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"A JEWISH GOSPEL"

Lesson 5 ■ For week ending January 29, 2022

Someone once said that the Bible is a Jewish Book from Genesis to maps! How true this statement is, for everything that we know about God today was brought to us by the Jewish people. It is not inconceivable, then, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ could be anything but a Jewish Gospel, one with deep roots in the Judaic faith that Jesus Christ our Lord practiced.

KEY TEXT: (Jesus speaking) "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

1. While many Christians have probably never thought about it, Jesus was a Jew.

- » Jesus was born to Hebrew parents of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14).
- » Discuss the Jewishness of Jesus Christ in His humanity.
- » Throughout His life, Jesus was faithful to the Jewish religion which God had given to His people.
- » Consider the fact that one of the last things Jesus did was to observe the Passover as all Jews are commanded to do (Luke 22:7-16).
- » What other things did Jesus do in obedience to the system of religion that was revealed in the Old Testament?

2. Since God never changes, we must declare that if Biblical Judaism were ever His system of praise, worship, and service, it must remain such in some form even today.

- » Read Ecclesiastes 3:14-15 and Malachi 3:6.
- » Yahweh is a God of reformation, and we find this principle being applied by Him to His religion, Judaism.
- » Consider the impact of the ministry of Jesus as a reformer of the Jewish faith (Hebrews 9:10).

3. We have ample evidence that the Early Church continued to practice the reformed Judaic faith.

- » Today we call it: NEW TESTAMENT JUDAISM. It is the Judaism that Jesus reformed and kept.
- » Expand upon the importance of the Passover observance in the New Testament Church (I Corinthians 5:7,8; 11:23-27).
- » Discuss how Jesus reformed the Sabbath as well. First, He established that He is Lord of the Sabbath in Matthew 12:1-8.
- » Jesus also established a new precedent in Matthew 10:13. According to Jesus, what were they permitted to do on the Sabbath?

4. How did Jesus change the Jewish faith of the Old Testament?

- » He changed it from a means of obtaining righteousness through the works of the flesh to a system of worship to God, praising Him for the fulfillment of the sacrificial law in the blood of Christ.
- » Read and discuss Hebrews 9:14,15.
- » What was the purpose of the Old Testament Law? First, it identified sin (Romans 3:20). Second, it was the system that was established until the time of Jesus came (Romans 8:1-4; 10:4; Galatians 3:23-25).

5. Without the Old Testament we cannot fully understand the New Testament.

» The Gospel was brought forth in a Jewish matrix, and it is most clearly proclaimed when its inherent Jewishness is recognized (Acts 24:14).

"YAHWEH - THE ETERNAL GOD"

Lesson 6 ■ For week ending February 5, 2022

In modern times, names and their meanings do not have nearly the importance that they did in the ancient times. In Bible days, names were chosen because of the character and qualities of the person who bore the names. This is particularly true of the personal name that the God of the Bible chose as a means of revealing Himself to man, the name Yahweh.

KEY TEXT: "And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"....This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations" (Exodus 3:14,15 partial quote).

1. The Hebrew name which God chose as His personal name is Yahweh.

- » Since there are no vowels in the original Hebrew language, the name is literally, YWYH.
- » The four letters are called the tetragrammaton.
- yahweh has been called the Sacred Name because it is the name which God chose to reveal Himself to His people.
- » In Exodus 6:3, Jehovah is literally Yahweh.

2. Since names reveal the qualities of the bearer, what does YAHWEH mean?

- » Yahweh is literally translated, "I am because I am."
- » This is a statement that can be made of only one being in the universe–and that is Yahweh God.
- » Only He is the source of His own being (Colossians 1:16,17).
- » Discuss the fact that He literally causes Himself to be (Isaiah 40:28).

3. Yahweh also means the Eternal One.

- » Consider this ancient application of truth about God which Abraham applied to Him in Genesis 21:33.
- » Since God is the Eternal One, He is also immutable (I Timothy 1:17).
- » IMMUTABLE (adjective) unchanging over time or unable to be changed.
- » Analyze the interconnection between His eternal nature and His immutability (Malachi 3:6; Psalm 90:2).
- » Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

4. "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain..." (Exodus 20:7a).

- » Because of the fear of violating the third commandment, the Jewish scholars substituted Adonai (LORD) for Yahweh in their reading of the Torah.
- » This is why "the LORD" appears in the Old Testament instead of Yahweh.
- » Consider the parallel between Yahweh (I Am that I Am), and Yahshua (Jesus, I Am Savior) as you read Revelation 1:8; 4:8; and Hebrews 13:8.
- » Analyze the value of understanding the proper and personal name of God as you read Revelation 3:12. What is the name of "my God"?
- » Yahweh is the "forever" name of God, the one which He chose for His personal memorial.
- » Only He causes Himself to exist, and only He is the Eternal One, without beginning or ending.
- » Only He can rightly be called God (Deuteronomy 4:35), and only He deserves our worship and adoration.

