

*A Study of the*

*RESTORATION*

*PRINCIPLE*

**12 Lessons**

**Prepared by:**  
**PAUL E. CANTRELL**

**2004**



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## Lesson One

***What is the Restoration Principle?***

***“He said, ‘Go, and tell this people: “Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.” Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.”(Isaiah 6:9-1-).***

The Israelite people had gone away from God and needed to come back (return) unto Him. But it was necessary for them to listen to God with their ears and perceive what He was saying with their hearts; look at what He requires of them and understand what it took to be in fellowship with God again. If they would turn back to Him, He would heal them. But mankind has not changed much over the hundreds of years since this warning was given to Israel. Men still depart from God’s ways and need to return unto Him.

The purpose of **Restoration** is to bring people back to God’s way in Christ. Just a casual look at the religious world known as “Christian” can easily show that men have departed from God. Christ established His church (Matthew 16:18) in the first century, but men were not content to stay with God’s way and went about establishing their own way—thus, corrupting true Christianity as originally given. The religious sectarian world that we see about us cries loudly for a restoring of what God originally established. To restore something is to bring it back to its original state. When you read your New Testament and compare in it what is required of men and look at the religious world about us, it should be evident to all—**there is a vast difference!**

**CHANGES INDICATE A NEED FOR RESTORATION**

The concept of Restoration implies that there have not only been changes made, but sufficient changes that the original no longer exist. Over the centuries, every aspect of New Testament Christianity has suffered from the attempts of men to change it to their liking. Following are some of the areas that have been affected.

- 1) **Changes in the Terms used to identify the church.** God’s terms for His church have been eclipsed by the human names used to identify the many different churches men have begun or originated. (See 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4)
- 2) **Changes in the form of church government.** It has changed from a simple congregational government with local elders to a large, complex, pyramid government over many churches. (See Ephesians 1:22; Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23).
- 3) **Changes in the plan of salvation given by God.** Perverted teachings has led people to believe that they are saved, when in reality they have not done what God says must be done to be saved. (See Galatians 1:6-9; Acts 2:37-38; James 2:24-26).
- 4) **Changes in the Authority in the church.** Men have replaced Jesus and His Word as the authority and substituted their own creeds and doctrines of men that they bind on men. (See John 12:48; 2 John 9-10).
- 5) **Changes in the activities of worship.** Changes have been made in the “what” is worshiped and also in the “way” to worship. Various additions and subtractions have been made. (Matthew 15:7-9; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19).

- 6) **Changes in the oneness of the church.** This oneness has been shattered by the many varied and competing bodies claiming to be connected to Christ.

These, and other changes, have help to rob believers of a clear vision of what Christianity was originally like. The seriousness of the matter is seen when we recall that an all-wise, infallible God designed and instituted the church and that sinful, fallible men have presumed to change it. No man or group of men can ever hope to improve on God's work. Restoration seeks to go back beyond all the sectarian groups that have evolved over the centuries and return to what God originally gave through His chosen Apostles. The church which Jesus established was precisely and exactly what God wanted it to be. Its faith, worship, and practice perfectly met the needs of humanity. Thus, every attempt by uninspired men to improve upon such can only succeed in corrupting it.

### IS THE RESTORATION PRINCIPLE VALID FOR TODAY?

The Restoration Principle is advocating that Apostolic Christianity can be reproduced in our present day—that is, to take people back to Christ, back to the New Testament, and back to the church of the New Testament. Is this a valid goal? Is it reasonable to believe that we can have New Testament Christianity today? Did Christ demand of his church to remain the same in faith, doctrine, and practice throughout the ages, or does He expect it to “flow with the times,” to “adapt” to its environment, and as men change their “views” of Christianity, is it the will of God that the church change to accommodate itself to these “views?” To advocate that such is reasonable, possible, and even necessary today, a person must believe:

- 1) That God gave us a perfect pattern for the church in the beginning;
- 2) That God expected men to follow this patter;
- 3) That men were not satisfied with such and set about to make changes;
- 4) That men need to be called back to that original pattern given by God.

### UNDERLYING BASIS FOR THE RESTORATION PRINCIPLE

The validity of this principle can be seen in the underlying basis for it. Without these things being understood, there can be no validity to a restoration of New Testament Christianity.

- 1) That there is a God who has revealed Himself through the Bible (Hebrews 1:1-2). Without such a revelation, there would be no **BASIS** for advocating such.
- 2) That this revelation was made known through Christ and His Apostles and Prophets (John 14:9-10; 16:13).
- 3) That God used men to write the Bible, but divinely guided them in this writing (2 Timothy 3:16-17). They wrote in their time and culture. What needs to be restored is not their culture, but the Truth given to them.
- 4) That the New Testament is the sole expression of Spiritual Authority for Christians today. (2 John 9). The first Christians continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). We too just continue in the Apostles' teachings and that only. To recognize any other is to reject the Bible and make a restoration concept completely invalid.
- 5) That Primitive Christianity is a model for times to come. God gave what He wanted in the first century, and wants it followed even today (Matthew 28:18-20).

- 6) That there has been a falling away from what God originally gave as prophesied in many passages (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). There would be no need of a reformation or even a restoration if there were no changes from the original plan of God.
- 7) That human beings can correctly understand and follow the Bible (Matthew 7:21; Ephesians 3:3-5). The Bible must be understandable, or Christianity is invalid, itself. If not understandable, it would not make any difference what man believes and does. To come to a knowledge of God's truth, one's mind must be open to what God says and have a willingness to search the Scriptures for Truth, as well as the willingness to submit to it (John 8:31-32).

Without these, there can be no such concept as a restoration of New Testament Christianity. If it is necessary to follow Christ correctly, then we believe that the principle is valid. If God has given us Truth to follow and men have erred from it, then restoration is needed and valid (1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 4:1-5). To entertain and advocate such a principle can involve great difficulties for people. For that reason, many will not accept the idea as valid. It involves a willingness to re-examine our whole religious outlook; our relationship to Christ, and our true intentions!

### REFORMATION OR RESTORATION—WHICH ONE?

To **Reform** something is to change it. These changes for the better may be few or many. But underlying the idea of reformation is the acceptance of the existing structure religiously. Existing religious bodies can be reformed in several areas, but not necessarily go back to the original teachings of the Apostles. The idea of **Restoration** is to bring about changes that brings back into existence that which was the original. It is to reject all wrong changes and to go back to what was the original. To illustrate: *“Luther was desirous of retaining in the Church all that was not expressly contradicted by Scripture, while Zwingli was intent on abolishing all that could not be proved by Scripture. The German Reformer wished to remain united to the (Roman) Church of all preceding ages, and sought only to purify it from everything that was repugnant to the word of God. The Reformer of Zurich passed back over every intervening age till he reached the times of the apostles; and, subjecting the Church to an entire transformation, labored to restore it to its primitive condition.”* (J. H. Merle D'Aubigne). Both of these men worked to bring about changes in the existing Church. But the big question is—“Was this really the same church that Jesus established in the first century?” If yes, then only reforms were needed. But if no, then what was needed was a restoration of the original church that Jesus established.

### RESTORATION—A STRIVING FOR THE IDEAL

To advocate a restoration of New Testament Christianity as first given by God is an effort to fulfill what Jesus challenged His followers to be—*“therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* (Matthew 5:48). It is to want to be just a Christian, a member of the church of Christ, to worship and serve Him faithfully as He prescribes in His Word. It is to strive to be like the ideal that is set forth in the divine plan of God. It is to strive to bring into existence (from the Word of God) the church as God originally gave it in the beginning.

