by the authority of) Jesus, we are doing those things with Christ’s stamp of approval. Think about Jesus’ words in Matthew 28:18 where He said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” The only one who has authority in matters of religion today is Jesus Christ. Anyone who tells you that he has some kind of authority from God is in direct opposition to what Jesus said. In 1 Corinthians 4:6 Paul said that the Christians in Corinth needed to learn “not to go beyond what is written.” If a single statement could do away with so much false doctrine, error, and confusion, it would be Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 4:6. Think about how many problems we could remedy if we simply said, “We will not go beyond what the Scriptures say.” That statement needs to be true of us, because it expresses a willingness to accept the authority of Scripture as found in Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18-19. We are not to add to or take away from the Word of God. We are to do only what we find within God’s Word. This is why Christians, and especially ministers of the Gospel, are told to speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine. We are told in 2 Timothy 4:2 that we are to preach God’s Word and it only. Peter said in 1 Peter 4:11, “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.” Thus, the question for us is the same question found in Jeremiah 37:17 “Is there any word from the Lord?” (or, “What do the Scriptures say?,” Romans 4:3). Thus, let us go forward by going back to the Bible for our authority in all religious matters.

Second, we also need to go back to the Bible for instructions about our worship. There are so many ideas today concerning worship that simply are not found in Scripture. Thus, let’s go back to the Bible to see what God wants us to do concerning worship. An important passage regarding worship is John 4:24 where Jesus said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” We must have our heart, soul, mind, strength, emotions, zeal, and love for God involved in worship. But the governor of all those things must be a determination to worship God “in spirit and in truth.” There are people in the Bible who tried to do things differently than God had commanded. Leviticus 10:1-2 provides a prime example. Nadab and Abihu will forever be remembered for making minor changes in the law of God—and for having died as a result. The two young priests offered a strange (unauthorized) fire to the Lord “which He had not commanded them.” Fire then came down from Heaven and consumed them. To them, their action no doubt seemed like “a small thing.” If they got the incense on the sacrifice lit, what did it matter where they got the fire? To God, however, it **did** matter, because He evidently had told them exactly how He wanted it done. Today, therefore, we need to worship God in the beauty of holiness. We are to fall down before Him and pay honor to Him because He is the true God.

In Matthew 4, Satan tried to tempt Jesus to worship him. He brought him up to the pinnacle of the temple and offered to give Him all he could see if He would simply worship Satan. Jesus said in Matthew 4:10, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" God is the only One Who is worthy of our worship, and we must worship Him in a way that is acceptable. Do you understand that there is an acceptable, and an unacceptable, way to worship God? Turn your attention to Hebrews 12:28 to see what the Scriptures say about acceptable worship. "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." This passage teaches us that there is a reverent, acceptable way to worship God, and that there is a way that is not acceptable. The only acceptable way to worship God is to worship Him exactly as He has commanded within the pages of the Bible. If what we are doing is not found in the Scriptures, then we have not gone back to the Bible regarding matters of worship. We need to be very careful about how we worship God. For example, today the New Testament is our only guide in worship. Ephesians 2:14 and Colossians 2:14 both teach that the Old Law was nailed to the cross. Today we are under the new covenant of Christ (Heb. 9:15-17). Thus, since we must obey the New Testament when it comes to worship, we must ask ourselves where people get authority for the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. I understand that under the Old Law people used such instruments. But we are not living under the Old Law. If we are not to go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6), if we are to do everything "in the name of" (by the authority of) Christ, where in the pages of the New Testament do we find any authority for the church on Earth to worship using instruments of music? We cannot find such authority. Ephesians 5:19 says that we are to "speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." This may seem like a small thing to many people, but the source of the fire for the altar probably seemed like a small thing to Nadab and Abihu—yet it wasn't!

Third, we need to go back to the Bible to see what God has to say about the church. There are so many religious groups and/or denominations in the world today. Is that really the will of God? Is that what God wants for the church today—division? Of course not! God never intended for there to be religious division among Christians. In John 17:20-21 Jesus said, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." In 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 we find a clear denunciation of religious division. Some were saying, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Apollos." Paul asked, "Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Division is not something God wants. But "going back to the Bible" in regard to the church means that we are going to have to look to God's Word to see what God has said about the church. Let's do exactly that. Look in Matthew 16. Jesus had asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" His disciples responded by saying that some people thought Jesus was John the Baptist, Jeremiah, or Elijah. Jesus then asked Peter, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus then said, "I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock [Peter's statement that Christ is God's Son] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (vs. 18). From this passage, there are several things that are worthy of notice. For example, Jesus said that He would build **His** church. He did not say that He would build John Calvin's church, or that He would build Martin Luther's church, or that He would build John Wesley's church. Jesus said, "I will build **My** church." The church is His; He owns it. We understand this principle in everyday life. If you work for many years to pay off the note on a house, you are not going to let someone else put their name on the deed, are you? If someone asks you, "Whose house is this,"

you will say, "This is my home." Why? You paid the price for it. In Acts 20:27-28 the Bible tells us that Jesus purchased the church with His own blood. The church belongs to Jesus. Let's give it the honor it deserves by allowing it to wear His name. Such names as "church of Christ" and "church of God" are names that are found in the Bible (Rom. 16:16; 2 Cor. 1:3).

