

# BIBLE LESSONS

Compiled by  
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Correlated to *The Infinite Way* and  
*Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture*  
By Joel S. Goldsmith

Lesson 4: The Nature of Error

## *Introduction to the Bible Lessons*

At Joel Goldsmith's 1962 Princess Kaiulani class in Hawaii, Joel invited Virginia Stephenson to give daily lectures on the Bible. To his delight, the whole class attended the lectures, and there was a great receptivity to them. As a result of these Bible lectures, Joel asked Virginia to make up a Bible study program that revealed the timeless, universal spiritual principles which are the basis of the Infinite Way. Joel wanted every student to be familiar with the spiritual thread of Oneness that runs through the Old Testament and the New Testament. Virginia's Bible Lessons originally appeared in Joel Goldsmith's Monthly Letters starting in January, 1963, and continued through April of 1965. They focused the students on the various principles and aspects of mystical unfoldment.

A mystical teaching like The Infinite Way requires study. It is not a religion in which you can find comfort in a church, temple or mosque. The way one comes to mystical realization is through study and meditation. These lead to illumination – that state of consciousness in which the presence of God is experienced. The tools we have for this kind of study go back to antiquity. Many great lights lived as transparencies for the Divine, and many of them left records of the principles for living in that mystical consciousness. Joel Goldsmith's work is a message of Christian mysticism, and he left a large body of work for people to study. To fully understand the principles he left to the world, it is helpful to know the Bible.

These Bible Lessons require the active participation of the student; they involve more effort than just reading from a book. They guide the student into finding the connections between the modern presentation of mysticism and its ancient roots. Not everything in the Bible is spiritual. Much of it describes the struggle of a people wanting to know God, and defines their concept of God and how man relates to the divine and to his fellow human beings. The mystical revelation in the Bible is hard to find, and often it is veiled behind a human agenda. Because of Joel's many years in Christian Science, where the Bible is essential to the service, Joel knew the Bible and was able to unveil its mystical thread. In his Infinite Way message, Joel continued to use the Bible as the foundation for mystical revelation.

## *How to study the lessons*

To study these lessons, first read the Bible passages given in the box. These passages have been selected to emphasize the theme of the lesson. Then read the selection from Joel's book(s) that is given after the Bible passages. Read just one section at a time and contemplate and meditate on what you have read. In this way you will increase your knowledge of scripture, and you will discover the connection between the mysticism of The Infinite Way and its ancient root.

Studying these lessons can also be a group activity. Individuals can take turns reading the passages and the group can meditate after each section is read.

Please note that the page references for quotations from *The Infinite Way* (abbreviated “TIW”) are from the DeVorss & Company thirty-fourth printing of the book in 2006. Page references for quotations from *Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture* (abbreviated as “SIOS”) are from the DeVorss & Company twenty-fourth printing of the book in 2003. If you have older or newer versions of these books, the passage that is quoted may be on a different page. If you are using the e-book versions of the books, you may not have page numbers at all. However, you can use the “Search” function on your e-reader to search for the first few words of the quotation and easily locate the passage.

Each book reference is given in this format: [*Book Title, page number: paragraph number*]. For example, the reference “*TIW, p. 21: 1-2*” refers to *The Infinite Way*, page 21, paragraphs 1 and 2. The reference “*SIOS, p. 25: 2*” refers to *Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture*, page 25, paragraph 2.

The paragraph numbers refer to “whole” paragraphs. In other words, a partial paragraph at the top of a page is not counted as the first paragraph on that page. It is considered the completion of the last paragraph on the preceding page. So for example, the reference “*TIW, p. 34: 1*” refers to the first complete paragraph on page 34 of *The Infinite Way*.

All Bible quotations are from the King James Version. Today, there are many online Bible study websites such as biblegateway.com and biblehub.com that are rich with features to facilitate study. Most of them allow you to specify a Bible passage, and then read that passage in many different translations. While Joel always used the King James Version, it can be helpful to read the same Bible passage in a few different translations before contemplating the passage to discern the meaning.

## *Our Gratitude*

We are most grateful to DeVorss & Company for their gracious permission to use quotations from *The Infinite Way* and *Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture* for these Bible Lessons.