Lesson Two

## ***The Old Testament Prophets and the Restoration Principle***

***“Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”***

(Isaiah 55:6-7)

The Prophets that God sent to the Israelite nation over a period of about a thousand years were primarily sent to call them to repentance and returning to righteous living before Him. God had given them a Law by which to live—an inspired Law. It was absolute. It was not to be added to nor deviated from by anyone (Deuteronomy 4:1-2). This admonition was repeated over and over in the Law of Moses and by the Prophets sent to them. Any deviation from it called for repentance and a change of conduct in regards to keeping the Law of God. Animal sacrifices were to be done constantly as a means of calling for God’s forgiveness for the breaking of any of His laws. But on occasions, these people would turn their backs on God altogether and forsake His ways. They would no longer be acceptable to God. A Prophet would be sent to them calling for their return to God from which they had fallen. This is illustrated vividly over and over in the book of Judges. When the people would not listen to the Prophets, God would warn them of the grave dangers to follow. Finally, in 722 BC, the Northern Tribes of Israel were taken captive by the Assyrians and taken into other lands. They were no longer the acceptable people of God.

### **RESTORATION BY KING HEZEKIAH**

During the life-time of Isaiah (8<sup>th</sup> Century), a righteous king came to the throne of the kingdom of Judah. His name was Hezekiah. He followed his father, Ahaz, as king. Ahaz had turned his back on God and had lured many of the people to follow him. Hezekiah saw a need for some radical changes to be made and a desire to get back to God’s original teachings in His Law. He was only 25 years old, but he had a zeal for God that brought about a restoration of the worship of the true God of heaven. He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He called on the people to return to the Lord and observe His Passovers. Hezekiah trusted in the Lord and would not depart from following Him—keeping His commandments (2 Kings 18:1-6) He believed that going back to God’s Law that had been given seven centuries early was still valid. He looked upon the Law of Moses as a pattern for the service of God under that Covenant.

### **RESTORATION BY KING JOSIAH**

Another young king like Hezekiah was Josiah, who began his reign at the age of eight. He lived a little over a hundred years after Hezekiah. Judah was on the verge of being taken into Babylonian captivity because of their departures from God. But God spared them for a while longer because of the efforts of this young king. Josiah made a covenant with the Lord:

- 1) To walk after the Lord;

- 2) To keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul;
- 3) To carry out the words of this covenant which were written in this book.

He also encouraged the people to enter into the same covenant. (2 Kings 23:1-3). The changes that were being called for were great. 2 Kings 23:4-27 gives a long list of those changes. The inspired writer approved of the course of action taken by Josiah by saying: ***“He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.”*** (2 Kings 22:2). The Prophet Jeremiah, who lived during the time of Josiah’s reign, admonished the people: ***“to return to the old paths.”*** (Jeremiah 6:16).

#### **BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN**

God gave instructions to Moses to construct the Tabernacle and made it very clear that He wanted it done according to His instructions: ***“You shall erect the tabernacle according to its plan which you have been shown in the mountain.”*** (Exodus 27:30). ***“Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was completed; and the sons of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses; so they did.”*** (Exodus 39:32). The Hebrew writer states that Moses was warned by God: ***“See that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.”*** (Hebrew 8:5). When the tabernacle (Temple) was rebuilt in the days of Haggai and Zephaniah, the people were not left to build it the way they wanted to, but to rebuild it according to God’s plan.

#### **RESTORATION—A GOING BACK TO THE ORIGINAL**

God’s people were being challenged by one Prophet after another to be faithful to Him. And when they turned their backs on Him, He called for their repentance and restoration to God’s fellowship again. The conditions became so bad at times, that a complete restoration was being called for on their part. We believe that the above divinely approved examples show clearly that the principle of restoration—of restoring God’s original order of things—to be a valid principle.

## Lesson Three

***Jesus' Teachings and the Restoration Principle***

***“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”*** (Matthew 23:23)

Both Reformation and Restoration infer that people have departed from the original plan of things and that they need to recognize such and make an effort to go back to the original way given by God. The Old Testament Prophets were continually helping Israel to see the need of such. Then, when John the baptizer came on the scene, his emphasis was the same. He called upon the people to repent and confess their failures to live up to the will of God in their lives (Matthew 3:1-2; Mark 1:4). Jesus' evaluation of John and his efforts was: ***“Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”*** (Matthew 11:11). Then, when Jesus was baptized of John in the river Jordan, He preached the same message of repentance (Mark 1:14-15).

**ILLUSTRATIONS OF JESUS' TEACHINGS**

One of the things that Jesus made clear in His teachings was His respect for the Law of God. He made it clear that he did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfilled them (Matthew 5:17-18). The Hebrew writer stated that Jesus learned obedience (to the Law of God—the Will of God) by the things which He suffered...and was pronounced as perfect! He did not sin or break God's Law one time (2 Corinthians 5:21). His respect for God's Law was brought out over and over during His ministry. He recognized that there was a standard by which the Israelite people were to live, and continually called their attention to such. Observe the following:

1. **Matthew 19:4.** When the Pharisees asked him about putting away one's wife, Jesus pointed them to God's original intentions—that is, one man and one woman for life was God's way for humanity.
2. **Matthew 19:16-19.** Jesus told the rich young ruler who came to Him asking about eternal life, to keep the commandments of the Law of Moses.
3. **Luke 10:26.** When a certain lawyer, tempting Jesus, asked him what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus answer was ***“What is written in the law?”***
4. **Matthew 11:20-24.** Jesus' pronouncement of judgment upon the cities of Chorazin and Capernaum was because they would not repent and do God's bidding—even though great miracles were performed in their presence to prove Jesus was from God!

All of Jesus' teachings showed clearly that He regarded the Law of Moses as the authoritative standard and binding pattern of conduct for the people at that time. And, because they had turned from it to do their own thing, He was preaching a need to repent—to turn back to God and do His Will.

Some of the most scathing rebukes that Jesus gave were to the religious leaders of Israel. They had perverted the Law of God (turned from God's standard to one they had conceived). He told His Apostles that the reason why He spoke in Parables was because of the dullness of the people's ears to hear and their eyes to see and their hearts to repent so that He could heal them (Matthew 13:10-17). He illustrated this concept in different ways, as follows:

1. **Matthew 15:1-9.** Jesus accused these leaders of breaking God's Law for the same of keeping their traditions. He illustrated His point by showing they did not honor their parents and excused themselves by thinking they had to keep their traditions that had replaced God's command. He called them hypocrites—in that they honored God with their lips, but their heart was far from God. And also, that they made their worship vain by teaching the doctrines and precepts of men as they replaced the Law of God. The very people that thought they were so right were wrong. Jesus called them blind guides (Matthew 15:12-14).
2. **Matthew 21:12-13.** In stead of respecting the Temple as a place of worship, the people had allowed it to be turned into a house of merchandise, a den of thieves. What was He calling on the people to do—nothing less than return the Temple into being what it was originally designed to be—a house of prayer!
3. **Matthew 23:1-39.** One of the strongest rebukes—one after another—against these religious leaders that Jesus gave (that was recorded). He exposes their continual hypocrisy. He pronounces judgment upon them because they chose to be blind, dull of hearing, and hard of heart. It wasn't that they could not, but that they would not! Finally, He lets the hammer down in verses 37-38: ***“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!”***

### OBSERVATIONS

Most of the Israelite people had lost their relationship to God. They needed to be restored to Him. In order for that to be possible, they needed to go back to the Law of God and began keeping it, as God had ordained.