Another principle that we find in Matthew 16:18 is that the church of which we read in the Scriptures is singular in nature. There is not a multitude of churches. Jesus said, "Upon this **rock** I will build My **church**." Both of those are singular. It may be foreign to the minds of many people, but God never intended for there to be more than one church. How do we know that? In Ephesians 1:22-23 we are told that Jesus is the Head of the church, which is His body. "The church" and "the body" are therefore synonyms. In Ephesians 4:4 we learn that there is "one body, one Lord, one faith...." What is "the body"? If the body is the church, and if there is only one body, then how many churches are there? There is only one church—which is all that God ever intended to establish. He never intended for denominationalism to exist. He never intended for men to call churches after themselves. His Son died to buy the church. Christ is the Owner of it, so we should give Him the glory by allowing the church to wear His name. We can understand this by observing that the church has no earthly headquarters. The headquarters of Christ's church is found in Heaven (Ps. 119:89—"Forever O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven"). The church has no earthly head, since Christ is the Head of the church. If the head of the church of which you are a member resides in Rome, Salt Lake City, Utah, or Springfield, Missouri, then that is the wrong place. Jesus is the Head of the church, and He currently resides at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3-4). So we need to go back to the Bible to understand about the church that Jesus built, and about its importance in this life.

Fourth, we also need to go back to the Bible for morality. What a wicked world it is in which we live today! Oftentimes, it seems to be reminiscent of the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, when the people were living immorality, having immoral relations, and doing all kinds of ungodliness and immorality. We need to go back to the Bible to save our country and to bring us back to where we ought to be morally. Christians ought to be the most-moral people in the world. In 1 Peter 2:11 we learn that we are to "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul." Ephesians 5:18 tells us not to be drunken with wine. We are not to give in to immoral living or actions. In Proverbs 20:1 we read, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." What does the Bible say about the morality of alcohol use? Christians ought not to do such a thing. Nor should Christians have anything to do with ungodly relationships. In Hebrews 13:4 we read, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." We live in a world where it is commonplace for men and women to live together. But God said that such people are "whoremongers and adulterers," and that they will stand before the bar of God on the Day of Judgment and give an account of their actions. We also live in a world where homosexuality is acceptable. But the Bible says in Roman 1:26-29 that such is wicked, unnatural, and ungodly. We also are told in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:12-13 that is an "abomination before God." Under the Old Law, people were put to death for it. We therefore need to understand that the Bible has much to say about morality. Probably one of the most familiar passages is 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, where we are told how a Christian must live once he has come out of an immoral world. Paul wrote,

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

In that context we learn that people who live those lifestyles will not make it to Heaven. So, we need to go back to the Bible to improve the moral standards of the world in which we live.

Fifth, we also need to go back to the Bible for teaching about the home. There is so much taught in the Scriptures about the home, which started in Genesis 2 with Adam and Eve. After Adam was created, he did not find a helper suitable for him. But the Scriptures then teach us that after all the animals had been created, God put Adam into a sleep, took a rib from his side, and formed Eve. That, then, is when the first home began. Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2:23). Then, Adam had conjugal relations with Eve, and children ensued—just as God intended for it to be. Today, the family is suffering. There are so many broken homes, and so many children who have multiple parents because a mother or father has remarried so many times. There are so many children who really do not know what true love is all about. How sad that is! If we would just go back to the Bible, we could solve these problems. God intended the home to be one man plus one woman for life. In Genesis 2:24 we read, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." The home is the place that God designed where a man and his wife are to rear children. It is a place where people help one another get to Heaven. God made Eve for Adam to be a "helper" for him. A helper for what? She was supposed to help him get to Heaven! That is what marriage and the home are all about. Marriage is intended to help the husband and wife grow spiritually and get to Heaven. The intention of parents rearing children is that those children will grow up in a spiritual environment and come to know the Lord so that they, too, can make it to Heaven. Oh, how more parents and children need to have the sentiment of Ephesians 6:1-4 in their lives.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'That it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.' And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

In that passage we find the divinely ordained responsibility of parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord so that they will know Who God is. More husbands and wives could do so much better in their marriage relationship if they would only put the principles to work that are found in Ephesians 5. Husband should love their wives as themselves. Wives should be submissive to their husbands. And both should desire to do this in order to obey the Lord and live according to His will. Thus, let us go back to the Bible to help the home, which is struggling so much in our society today.