## *Lesson 4: The Nature of Error*

### **Part I**

#### **Genesis 1: 27, 31**

<sup>27</sup> *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

<sup>31</sup> *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

All the error that has existed down the ages is founded on the theory or belief of two worlds, one the heavenly kingdom, or spiritual life, and the other a material world or mortal existence, each separate from the other.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Genesis 2: 1-3, 6-7, 9**

<sup>1</sup> *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.*

<sup>2</sup> *And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.*

<sup>3</sup> *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

<sup>6</sup> *But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.*

<sup>7</sup> *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

<sup>9</sup> *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

"Let us begin with the understanding that our world is not an erroneous one, but rather that the universe in which we live is the realm of reality about which man entertains a false concept. The work of bringing health and harmony into our experience is not, then, getting rid of, or even changing, a mortal material universe, but correcting the finite concept of our existence."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Infinite Way* (DeVorss & Company, Thirty-fourth printing, 2006), p. 21: 4. Please note that all subsequent references to this book will be abbreviated as "TIW."

<sup>2</sup> *TIW*, p. 22: 1

“Our progress Spiritward is in proportion to the illumination which enables us to behold more and more of Reality. Because the human scene is entirely a misconception through misperception, any thought of helping, healing, correcting, or changing the material picture must be relinquished in order that we may see the ever-present Reality.”<sup>3</sup>

“In the spiritual life, you place no labels on the world. You do not judge as to good or evil, sick or well, rich or poor. While appearances may show forth harmony or discord, by not judging, you merely know *IS*, and let that which truly *IS* define Itself.”<sup>4</sup>

## Part II

### **Genesis 3: 1-6**

<sup>1</sup> *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

<sup>2</sup> *And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:*

<sup>3</sup> *But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

<sup>4</sup> *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*

<sup>5</sup> *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

<sup>6</sup> *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

“The personal sense of “I” is busily engaged in getting, achieving, desiring, accomplishing, accumulating; whereas our real Self is giving, bestowing, sharing, and blessing. The personal sense of self is the embodiment of all human experiences, most of which are limited and undesirable: The real Self is the embodiment of infinite spiritual ideas and activities forever expressing Itself without limit or restraint.”<sup>5</sup>

“The small ‘I’ concerns itself primarily with its personal problems and affairs, enlarging its borders to include members of the immediate family or circle of friends. Personal sense often goes further afield into charitable works or community welfare, but we know that it is personal sense when we analyze the motives which govern. The real sense of Self lives out from the center of its being, blessing all whom it touches, and is recognized by its selflessness, by its unselfishness, by its lack of seeking recognition, reward, or any personal aggrandizement. It is not a spineless entity or a floormop to be pushed around by mortals – it is never even seen or known by mortals.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *TIW, p. 33: 3*

<sup>4</sup> *TIW, p. 150: 2*

<sup>5</sup> *TIW, p. 45: 4*

<sup>6</sup> *TIW, p. 46: 1*

**Matthew 4: 1-11**

- <sup>1</sup> Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.
- <sup>2</sup> And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.
- <sup>3</sup> And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.
- <sup>4</sup> But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
- <sup>5</sup> Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,
- <sup>6</sup> And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- <sup>7</sup> Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
- <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;
- <sup>9</sup> And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.
- <sup>10</sup> Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
- <sup>11</sup> Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

“While we strive and struggle and contend with the so-called powers of this world, combating sickness and sin or lack, spiritual sense reveals that ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’ Only as we transcend the desire to improve our humanhood do we understand this vital statement. When, however, we leave the realm of human betterment, we catch the first glimpse of the meaning of ‘I have overcome the world.’”<sup>7</sup>

“Prayer is the inner vision of harmony. This vision is attained by giving up the desire to change or improve anyone or anything.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> TIW, p. 23: 2

<sup>8</sup> TIW, p. 150: 4

**Part III****John 3: 1-6**

- <sup>1</sup> *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:*  
<sup>2</sup> *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*  
<sup>3</sup> *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*  
<sup>4</sup> *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*  
<sup>5</sup> *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*  
<sup>6</sup> *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

“Are we seeking ‘the things of the Spirit of God’ for some human purpose, or are we really endeavoring to ‘put off’ the mortal in order that we may behold the harmony of the spiritual realm?”<sup>9</sup>

**Romans 8: 5-6, 9, 14**

- <sup>5</sup> *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*  
<sup>6</sup> *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*  
<sup>9</sup> *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*  
<sup>14</sup> *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

“We have not overcome the world while we are seeking to have less of the world’s pains and more of the world’s pleasures and profits. And if we are not overcoming the sense of struggle over worldly affairs, we are not entering the realm of heavenly affairs.”<sup>10</sup>

“‘For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.’ Spiritual consciousness overcomes the world – both the pains and pleasures of the world. We cannot accomplish this evangelization of humanhood by mental might or physical power, but by the spiritual sense of existence which all may cultivate through devotion of thought to the things of the Spirit. ‘For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.’ Here is the guide.