When we talk about a restoration of New Testament Christianity, we are trying to get people to go back to the original patten given by God to be followed, practiced as God intended. It is not starting a new denomination among many denominations, but a restoring the church as it was originally given by God. Just as Israel and their leaders needed to repent and go back to what God originally gave for them to practice, so that same call goes forth today for the same reason—men have changed God's Law (added to it or taken away from it or lived ungodly, hypocritical lives). Men need to repent and go back to what God originally gave—New Testament Christianity in its purity and simplicity. There needs to be a proper concern and response to heaven's call to restoration!

## Lesson Four

## *The Early Church and the Restoration Principle*

*“Take heed, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”* (Hebrews 3:12-13)

Both John and Jesus’ message was *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand...”* (Matthew 3:2; 4:17). *“Repent”* was preached because they had turned their hearts from observing the Law of God. Their hearts needed to be turned back to God and the keeping of His Law. But they also preached a new and exciting message that *“the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* The kingdom that King David, the Old Testament Prophets, and Daniel in particular all had foretold would come (2 Samuel 7:12-13; Daniel 2:44). That kingdom was now at hand ready to be set up among men. But it was not to be an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom where God rules in the hearts of men. This kingdom would be made up of not just one nation of people, but all nations of people. This kingdom was the new family of God, the body of Christ, the called out people (church) of God. The church was set up and given its marching orders: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* (Matthew 28:19-20). And a little over 30 years later the Apostle Paul could write by inspiration that the gospel had been preached in all creation under heaven (Colossians 1:23). But this new kingdom or church, made up from people of all nations, needed a standard to guide them and hold them together as a people of God. Thus, the New Testament came into being over a period of some 70 years to serve as that guide (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It was a perfect guide (James 1:25) able to prepare them for every good work!

### WARNINGS BY THE APOSTLES

God, knowing man’s tendencies to change or turn from His directions, put warnings in His New Covenant that nothing was to be changed. False teachers who desired to satisfy the itching ears of the people and change the message were to be dealt with. Some of these warnings are as follows:

1. **1 Corinthians 1:10.** The Apostle admonished the saints at Corinth to speak the same things, and to be of the same mind and judgment. Don’t turn from that which they had been given by God.
2. **Galatians 1:6-9.** This warning not only warned against men changing the teaching, but even if an angel from heaven did so, he would also be accursed by God.
3. **Romans 16:17-18.** Men who are more concerned by filling their bellies than they are of respecting the Word of God are to be rejected by the churches.
4. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 John 4:1.** All three passages warn of not only the danger of turning from the way of God, but that an apostasy from the faith (once delivered to the saints—Jude 3) would actually occur in the future. Obviously, these passages are warning for the people of God not to get caught up in such teachings that lead from God.

5. **Revelations 22:18-19.** Similar to Deuteronomy 4:2, the warning is given not to change the message of God to man....not to add to it, nor to take away from it....but to hold to and do its bidding.

### EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS (2<sup>ND</sup> to 5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

After the death of the Apostles, men in the churches wrote letters calling on the churches to hold to the faith given by the Apostles who had received it from the Lord. Such men as Polycarp, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Papias, Tertullian, etc., all pleading with churches not to be caught up in the new doctrines springing up among them taught by false brethren. Tertullian of Carthage (c. 160-230 AD) expressed the thought well: *“We, however, are not permitted to cherish any object after our own will, nor yet to make choice of that which another has introduced of his private fancy. In the Lord’s apostles we possess our authority; for even they did not of themselves choose to introduce anything, but faithfully delivered to the nations of mankind the doctrine which they had received from Christ.”* (The Prescription Against Heretics, 6). And again he stated: *“What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?.....Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and Dialectic composition!”* (Prescription, 7).

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

*“A survey of the early Christian centuries demonstrates the enduring acknowledgement that Christianity had a clearly defined set of doctrines which it preached and confessed from the beginning. When heretical doctrines were taught and appeals began to be made to other authorities than that of Scripture alone—a ‘rule of faith,’ ‘apostolic succession’ or creeds—there was a consensus that these were expressions in continuity with apostolic proclamation. If the assumption was sometimes incorrect, it, nevertheless, testifies to the recognition that the ‘plan of our salvation’ was first proclaimed in public by the apostles and then handed down in the Scriptures ‘to be the ground and pillar of our faith.’”* (Carl W. Cheatham)

A strong emphasis remained for several centuries after the beginning of the church on holding fast to the Word of God given by Jesus through His inspired Apostles. There should be no deviation from, and those who did so were false teachers, heretics. They stressed not only holding to the Truth of the gospel, but a return to it by those who had gone astray.

## Lesson Five

## *The Restoration Principle in the Reformation Movement*

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”*

(Matthew 5:3-6)

During the first few centuries after Christ, the church was plagued with doctrinal controversies brought in by people not truly wanting Christ to be Lord. A great deal of turmoil resulted. Separate groups began to form such as the Montanists, Marcionites, Novatians, and the Donatists. While these groups advocated doctrines different from the generally accepted teaching, yet, their strong emphasis upon purity of life was badly needed at that time.

Very little is known historically about conditions that we would identify as restoration efforts. The **Paulicians** are mentioned in 555 AD, and known during the middle ages. They were known as a people of the book.

- 1) They condemned the deviations of the Catholic and Armenian Churches.
- 2) They rejected infant baptism.
- 3) They stressed faith, repentance, and immersion for adults.
- 4) Their worship was simple—not elaborate.
- 5) They rejected ecclesiasticism.
- 6) They taught that all baptized believers composed the apostolic church.
- 7) They emphasized the priesthood of all believers.
- 8) Their leaders would correspond to the concept of elders.

These people probably considered themselves more as direct descendants of the early church than restorers. They seemed to have been more successful in holding to original Christianity than any other group known during the Middle Ages. Their chief efforts were in Armenia.

### OTHER GROUPS IN EUROPE BEFORE THE REFORMATION

**1. The Bogomils.** They were greatly influenced by the Paulicians and emerged in about the 10<sup>th</sup> century in Bulgaria. They disintegrated in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Their teachings briefly stated:

- a) They professed to be only Christians.
- b) They greatly opposed the existing religious structure as apostate.
- c) They accepted Scriptures as Revealed Truth.
- d) They stressed godly living.
- e) Also stressed the priesthood of all believers.
- f) Elders guided the congregations.
- g) They were against infant baptism.
- h) We are not sure of their teachings about immersion (no clear records).

**2. The Waldenses.** They appeared in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Peter Waldo was a leader among them. At first, it was a church within the established church. Later, they separated and put off much of the

innovations of the Catholic Church: Papacy, Celibacy, Latin Liturgy, Organs, Relics, Purgatory, etc. They stressed:

- a) The Bible as the supreme authority.
- b) Took it too literal that caused a lot of problems among them.
- c) They advocated voluntary poverty, free preaching to the poor, and liberty in Christ.

They were more concerned about the ethical teachings of Jesus than external forms. Their efforts fell short of a real restoration.