Sixth, we need to back to the Bible to learn about sin and its destructive nature on mankind. Sin has plagued people since the Garden of Eden, and is something that all people must face. Romans 3:10 says, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Sin provides the hardest life you can imagine, as Proverbs 13:15 points out when it says that "the way of the transgressor is hard." We need to learn to sin that has never benefited humankind spiritually in any way at all. Yes, we all face it, as Romans 3:23 says. Sin has separated even the most righteous of us from God. In Isaiah 59:1-2 we read, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear." Romans 6:23 tells us that "the wages of sin is death." In Ezekiel 18:4 the prophet said, "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die." We need to go back to the Bible to see what it has to say about the horrible and destructive nature of sin. We need to be warned that sin will cost man his eternal reward. If we live a life of sin, that is not pleasing to God.

Seventh, we need to go back to the Bible concerning the matter of salvation. Yes, sin brings sad results. But if we go back to the Bible, we can find what God has to say about salvation from sin. What a wonderful subject salvation is within the Scriptures. It is the golden thread that runs throughout the whole Bible as God works to bring man to salvation in Jesus Christ. The greatest question that has ever been asked deals with salvation. In Acts 16 Paul and Silas are in Philippi, where they have spoken to and converted Lydia (a seller of purple) and her family. Now, however, they are in prison. God opens the prison doors. As the jailer sees what is happening, he starts to take his own life, but is deterred by Paul. The man then asks, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (vs. 30). From Genesis through Revelation there is not a more-important question that a person could ask. It shows that a person realizes that he is lost. Once a person realizes he is lost, he must go to the correct source to learn about salvation. Jesus is the only way a man can be saved. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Peter and John said in Acts 4:12, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Christ is the only avenue for salvation.

If you have never gone back to the Bible to inquire about salvation, here is what God says a person must do to be saved. First, a person must be willing to believe that Jesus is God's Son. In John 3:16 we are told, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." A person must believe in Christ, but belief is not all that a person has to do to be saved. A person also must repent of his ungodly ways. In Acts 17:30 we are told, "These times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." Then, a person also must confess Christ's name. Jesus said in Matthew 10:32-33, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." And, a person must be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins. In 1 Peter 3:21 we read that "baptism does also now save us." Baptism does not "earn" us our salvation. Rather, it is something we do because God told us to do it. Plus, it is the point at which a person contacts the soul-saving blood of Jesus. In Acts 22 Saul had been told to go into Damascus, and there he would be told what he needed to do. In Acts 22:16 we read, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Have you obeyed the Gospel? Have you gone back to the Bible for salvation? If not, you can do so right now. You can become a New Testament Christian by doing the things we have discussed here. It is my fervent prayer that you will have the attitude of King Josiah, Hilkiah the high priest, and Shaphan the scribe who, upon finding the Book of the Law of the Lord, amended their ways and went back to God's Word.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST is brought to you by loving, caring members of the church of Christ. The McLish Avenue church of Christ in Ardmore, Oklahoma, oversees this evangelistic effort. For a free CD or DVD of today's broadcast, please write to:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

**607 McLish Ave.
Ardmore, OK 73401**

You may call **580-223-3289**. Please visit us on the web at www.thegospelofchrist.com. We encourage you to attend the church of Christ, where "the Bible is loved and the Gospel is preached."

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “BACK TO THE BIBLE”

1. In Jeremiah 6:16, what did Jeremiah urge God’s people to do?
2. What important piece of information does Jeremiah 10:23 contain?
3. What does Proverbs 14:12 say about man’s attitude toward something being “right.”
4. Why, according to Hosea 4:6, were God’s people being destroyed?
5. In 2 Timothy 2:15, what did Paul urge Timothy to do?
6. According to Matthew 28:18, where is “all authority” to be found?
7. What, according to John 12:48, will one day judge us?
8. What does Colossians 3:17 command us to do?
9. What does 1 Corinthians 4:6 command us **not** to do?
10. What important question did King Zedekiah ask in Jeremiah 37:17?
11. What do Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18-19 forbid us from doing?
12. According to 1 Peter 4:11, when we speak, how are we to speak?
13. In Leviticus 10:1-2 we read about Nadab and Abihu. What did the two priests do, and what was the end result of their actions?
14. What important question is asked in Romans 4:3?
15. According to John 4:24, how are we to worship God?
16. According to Hebrews 12:28, how are we to worship God?
17. According to Matthew 16:18, how many churches did Jesus Christ establish?
18. Who, according to Ephesians 1:22-23, is the head of the church?
19. Ephesians 4:4 teaches that there is one body. According to Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18, what is “the body”?
20. According to Acts 20:28, Christ purchased something. What was it?
21. According to Acts 20:28, what price did Christ pay for His purchase?
22. What does Proverbs 13:15 tell us about a life of sin?
23. What does Romans 6:23 tell us about sin?