<sup>9</sup> *TIW, p. 23: 1*

<sup>10</sup> *TIW, p. 23: 3*

Watch your thoughts, aims, and ambitions for just a short while and see if your mind is on your health, the pleasures of the senses, or worldly gain. Then as these worldly thoughts appear, learn to reject them because now we are no longer set on the path of improving our human affairs, but on attaining the spiritual kingdom.”<sup>11</sup>

“A universal illusion binds us to earth – to temporal conditions. Realize this, understand this, because only through this understanding can we begin to lessen its hold upon us. The more fascinated we are with conditions of human good and the greater our desire for even the good things of the flesh, the more intense is the illusion. In proportion as our thought dwells on God, on things of the Spirit, the greater the freedom from limitation we are gaining. Think neither on the discords nor on the harmonies of this world. Let us not fear the evil nor love the good of human existence. In proportion as we accomplish this, is the mesmeric influence lessening in our experience. Earth ties begin to disappear; shackles of limitation fall away; erroneous conditions give place to spiritual harmony; death gives way to eternal life.”<sup>12</sup>

“Life beyond the grave has no relationship to immortality. Life beyond the grave is but the survival of personality. This personality dies – it must die either this side or that side of the grave in order that immortality may be realized. *The immortal Self is ever-present*, even when clothed with personality, but is revealed and lived only in proportion as personality, or the human selfhood, disappears.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *TIW*, p. 24: 1

<sup>12</sup> *TIW*, p. 181: 2

<sup>13</sup> *TIW*, p. 170: 1

**Part IV****Isaiah 1: 11-18**

<sup>11</sup> *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.*

<sup>12</sup> *When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?*

<sup>13</sup> *Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.*

<sup>14</sup> *Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.*

<sup>15</sup> *And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.*

<sup>16</sup> *Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;*

<sup>17</sup> *Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.*

<sup>18</sup> *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

“Prayer, when based on the belief that there is a need unfilled or a desire unsatisfied, is never in accord with true scientific prayer. A prayer for God to do something, send something, provide, or heal is equally without power.”<sup>14</sup>

**John 9: 1-7**

<sup>1</sup> *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.*

<sup>2</sup> *And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*

<sup>3</sup> *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

<sup>4</sup> *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

<sup>5</sup> *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

<sup>6</sup> *When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,*

<sup>7</sup> *And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

<sup>14</sup> TIW, p. 101: 2

“To many, prayer means supplication and petition to a God in a place called heaven. That this prayer has resulted so universally in failure to attain its ends must prove that this is not prayer and that the God prayed to is not there listening. Human thought eventually realized the lack of an answer to such prayers and turned to a search for the true God and the right concept of prayer. This led to a revelation of truth as understood and practiced by Christ Jesus and many earlier revelators.”<sup>15</sup>

“Here we learn that ‘the kingdom of God is within you,’ and therefore prayer must be directed within to that point in consciousness where the universal Life, God, becomes individualized as you or as me. We learn that God created (evolved) the world in the beginning and that ‘it was good.’ Being good, the universe must inevitably be complete, harmonious, and perfect so that instead of pleading for good, our prayer becomes the realization of the omnipresence of good, and so the higher concept reveals prayer as the affirmation of good and the denial of the existence of error as reality.

“When the prayer of affirmation results in the use of formulas, it has a tendency to revert to old-fashioned faith-prayer and thereby loses its potency. When, however, one’s prayer consists of spontaneous and sincere affirmations of the infinity of God and of the harmony and perfection of His manifestation, one is indeed nearing the absolute of prayer, which is communion with God.”<sup>16</sup>

“The universe of Spirit, Truth, God, is an activity in eternity. Thus understood, neither birth, disease, accident, nor death has ever occurred. In every instance, when presented with the appearance of humanhood – even good human beings or conditions – remember that this is not truth, but a mental image in thought, without reality, law, substance, cause, or effect. Then ‘see’ deeper into consciousness and behold that which is – eternity even in what appears as past, present, or future.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *TIW*, p. 106: 2

<sup>16</sup> *TIW*, p. 107: 1-2

<sup>17</sup> *TIW*, p. 177: 3

*Notes: The Nature of Error*