**3. Unitas Fratrum (Unity of Brethren).** These came out of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Bohemian Reformation of John Huss. They were greatly affected by John Wyclif's assertion "*The Bible is the Christian's sole spiritual guide.*" In 1414, Huss was condemned by the Council of Constance and burned at the stake. This brought about fighting between the Hussites and the Catholics, as well as a split in the followers of Huss' teaching. One of the groups that came out of Huss' effort was called "Unitas Pratum." They called for all disciples to withdraw from government relations. They stressed a return to primitive Christianity. Peter Chelzicky was a main leader of the group later on. He renounced violence and war. He called for separation of church and state. He called for abolition of all class distinctions. This movement suffered an early major division. It resulted in what we know today as the Moravian Brethren. They were more concerned with purity of life than doctrinal matters. They practiced both infant and adult affusion.

## THE REFORMATION MOVEMENT

The Protestant Reformation (as it is generally called) in a way was both a reform effort as well as a restoration effort at times. It clearly defined the Roman Catholic church as false and their purpose of reformation was to reinstitute the true church using only the Word of God.

1. **Martin Luther** was considered more of a reformer than a restorer. Yet, in his book entitled *Against Hanswurst*, he wrote: "*Thus we have proved that we are the true, ancient church, one body and one communion of saints with the holy, universal, Christian church. Now you too, papists, prove that you are the true church or are like it. You cannot do it. But I will prove that you are the new false church, which is in everything apostate, separated from the true, ancient church, thus becoming Satan's whore and synagogue.*" Men like Luther sought to purify the Roman Catholic Church of all its human traditions and teachings and to stand alone on the Word of God.
2. **Ulrich Zwingli** lived and worked primarily in Zurich. In his *Commentary on True and False Religion*, he argued for returning to the Word of God alone when he said: "*Faithfulness.....demands, first, that we learn from God in what way we can please Him, in what manner serve Him. Next, it demands that we shall add nothing to what we have learned from Him, and take away nothing.*" In another place he wrote, "*If, then, that worship, that piety or religion, is vain which proceeds from human invention or law, solid and true surely is that religion, on the other hand, which is guided by the word of God alone, and looks to and hears this only.*"
3. **Conrad Grebel** was a disciple of Zwingli, who later separated from him over infant baptism, and wrote a letter to Thomas Muntzer in 1524 that shows this same spirit of restoration: "*Whatever we are not taught by clear passages or examples must be regarded as forbidden.*"

4. **John Calvin** also taught that the Roman Catholic faith was a false church since it held to unauthorized worship and did not preach the pure Word of God. His attitude was, *“What the apostles instituted is the only model of a true church, and whosoever deviates from it in the smallest degree is in error”* Calvin wished to cleanse the church of all human traditions and ground it in Scripture alone.

During the reformation period of the 1500s there were four fountainheads: Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Anabaptist. The leaders of the first two have been briefly quoted on their stand on the Word of God and it alone. The **Anabaptist** movement came out of the efforts of Zwingli and others in Switzerland in 1523. It was a large loosely organized group. It was strongly persecuted and scattered all across Europe. But as they went, they spread their teachings zealously. Three things infuriated their enemies:

- (1) Opposition to church and state being tied together;
- (2) Rejection of infant baptism;
- (3) That there was only one true church made up of committed people.

In addition, they stressed:

- (4) A return to Apostolic practices.
- (5) The need to re-baptize those sprinkled at infancy. Their enemies dubbed them “Ana-Baptists” with reference to their emphasis on “Re-Baptism.”
- (6) There are grave questions as to whether they practiced immersion.
- (7) They called themselves “Brethren.”

Menno Simons finally drew many of these scattered groups together into a fellowship. His followers were called Mennonites. Many immigrated to America. The Ana-Baptist movement has influenced numerous other efforts.

Restorationism was deeply imbedded in English thought long before the Reformation Movement in the 1500s. **Wycliffe** advocated strongly on using the Bible only. The influence of the Ana-Baptist also played a part. A group arose in England that wanted to purify the Church of England of all its Catholic traditions. They were later called **Puritans**. They were a much-divided group, but generally agreed on the principle of restoration of the church. John Field and Thomas Wilcox introduced a document before Parliament in 1572 that stated: *“Seeing that nothing in this mortal life is more diligently to be sought for, and carefully to be looked unto than the restitution of true religion and reformation of Gods church: it shall be your partes (dearly beloved) in this present Parliament assembled, as much as in you lyeth to promote the same, and to employ your whole labour and studie; not onely in abandoning al popish remnants both in ceremonies and regiment, but also in bringing in and placing in Gods church those things only, which the Lord himself in his word commandeth.”* In short, they were calling for a restored church according to God’s Word.

Another group that were considered Puritans withdrew from the English church and established a true church according to the patter in the New Testament. Henry Barrow wrote: *“God commandeth his faithfull servants, being as yet privat men, together to build his church, according to the true patterne of Christ’s Testament (without altering, changing, innovating, etc.). And for this we have the example of the primitive churches for our patterns and warrant....having received the faith of Christ, received likewise the ordinances of Christ, and continued in the same.”*

## ADDITIONAL EFFORTS AT REFORMATION AND/OR RESTORATION

**The Independents.** These groups went beyond the Puritans in changes they were advocating. There was at least three distinct groups that can be identified during this time:

- 1) **Congregationalists.** Each church was separate from all other congregations. No infant baptism was accepted. The church was to be made up of “willing, committed people.” The strongly urged separation of church and state.
- 2) **Baptists.** Similar emphasis as the above, but they insisted on immersion.
- 3) **Quakers.** They disdained outward forms and insisted on being guided by an “inner light.” John Locke, a philosopher, was associated with them (1689). His writings on restoration influenced many different reformers.

**The Sandermanians.** John Glas left the Church of Scotland to become an Independent (1728). He organized a group of churches around the restoration ideal. His son-in-law, Robert Sandeman, later joined his efforts. The people in this group were referred as “Glasites,” “Sandemanians,” or “Old Scotch Independents.” They had autonomous congregations overseen by elders. They observed the Lord Supper weekly. They were not immersionists, but some did and became known as Scotch Baptist. Some immigrated to Canada and planted churches that later affiliated with American congregations in the Restoration Movement in America.

**The Haldanes.** This was a similar Scottish Reformation in the 1800s. Two brothers were deeply in working together to advocate a return to the Bible as the sole guide. Greville Ewing became a co-worker of theirs. They strongly stress a restoration of New Testament Worship, Organization, and a godly life. They were very evangelistic. Later, these churches were called on to reject sprinkling and accept immersion. They split over the issue—Ewing went with those who accepted sprinkling. This greatly hindered the movement. Their thinking greatly affected the Plymouth Brethren and the American Restoration movement.

**Plymouth Brethren.** They first began as a coalition of independent churches in about 1825. They strongly stress that the true Christian is one who is guided solely by Scriptures. Early leaders in this movement were: Darby, Groves, Newton, Muller, Chapman, and Craik. Later well-known adherents were Tregelles (well-known textual critic) and F. F. Bruce. They just called themselves brethren, and did not want to be known as a denomination. They stressed the priesthood of all believers. They had elders. The Lord’s Supper was central to their worship. They rejected all creeds of men. The function of baptism was nebulous. They are more like the Baptist today (that baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace). Darby is looked upon as the reviver of Pre-Millennialism or Dispensationalism. Some stressed the need for restoration while others only desire some reforms.