"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY-Part 1"

Lesson 7 ■ For week ending February 12, 2022

The 7th Day Sabbath (Saturday) is the day that has always been set apart by the Creator to be remembered by His creation. As a weekly memorial it reminds us that we have life solely because Yahweh created us and our world, that we have spiritual life and rest only through Messiah Jesus, and that we will have eternal rest with Him beginning with the coming Sabbatical Millennium.

KEY TEXT: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God..." (Exodus 20:8-10a).

1. Some have mistakenly thought that the Sabbath is a Jewish Day.

- » Read Genesis 2:1-3. It was Yahweh God that established the 7th Day Sabbath.
- » What did God say about the Sabbath? First, God *blessed* the Sabbath. Second, God *sanctified* (set apart) the Sabbath. And third, God *rested* on the Sabbath.
- » So, the Sabbath is a day that is blessed by God, set apart from the rest of the week, and it is a day ordained by God to rest.
- » While many people today want to legalize the Sabbath with restrictions and rules, God intended it to be a "delight" to His people (Isaiah 58:13,14).
- » In Leviticus 23:1-3, God instructs His people to have a "convocation" on the Sabbath. The word convocation simply means a public meeting. We would call it having church.
- » While you can have *church* on any day, God expressly commands us to have church on the 7th Day Sabbath (Saturday).

2. Discuss the commandment of Exodus 20:8-11.

- » Notice that the commandment starts with the word "remember." Why? Because the Sabbath was established at Creation by Yahweh God.
- » The fact is this: It was God that established the 7th Day Sabbath (Saturday).
- » Many today have dismissed the 7th Day Sabbath altogether. This was never God's intention.
- » Do we have the right to dismiss any of the 10 Commandments? If not, are we permitted to dismiss the 4th commandment regarding God's Sabbath? Read Malachi 3:6.

3. Why do the majority of modern-day believers not observe the 7th Day Sabbath (Saturday)?

- » It's because the observance of the Sabbath was outlawed after the fall of the Early Church.
- » The Apostle Paul talked about the attack that would come upon the Early Church in Acts 20:29,30.
- » So, why do believers today go to church twice a day on Sunday–the first day of the week? Because they were commanded to do so by the Roman Catholic Church.
- In 321 AD, the Roman Emperor Constantine commanded that people rest on Sunday (the Day of the Sun). In 363 AD, the Council of Laodicea officially condemned the "Jewish" Sabbath and commanded that Sunday be the day of rest, and that people honor "the Lord's Day." In 375 AD, it was commanded that people assemble twice on "the Lord's Day." (See MANUAL, V,B,3)

4. Did the Early Church stop observing the 7th Day Sabbath (Saturday) and start worshiping on Sunday the 1st Day of the week?

» The answer is no. Next week we will examine the scriptures used to promote this false doctrine.

"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY-Part 2"

Lesson 8 ■ For week ending February 19, 2022

Last week we discussed the 7th Day Sabbath. We learned that the Sabbath was established by Yahweh God–not the Jews of the Old Testament. We learned that God established 3 things about His Sabbath: 1) He said it was a *blessed* day. 2) He said it was a *sanctified* (set apart) day. And, 3) He said we should *rest* on the 7th Day. This week we will continue to examine why the modern-day Church abandoned the Sabbath and chose the first day of the week to worship on.

KEY TEXT: "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord..." (Romans 14:5,6a)