**Concluding thoughts.** Indigenous restoration efforts have been found in many different countries. To some degree or another, men wanted to go back to what God originally gave to us.

## Lesson Six

***The Restoration Principle in America***

***“Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are our ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your Name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.”***

(Revelation 15:3-4)

Restoration efforts have been found in many lands around the world for centuries. All have been built around the principle that the Bible must be man’s sole authority. But it is one thing to pay lip service to such a concept, but an altogether different thing when it is consistently followed!

The most prominent and far reaching effort of Restoration has been in this Country. One could list several possible reasons for that, such as:

- 1) Less persecution here than in Europe.
- 2) More open-mindedness of the people to hear what the Bible says.
- 3) Better grasp of the principle of Restoration.
- 4) Better educated leadership to avoid pitfalls of the groups that have gone before.
- 5) One fact that seems to stand out that indicates its effectiveness in this country is the combining of several independent groups into one major thrust—From the British Isles, The New England states, Pennsylvania, Carolinas, Western Reserve, Canada, Georgia, Kentucky, etc.
- 6) Another factor that lent itself well to help make their efforts effective was the absence of a state church in America that could dominate or persecute. There were so many multiplying groups emerging everywhere, which brought more to the forefront the need for unity and restoration!

In this lesson, we will attempt to present a brief overview of the success of the Restoration Movement in America.

**EARLY EFFORTS IN AMERICA**

**1. The O’Kelley Movement (1793).** This was a revolt against the Authoritarianism of Bishop Francis Asbury of the Methodist Church. They, at first, called themselves “Republic Methodists.” Their leader in the revolt was James O’Kelley of Virginia. They adopted these cardinal principles:

- a) Christ as the only head of His church.
- b) The name “Christian” to be used instead of any sectarian name.
- c) The Old and New Testament as the only “Creed.”
- d) Christian character as sole test of fellowship.
- e) Emphasis upon purity of life.

**2. The New England Movement (1801).** Two Baptist preachers began a similar emphasis in New England. Elias Smith and Dr. Abner Jones joined forces in 1804. They advocated:

- a) To wear no sectarian titles.
- b) The Bible to be the only Guide.
- c) They practiced immersion, but fellowshipped with the unimmersed.

d) This movement had trouble with Unitarianism at times.

**3. The Barton W. Stone Movement (1803).** Five Presbyterian preachers formed their own synod upon removing themselves from the larger group. Shortly afterwards, they realized they had gone the same route of setting up another denomination, so they dissolved their Synod in June 24, 1804. They issued what was entitled: “**The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery.**” Barton W. Stone of Kentucky was the most influential of the group.

**4. Informal efforts at fellowship with other groups.** The Eastern churches became known as “Christian Churches.” The Stone Movement contacted them and efforts were made for them to work together to the same end in 1809. In 1931, the Eastern churches merged with the Congregational Church (Congregational Christian Church). Later, they merged with the Reformed and other groups that became known as the “United Church of Christ.”

**5. The Samuel Simon Smucker Movement (1839).** He had a vision of bringing a union among the different churches. He organized “The Society for the Promotion of Christian Union” in 1839. Its purpose was: “*to promote Christian union, on apostolic principles, according to the general plan proposed in the fraternal appeal to the American churches.*” Smucker made it very clear that he had no desire to start another denomination, but merely to have the churches to work together. It was to be a confederation of churches with each denomination to retain its own government, organization, discipline and mode of worship under the umbrella of a weak central government. In the end, most Protestant leaders rejected Smucker’s plea.

## LATER EFFORTS IN AMERICA

**1. The Thomas and Alexander Campbell Movement (1809).** Thomas Campbell came to America first before his family. He was a Presbyterian Clergyman. He was distressed by divisions among Presbyterians. In time, he was suspended by his Synod for fellowshiping another group of Presbyterians not in their fellowship. He then decided to form the “Christian Association of Washington (PA) with a group of preachers and members sympathetic to his views of unity. In 1809, he drafted an expression of their views and goals called the “Declaration and Address.” It stressed:

- a) Udenominational Christianity;
- b) Christian Unity;
- c) The sole Authority of the Scriptures.

The Address had 13 propositions. The first 3 illustrated the basic principles of restoration.

Thomas’ son, Alexander, and family joined him in America from Scotland. Alexander had already been exposed to restoration ideas in Scotland. Upon arrival, he found that both he and his father were in agreement on their concept of restoration and unity. They together, pushed for a restoration among the churches. Their influence was far wider than the Stone Movement. They envisioned the crumbling of all denominational bodies and being replaced with the divine church of the New Testament. Alexander Campbell expressed it this way: “*The restoration of original*

*Christianity, and not the reformation of Popery or of Protestantism, is the polar star of all our aims and efforts ecclesiastic.*”

**2. The Stone and Campbell Movements joined forces in 1831.** It was inevitable that preachers and churches from these two movements would come into contact with each other. The more their contact, the more they realized they were after the same thing. They had no means of control of the churches; thus, no official merger could be dictated. But godly men from both groups kept working towards their working together and giving recognition to each other.

**3. The John Wright Movement (1819).** John was an Indiana Baptist, but realized the need of going by the Bible. He offered a resolution to the Blue River Association of Churches to put away all party names and be just Christians. By 1821, they were calling themselves just “Christians.” In addition, he helped to bring fifteen Tunker Churches into their fellowship on the same basis. They, in turn, later united with the Stone Movement—and then, with the general restoration movement.

**4. The John Mulkey Movement (1809).** He also began to advocate in Kentucky the need to go by the Bible alone. Because of contact with churches in the Stone Movement, he associated with them.

**5. The Christian H. Dasher movement (1819).** He was a German immigrant, that sought a return to New Testament Christianity. His efforts resulted in several churches in the Valdosta, Ga., area. In 1839, these churches associated themselves with the main body of restoration churches.

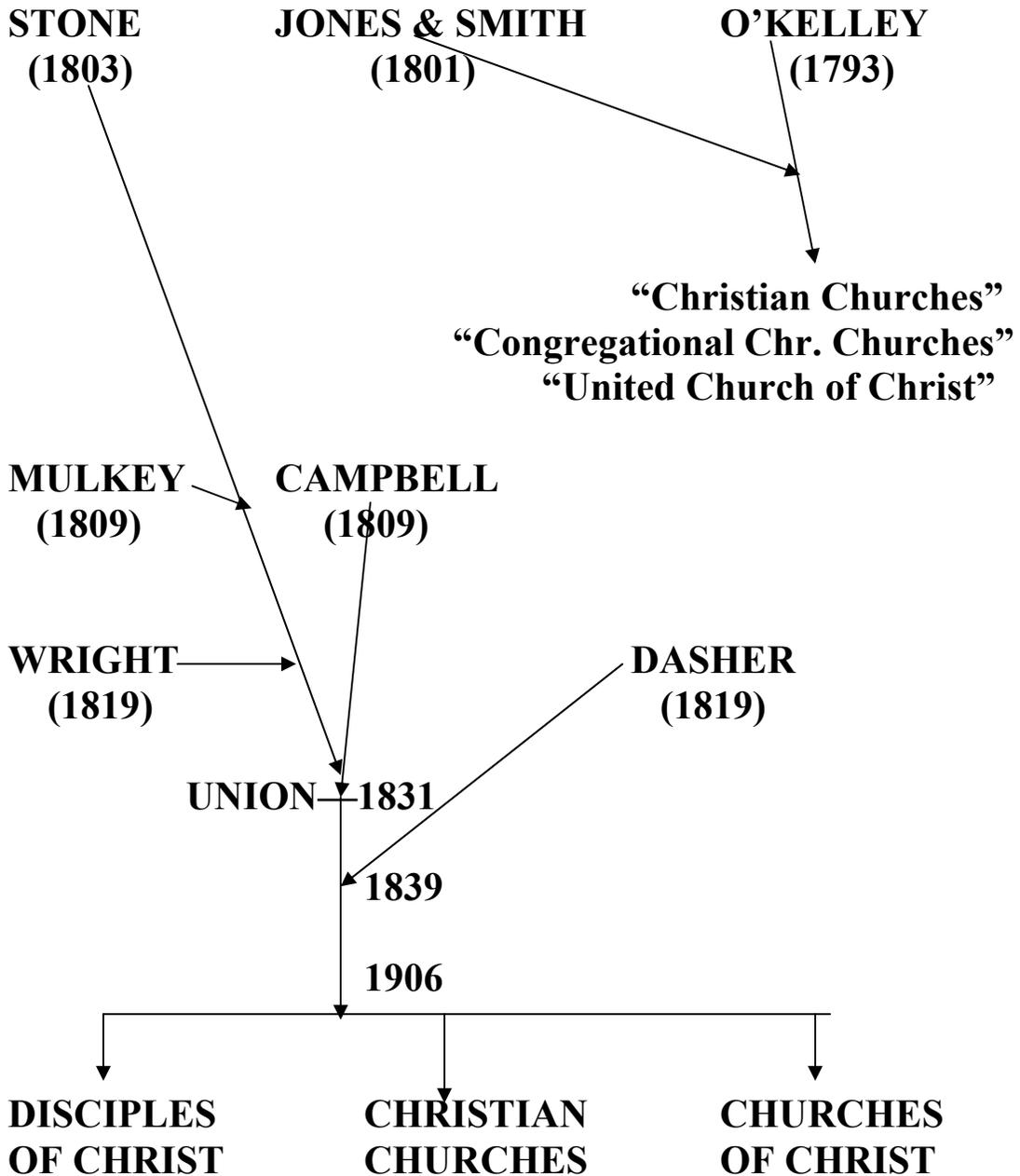
#### STRUGGLES AGAINST DIVISIONS AND DEPARTURE FROM THE RESTORATION PRINCIPLE

There were two major thrust in the movement: Union and Restoration. They stressed the need to be unified, rather than divided into different sectarian groups. But, they also saw the need of going back to the Bible to bring about a restoration of the true church. To try to accomplish both ideals was too narrow—it excluded too many! More and more they sacrificed the “Restoration Principle” for their concept of Union with other disciples. This group ultimately became known as “The Disciples of Christ Church.” They have of recent years restructured themselves into a denominational body. They hope to merge themselves out of existence as a separate body.

To others, the feeling was very strong that both concepts went together. But it became more obvious that going back to the Bible became more and more exclusive of whom they could truly call Christian and fellowship. These churches used the terms: “Christian Churches” or “Churches of Christ.” These two groups later divided over a basic approach to the Bible resulting in a clear distinction by the 1906 Religious Census.

The Restoration Movement is a thrilling story of good men wanting to get back to the original New Testament Christianity. But men’s hearts are not always willing to pay the price.

## Charted Overview of Restoration Movement in America



## Lesson Seven

***The Bible's Role in the Restoration Principle***

***“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”*** (2 John 9-11)

On the night of His betrayal, Jesus prayed earnestly for His disciples as well as for all who would believe on Him through the preached “word” (John 17:13-20). His prayer was for His believers to have a oneness and unity among them so that they could make a sincere appeal to a lost world (John 17:20-23). But unity requires holding to something(s) in common. Upon what or in whom should we be united?

When one looks around in the religious world, even today, he sees a divided “Christendom!” He sees hundreds of sectarian groups that have sprung up in this country over the past one hundred years. Is this what Christ prayed for? Is this an answer to His prayer for the oneness of those who claim to be His people? The answer to such questions should again be obvious!

If a sincere effort were made to unify those who claim to believe in Christ, what means would we use to help bring such about? What standard would we appeal to? What person would we encourage them to rally around and be united in? We believe the answers are obvious—Jesus is the one that can unite us. He is the **Who!** But the Word of Christ is the **What** that can unite us. Our next lesson will discuss Jesus’ role in the Restoration Principle. This lesson will look at the standard by which we can be united in Christ.

**UNITY AND THE WORD OF GOD**

Jesus certainly would not have prayed for the oneness of His people unless it was a possibility! But, at the same time, there had to be a means by which this unity is brought about and maintained. Many admonitions are given in the New Testament in regards to this.

- 1) *“that you all speak the same things”* (1 Corinthians 1:10)
- 2) *“that there be no divisions among you”* (1 Corinthians 1:10)
- 3) *“that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Corinthians 1:10)
- 4) *“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”* (Romans 16:17)
- 5) *“that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.”* (1 Corinthians 4:6)
- 6) *“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”* (Galatians 1:8)
- 7) *“endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body... one Spirit...one hope...one Lord...one faith...one baptism...one God...!”*

- 8) *“fulfill my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”* (Philippians 2:2)
- 9) *“let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”* (Philippians 3:16-17)
- 10) *“stand fast in the Lord...”* (Philippians 4:1)
- 11) *“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”* (Colossians 2:6-7)
- 12) *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another...”* (Colossians 3:16)

The unity of God’s people definitely is closely tied in with a belief in and holding to the Word of God. Mankind has been given an authoritative record of His Will for the benefit of all men. The authority of Jesus, as well as God the Father, stands behind the New Testament revelations. If men will respect their authority, then they should be unified in their beliefs and practices. It is when we ignore their authority that we become divided and run into grave problems. The following Scriptures emphasize the authority of Christ over mankind.

- 1) Because He is God in the flesh (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 2:9).
- 2) Because He is the One through whom the Father speaks to mankind today (Hebrews 1:1-2; Matthew 17:5).
- 3) Because He is “the truth” (John 14:6).
- 4) Because He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18).
- 5) Because it will be the words of Jesus that will judge mankind in the last day (John 12:48).

### THE WORD OF GOD AND THE APOSTLES

The word “apostle” carries with it the idea of “a person or persons that have been chosen and sent as a special envoy that is fully authorized to represent the sender.” Jesus chose the twelve apostles as His special ambassadors. He gave them the power of binding and loosing His Will among men (Matthew 18:18). What they bound is bound, and what they loosed is loosed! These men were divinely guided in the giving of the Word of God to men (John 16:13). What they were guided into speaking from God and eventually wrote down is the Word of God—***“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe”*** (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 14:37). Christians are exhorted to stand fast in that word (2 Thessalonians 2:15). All things are to be proved by this word (1 Thessalonians 5:21); it is not to be changed or perverted (Galatians 1:6-9); and, it is not to be added to or subtracted from upon threat of terrible things to happen to the one who does (Revelations 22:18-19). When we receive the words of the apostles, we also receive Christ who sent them, as well as the Father who sent Jesus (Matthew 10:40). Jude states that this “system of beliefs” has once for all been delivered to the saints (Jude 3). James states that it is perfect (James 1:25). We infer from the above that the Lord intended for His Word to be an unchangeable pattern to govern the church for all time!