- Last we discussed how that the Roman Catholic Church made laws and decrees that outlawed the observance of the 7th Day Sabbath (Saturday) and commanded that people worship on the 1st Day of the week (Sunday).
 - » All of those decrees were enacted nearly 1700 years ago. Why does the modern-day church still recognize Sunday as opposed to Saturday as the day of worship?
 - » There are a couple of Scriptures in the New Testament that are used to claim that it was the practice of the Early Church to meet on Sunday. They state that the church made this switch to honor the day that Jesus arose from the grave.
 - » This false conclusion is derived from Acts 20:7,8.
 - » The Apostle Paul is well known for his many journeys to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ—especially to the Gentile people surrounding Israel. The passage in Acts 20:7,8 is nothing more than a special service that was held to accommodate Paul's arrival to Troas. Verses 1-6 of the same chapter tell of Paul's travels to Macedonia, Greece and so on.
- 2. Read Colossians 2:16,17. These Scriptures are used to say that we can choose to worship on any day and that no one is permitted to judge us regarding the matter.
 - » If you read the entire 2nd chapter, you will note that Paul is writing this letter to address some erroneous teachings that had infiltrated the church at Colosse.
 - » Notice in verses 6 and 7, Paul instructs them to walk in the truths of Jesus Christ. In verse 8, Paul gives them a warning: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."
 - » Paul was talking about gnosticism (the false belief that secret esoteric—which means only understood by a few–knowledge was the source for salvation) and ascetism (practicing strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline). (See MANUAL, V,B,3 for more details.)
 - » In Colossians 2:20-23, Paul expands on these false teachings which require strict fasting, not eating meat (which is where the doctrine of "Lent" comes from), and self-punishment (self-flogging, etc).
 - » In Colossians 2:16,17, Paul is addressing the issue of whether or they should be *feasting* or *fasting*.
- 3. Read Romans 14:1-6. These Scriptures are used to say we are not permitted to judge or to esteem one day above another.
 - » Read Romans 14:2. Paul is establishing the subject he is about to discuss: Eating! A subject that is dear to all of our hearts...LOL!
 - » Paul is again addressing the false religion of gnosticism and ascetism (See MANUAL, V,B,3).
 - » Paul is not addressing the issue of the Sabbath. Instead, he is addressing the issue of feasting or fasting (self-denial) during festivals.
 - » Paul concludes the matter in Romans 14:20a, "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food..."

"THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES"

Lesson 9 ■ For week ending February 26, 2022

The "Valley of Dry Bones" is a representation of how the whole house of Israel had lost hope when they were carried away captive into Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament. These dry bones were raised to life in two stages: First, a *physical restoration*, and second, a *spiritual restoration*. When our hope has diminished, God knows that we look for a physical manifestation of hope first, and then life is breathed into our spirits when that which we have hoped for is renewed. However, faded hope is not the only thing that can dry up our bones.

KEY TEXT: "Then He said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; we are completely cut off" (Ezekiel 37:11).

1. In Ezekiel 37:1-2, the prophet was carried away in a vision to a valley full of very dry bones.

- » The children of Israel had a history of falling into the pagan practices of the neighboring heathen nations.
- » Even King Solomon, the wisest man ever to live, could not escape these practices (Nehemiah 13:26).
- » Physically, our bones become dry and brittle when the sinews and marrow is diseased.
- » Proverbs 3:7-8 offers a spiritual way to bring health back to the spirit—even if our natural body is suffering.
- » According to verse 7, what is it that brings moisture back to the bones?

2. The reality of the dry bones coming to life again showed itself later on in Ezekiel 37:22.

- » God commanded Ezekiel to take two sticks named Ephraim (representing Gentiles) and Judah (representing Jews) and bring them together into one nation, under one King (Jesus).
- » So, how did the bones (Israel) become so dry? God reveals what caused the bones to become dry in the first place in Ezekiel 37:23 and Psalm 38:3.

3. Rarely–if ever–do we think of our bones being affected by our actions or behaviors.

- » The Bible is filled with Scriptures that instruct us otherwise.
- » Read Proverbs 14:30 and Matthew 23:27.
- » Mercifully, we have a promise of restoration through Jesus Christ (Romans 8:11).
- » Jesus is the hope that anchors our very soul (Hebrews 6:19).

4. Ezekiel prophesied to the dry bones that God would restore the flesh and sinews upon them and it happened in Ezekiel 37:7.

- » Nevertheless, they were still dead according to verse 8.
- » Consider the hypocritical Pharisees in Jesus' day: they looked good on the outside, but they were still dead in the inside. A physical restoration is literally only half of the story, we must inquire of the Lord to resuscitate us with His Holy Spirit.
- » Romans 8:9-11, "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."
- » God will do His work in us but He requires that we do our part as well.

"WALKING IN THE SPIRIT"

Lesson 10 ■ For week ending March 5, 2022

The life of a believer is a journey! As we travel through this life it is certain that we will face many challenges. This is the reason we need to let the Holy Spirit have control of our lives. He will lead and guide us in the way of truth! It is one thing to enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit in a great church service, but it is another thing entirely to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. Ask yourself today: "Am I walking in the Spirit?"

KEY TEXT: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25).

1. The idea of walking in the Spirit is not something mystical.

- » It is not walking around in some kind of spiritual haze with your head in the clouds.
- Walking in the Spirit has more to do with choosing daily to live in obedience to the Word of God.
- » Read and discuss Joshua 24:15, "And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
- » In Galatians 5:16-26, the Apostle Paul lays out for us in very definitive terms what it truly means to walk in the Spirit.
- » The truth is that our flesh needs to be washed and purified by the Word of God.
- » Read Ephesians 5:26,27 and I Peter 1:21-25.

2. One of the key elements that Paul brings to light in his dissertation, is that the flesh has to be crucified in order for us to successfully walk in the Spirit.

- » Walking in the Spirit begins with Jesus!
- » We must choose to follow Jesus in every part of our lives rather than our old carnal nature.
- » Our flesh has an inherent sinful nature. In other words, left alone, our flesh will choose sin.
- » That's what Paul was saying in Romans 7:18,19.
- » As you read Romans 8:1-9, expand upon why it is necessary to crucify the flesh on a daily basis.
- » Paul makes a great summary of how to crucify your flesh in Romans 6:12-14.
- » The key is stated in verse 14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you!"

3. Walking in the Spirit should not be characterized by struggle but rather by surrender.

- » In other words, someone who has given their life to Jesus Christ will have within them a new heart that wants to live in obedience to the ways of God.
- » Confirm this from the following scriptures: Ezekiel 36:26,27 and Romans 6:1-7.

4. The decisions that we make each day are very important. Those choices can either bring blessings or curses upon our lives (Deuteronomy 30:19,20).

- » The truth is that we decide every day–by the way we communicate, respond, and/or interact with one another–whether to walk in our flesh (Galatians 5:16-21) or to operate and walk in the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26).
- » Discuss the importance of governing our tongue and controlling our reaction to life's everyday interactions (James 3:2-12; Proverbs 14:29; 18:21; 25:11).
- » Remember, self-control is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- » When we walk in the Spirit, we will reap the blessings of God (Galatians 6:7-10)!

"LET THE WORLD SEE JESUS"

Lesson 11 ■ For week ending March 12, 2022

The world in which we live is daily growing darker just as prophecy declares that it would; however, we as believers should not be in despair. When darkness is at its darkest, the light of Jesus can shine through us at its brightest! There must be a sense of urgency to lift up Jesus to those who are lost in the darkness of sin. Jesus is the only Light of Life! He is the hope of salvation!

KEY TEXT: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:1,2).

1. Isaiah declared that the *glory of the Lord* would be seen upon the people of God during a time of great darkness.

- » The glory that is seen upon God's people is none other than the glory of Jesus Christ (John 1:14)!
- » Consider the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1,2 and its fulfillment in Matthew 4:13-17.
- » One of the things that darkness brings upon people is a sense of hopelessness. People feel vulnerable when it is dark and they cannot see daylight.
- » Discuss the hopelessness that the COVID pandemic has brought upon this world.
- » Every time we think we have a handle on this virus, it mutates and another round of infections and hospitalizations occur.
- » Instead of participating in the darkness and hopelessness, our job as believers is to allow God's peace and glory to arise in our lives (re-read Isaiah 60:1,2).
- » As believers, are we hopeless? Read I Peter 3:15.

2. When the glory of the Lord arises upon your life—or, in other words, when you come to a true revelation of Jesus Christ—your very life will be transformed causing you to reflect the light that He has brought to you.

- » The Apostle Paul made this very clear in II Corinthians 4:1-6.
- » Expand upon his statement "..we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord."
- » All of our hope can be found in Jesus Christ alone.
- » Read and discuss I Peter 1:3-6. As believers, are we exempt from trials and tribulations?

3. The calling of the church is to point this world to Jesus (I Peter 2:9; Ephesians 3:9).

- » Jesus—as the Light of the World—bestowed upon His Church the responsibility to continue shining His Light in the world (Matthew 5:14-16).
- » Ask yourself this question: "If someone is watching my life and following me, would I lead them to Jesus?"
- » Instead of allowing our circumstances to bog us down, what should we as believers do (II Corinthians 4:16-18)?

4. As Jesus prepared His disciples for His departure from this world, He prayed a prayer not only for them, but for all who would come to believe in Him.

- » Read part of this prayer (John 17:14-21).
- » Discuss the ongoing mission of the Church to stand as a visible witness of Jesus Christ to this world (Acts 2:32).

"GOD HEARS MY PRAYERS"

Lesson 12 ■ For week ending March 19, 2022

It is an awesome thing to witness the manifestation of God's glory. When God moves, there is salvation and healing, and the gifts of the Spirit operate freely in the Church. The way to see more of this manifestation of God's power is to understand the ministry of prayer. It is in the secret place of prayer that God goes to work on behalf of those who put their trust in Him.

KEY TEXT: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust" (Psalms 91:1,2).