## THE RESTORATION PRINCIPLE AND THE WORD OF GOD

The very term “restoration” infers that there is a pattern or original to which one looks. If restoration is calling for a return to what God originally gave man—he has to return to the Word of God! It is the only source to which we may turn to find our answers about the original intent of God. And, it is because men deviate from the Word of God that the call for “repentance” or “restoration” has to be brought to man’s attention.

Can we worship any way we want to as long as we are sincere in our efforts? For example, (1) Can we offer animal sacrifices, (2) offer burnt incense, (3) offer up our children as a sacrifice to God, (4) or practice prostitution or immoral acts as worship to God and be acceptable to God. Again, can we believe anything we want as long as we are sincere in those beliefs? For example, (1) Can we believe that Jesus was just a man, (2) that the book of Mormon is inspired of God, or that we can practice sin and still be acceptable to God? Does it really matter what a person believes? Jesus said, that we should know the truth and that alone can make us free (John 8:32). The answer to such questions should be obvious to all sincere religious people! The Old Testament Prophets made that perfectly clear time after time in their preaching and writings. The work of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18—700 BC) and King Josiah (2 Kings 22-23—600 BC) to bring about a restoration of the Jewish back to God shows clearly that when we depart from the Word of God that we are not acceptable to Him—that God will not accept just any kind of worship, living, or teaching to His people.

A strong emphasis of passages against turning from the Word of God should make it obvious that it is a necessity to turn to it if we are to be right with God.

- 1) God will take vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8).
- 2) Warning against having an evil heart of unbelief in departing from God, and we only become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. The Jewish nation was not allowed to enter into the promise land because of their disobedience to God or their unbelief. (Hebrews 3:12-14, 18-19)
- 3) Those who willingly turn from God’s Word (sin) and will not repent will be eternally lost (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31).
- 4) Warned to endure so that after we have done the will of God, we can receive the promise of God (Hebrews 10:35-36).
- 5) Peter’s warns against turning from God’s way to sin (2 Peter 2:20-22; 3:14-18).
- 6) We must not turn to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. (Titus 1:15; Mark 7:7-8)
- 7) Warnings against false teachers to lead people astray (2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Acts 20:30; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11).

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

During the Reformation Movement, there was a strong emphasis upon going back to the Bible, which clearly shows the connection of the Bible with the Restoration Principle. The call for restoring New Testament Christianity is a call for going back to the Bible for our authority as it was in the beginning!

## Lesson Eight

***Jesus and the Restoration Principle***

***“Sanctify them by Your truth, Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 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.”*** (John 17:17-21).

The Philippian church was one of the better congregations that the Apostle Paul had helped to establish in Christ, but it was not without problems or challenges. Several references do seem to indicate this (2:1-4; 3:2, 17-19; 4:2). He calls on them to look to Jesus as an example for them to imitate—***“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...”*** Look to Him, have the same mind-set that He had, and you will solve any problem in your midst. But there was a strong emphasis upon Jesus being obedient to the Father, even unto death, even the death of the cross (2:8). He again is our example—an example of submission to God’s Will. Then he exhorted the church to continue after Jesus’ example by being obedient to God (2:12). What does all of this have to do with restoration? Jesus is our example of what makes restoration work—we need to be submissive to God’s Will in our lives. The reason why restoration is necessary is that men have turned away from obeying God and are doing their own thing (Hebrews 3:12). Christ is calling for them to return to Him, to His Way, to His Word!

**JESUS AS THE FOCAL POINT OF RESTORATION**

Focus is that which is central, that which is emphasized, or that which is most important. If you were to shine three flashlights on the same object...you would definitely have a focus on that object. If all of man’s religious efforts were to be focus on Christ, there not only would be a unifying force in Christ, but there would be a restoration of men back to God. When men get side-tracked on the wrong things, it only succeeds in splintering religious people even more.

But there is a danger here also! Someone may observe: *“I could care less about a Restoration principle—all I want is Christ!”* But in reality, can you have Christ without a restoration—a returning to that obedient spirit that Jesus exemplified? We can’t have Christ and ignore His church, His gospel, or His ordinances. The inspired Apostle John wrote: ***“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”*** (2 John 9). Our focus needs to be on Christ—no question about it! He is the One that can save us, give us direction for our lives, and give us an eternal hope of glory. The following may help to illustrate:

1. We do not focus on the message, but on the One who gave the Message. We are to believe in Him, and follow Him who has spoken to us! But we do not separate the Message from the Messenger.
2. Our faith is not focused on some rational facts about Christ only, but it is focus on our full trust in Him as Savior and Redeemer. But we do not separate the facts about Christ from Christ, Himself.

3. Baptism is not just an isolated act that is required of man for salvation. It finds its meaning in Christ. We are baptized into Christ, in His death, etc. We re-enact what we believe about Christ. We show that He is the focal point by our submission to His Will in our lives for the purpose He says to do it.
4. The Church is not a social or religious club to be joined as you would any other club. It is the family of God that has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. It is the body of Christ. He is the head, the king, the savior. Christ gives meaning and importance to the church, but Christ is the focal point.
5. The Lord's Supper is not just a command to be done as a religious exercise. It relates to the focal point—the remembrance of Christ's death for us. There is no merit in partaking of the Lord's Supper in and of itself...only as it relates to Christ! We partake because Christ said so and we want and need to continually be reminded of how much we owe to Him.
6. To help others—to do acts of benevolence is important and necessary...because that is one of the ways we serve the One who has redeemed us.
7. Doctrine is not just a list of truths to be learned and held to, but they are significant because they come from Christ and find their meaning in Christ.

The focus of Christianity is Christ. Everything finds its meaning and value in Him. True Restoration is to put Christ back on the Throne, make Him the central focus of our faith and actions. We make a very serious mistake if we think we can have Christ without restoration. Restoration is an ongoing necessity if we are to remain in fellowship with Christ (1 John 1:7-10).

#### **THE OUTCOME OF CHRIST AS THE CENTER OF RESTORATION**

1. If Christ is the focus, then the doctrines and commandments of men will be put away (Matthew 15:7-9).
2. If Christ is the focus, then He will be the Lord of His Church. He will be the only head of it (Ephesians 1:21-22).
3. If Christ is the focus, then we will recognize that He alone gives the terms of pardon (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).
4. If Christ is the focus, then we will have the kind of leadership that He tells us (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11).
5. If Christ is the focus, then we will practice with simplicity and solemnity the requirements of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, etc.)
6. If Christ is the focus, then the Creeds, Confessions that only hinder restoration will be abandoned for the teaching of Christ only (2 John 9-11).

#### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

On and on the illustrations could go. Christ must be central in any effort to restore New Testament Christianity to its original condition. Without Christ, you have nothing but an empty shell for religion. But you do not have Christ without all that goes with Him—His Name, His Church, His Terms of Pardon, His Worship Activities, His Way of Living, etc.!