1. Jesus taught some very important principles on how to be effective in ministry. He gave warning to those who do all they do just to be seen of men.

- » Discuss the power that comes from praying to the Father in secret as you read Matthew 6:5,6.
- MATTHEW 6:5-6, "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."
- » A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian.
- » Did Jesus practice this principle in His own life (Mark 6:45,46)?

2. One of the traps that we fall into as believers is to be so busy that we do not take the time to pray. If we are too busy to pray—then we are too busy!

- » Jesus warned His Disciples about this very thing before the Last Passover (Luke 21:34-36).
- » Satan's goal is to keep you distracted and defeated—and he will use whatever means he can to do it. Whether it be your job, your health, your family, your hobbies—don't allow anything to keep you from communicating with God on a daily basis.
- » It is in the place of prayer that we receive and release the power of God into every area of our lives and ministries.
- » What can we accomplish through prayer (Mark 11:22-24; John 14:11-14)?

3. Prayer should be the number one priority in all that we do.

- » This is something that the Apostles had to recognize as the church began to grow and the demands of ministry became greater (Acts 6:1-4).
- » Prayer was not something that could be put off until all the work was done.
- » Prayer-and the ministry of God's Word-are the work!
- » Why was prayer so important to the Apostles (Psalms 143:8; John 16:12,13; Matthew 10:27)?

4. Daniel was a man that was known for his faithfulness to God in prayer. In fact, this was the only thing the governors could find to use against him (Daniel 6:5-9).

- » Daniel did not pray just to be in defiance of this decree, he prayed in faithfulness to God just as he had always done before (Daniel 6:10).
- » Daniel dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, and God moved on his behalf in the time of trouble (Daniel 6:16,19-23).
- » When we seek God in secret, He will reward us openly!

"WE SERVE A GOD OF RESTORATION"

Lesson 13 ■ For week ending March 26, 2022

Throughout the Scriptures, we find that God has a plan to bring about a restoration of all things that have been lost as a result of the devastating effect of sin on mankind and the world. Although we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, He always stands willing and ready to restore us. God's hand of mercy is extended to all who will turn from their sinful ways and seek to be restored.

KEY TEXT: "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you" (Joel 2:25).

Satan would like nothing more than for us to believe that because of the sin and failures of our past, we can never be restored to a right relationship with God.

- » The truth is that Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).
- » Consider the promise God made to His people in Joel 2:25-27.
- » Can God restore a life that has been devastated by years of sin? Notice what He said would happen in verses 28 and 29.
- » You may think that your faults and failures have disqualified you from having a successful relationship with God or even to be used by God.
- » If you have failed and are broken, then you are the one that Jesus came for (Isaiah 61:1-3).
- » In fact, if you have been a vile sinner, then Jesus came specifically for you (Luke 5:31,32).

2. King David was a man who experienced first-hand what it was like to fall and then be restored by the power of God.

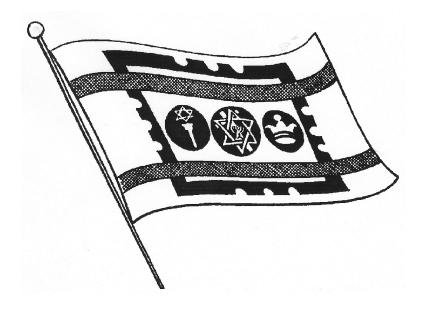
- » As you read Psalms 51:1-4, notice that the first thing David did in the process of restoration was to acknowledge his sin and repent.
- » Can we be restored to God without first turning from our sinful ways?
- » David *knew* and *acknowledged* that the restoration he needed in his life could only be found in God (Psalms 51:10-12; 23:3).

3. Perhaps the greatest example of God's restoration power is the story of the Prodical Son found in Luke 15:11-24.

- » After the son had hit rock bottom and "came to himself," what was his attitude?
- » Discuss the importance of humility when seeking to be restored.
- » The father in this story is a vivid picture of the way in which our Heavenly Father watches and waits for His children to return home so that He can restore them to the fellowship with joy (Luke 15:10).
- » Notice that the Father did not scold the son, nor did He beat him. In fact, the Father threw a party to celebrate the son's return.
- » God is waiting for you to return to Him today. Not to punish you, but to celebrate your restoration.
- » What are you waiting for?

4. Restoration with the Father can only come through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ the Son (John 14:6; Romans 5:1,2).

- » Jesus suffered, died, and resurrected so that we might be able to experience a total restoration and healing in our lives both naturally and spiritually.
- » Discuss this as you read Isaiah 53:4-6 and Luke 5:30-32.



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