## Lesson Nine

***The Cause and Cure of a Sectarian Spirit***

One of the great hindrances to a true restoration of New Testament Christianity is a sectarian spirit. God recognized this problem when He gave the New Testament to mankind to be followed. Many references are made in the New Testament about the dangers of division, factions, and parties arising in the midst of God's people. The sad thing is that these warnings are evidently not taken seriously by some and they often become the source of division and strife in congregations. One of the seven things the Lord hates and is an abomination to Him is ***“one who sows discord among brethren.”*** (Proverbs 6:16-19).

**THE CAUSE OF DIVISION**

Generally, when we look for the cause of division, it is attributed directly to “false teaching.” While it is obvious that false teaching is involved in the process, we believe that the problem goes deeper than that. False teaching may be more of a symptom of a deeper, underlying problem which brings about parties, factions, and divisions. The First Corinthian Letter serves as a divine commentary on division, and its causes and solutions. Early in the first chapter, inspiration comes to grips with the problem: ***“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*** (1:10) The need for renewed efforts at unity among them was becoming obvious—thus, the admonitions in this verse!

Why were they in danger of dividing? What was an underlying factor that was creating the possible division of the church? Verses 11-14 spells the problem out clearly! ***“There are contentions among you....I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.”*** The problem was coming from a wrong attitude of men. It is easy for one to preach himself rather than Christ and to draw people to himself rather than to Christ. It is easy to be attracted to a certain personality instead of to Christ. When this happens, factions can easily develop in that congregation. Self-seeking leads to preaching which draws people to men. The sad thing is that one may preach himself and be deceived into thinking that he is preaching Christ. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2 was badly needed to be said to the church: ***“For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”*** And again, he said: ***“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.”*** (2 Corinthians 4:5). It is very possible that the self-seeking of men was back of looking to the wisdom of this world that led to the false teaching that splintered the church in Corinth. They were taking God's wisdom and using it to bring glory to men. Religion needs to be God-centered, not man-centered. When the center is shifted from God to man, division is certain to take place. The desire for glory (vain glory—the glory of this world) is the primary source of every false doctrine that has cursed the world and divided the church. It is men wanting the glory that belongs to God (1 Corinthians 1:29) and he will go to great lengths to get it. No wonder Paul exhorts the Christians at Corinth not to glory in men, but to glory in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31; Jeremiah 9:23-24).

The trouble at Corinth was not a new thing, but one that has been repeated by mankind from the very beginning. The church was plagued with men with carnal approaches to life (1 Corinthians 3:1-9). Carnality had brought about envy, strife, and factions. Why do men walk by fleshly wisdom rather than God's wisdom? The answer again should be obvious—self-seeking, vain glory, or fleshly glory. In his letter to the churches in Galatia, he shows that the false teaching of the Judaisers came out of self-seeking ambition, pride, a carnal desire to be recognized. Look carefully at Galatians 6:12-14: ***“As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”*** Also, in chapter 5:19-21, Paul connects the sins of contentions, dissensions, heresies, and selfish ambitions with the working of the flesh—giving in to the desires of the flesh. Or, in simple terms, man's desire for recognition—no matter what he has to do to get it. Inspiration adds this observation from Paul: ***“I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”*** (6:12-13). The solution to the problem is given early in the Galatian letter: ***“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”*** (2:20; 5:24, 26; 6:14).

#### THE CURE FOR A SECTARIAN SPIRIT

The cure is simple—**crucify the flesh!** (Galatians 5:24-26). Put to death the old man and let a new man arise to walk in God's way, not his own way (Romans 6:1-6). Work to bring glory to God, not self or some man. 1 Corinthians 3:18-20 shouts it out: ***“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.”*** Just as sure as we glory in men and not in the Lord, division will follow. Division crystallizes around people. Paul shows that to glory in men is to think of men above what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). Whatever one man possesses over another is not of his making, but God's. Let God have the glory, then! (4:7).

When a thorough study is made of the concept of man's boasting or glorying in the Bible, it will be very obvious that herein is the root of all of our problems in Christianity! Again, Paul's first letter to Timothy makes this very clear: ***“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions.”*** (1 Timothy 6:3-4) The reason why such a person will not consent to wholesome words is Pride—thinking he knows when he doesn't that leads to the wrong things. Such people need to see Christ crucified—the glory of God and man's only hope of salvation.

## THE STRUGGLE OF THE PROUD

The “prideful” struggle with such words as “repentance,” “reformation,” or “restoration.” The reason should be obvious—it is to admit wrong. Instead of stressing unity and oneness, the “prideful” are known for envy, strife, reviling, and evil suspicions! To turn back to God is to give glory to God, not one’s self. The seven things God hates begins with pride and ends with sowing discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:16-19). Pride prevents resolving difficulties that lead to division. The one who has done the wrong is too proud to repent, and the one wronged is too proud to forgive. Even the Apostles who had been with Jesus for some three years were still struggling with this problem of pride—who is going to be the greatest in the kingdom! Jesus’ answer in both cases was ***“the greatest is the servant!”*** (Matthew 20:26; John 13:14).

The restoration principle is calling on sinful man to acknowledge his wrong and to humbly repent and turn back to God. Turn from those things not taught in God’s word and be willing to let His word be our only guide. Oneness and unity is found in Christ and listening to Him and giving glory to Him. Restoration will only come when we see our littleness and God’s greatness and seek to point men unto Him. It will only come when we acknowledge that God knows best and our “wisdom” is so far inferior to His—and listen to what he says and do it!

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Are we willing to examine our lives to see if we really are following Jesus or are we following the teachings of men? Can we point to God’s authority (His Word) for what we believe and practice in the name of Christ? Are we perpetuating division by wearing “party names” and following after the “doctrines and commandments of men?” Is my pride showing? Am I concern about what I want, rather than what Jesus wants? Am I willing to be crucified and die to the old way of living and thinking, and let Christ live in me?

## Lesson Ten

## ***Does the Restoration Principle Allow for No Diversity Among Christians?***

***“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*** (Ephesians 4:1-3)

The above admonition that challenges God’s people to work hard at keeping the unity of the Spirit makes it clear that unity is not a “slam-dunk!” It is something at which we must constantly work. Just as surely as we let our guard down, we will be faced with a possibility of a divided congregation. Unity and the restoration principle go hand in hand. A call for unity of those who claim to believe in Christ is a call for going back to Christ and His Church, His Word, His Plan of Salvation, His Worship, His Way of Living, etc. Thus, several things play an important role in restoration: (1) A high respect for God and His Word; (2) A Truth-seeking attitude; (3) A great central focus upon Christ; (4) A proper approach to an understanding of the Word of God.

But something else would seem to be just as critical to be dealt with as the above—the problem of diversity! Restoration seems to be calling for completeness, perfection, total conformity to the original. What happens when we can not find that in a congregation or a brotherhood to which we are connected? In this brief study, we have tried to point out that effort after effort keeps falling far short of the original. How do we deal with all of this diversity? Do we ignore it? Do we accept it as inevitable? Do we justify it or condemn it? Do we prefer a divided brotherhood over a united one with some diversity? Does the restoration principle allow for some diversity among those who profess faith in Christ? Brother Furman Kearley (former editor of the Gospel Advocate) discussed a list of six principles that would help to answer these questions. We believe these thoughts are worthy of our sincere evaluation.

### **MAKE A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP ONLY WHAT GOD SAYS SHOULD BE A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP**

It should be obvious to one who has even a small knowledge of Scripture that Christian fellowship is not wide open with no limitations. God’s Word does draw some lines of fellowship. Six sins are listed in 1 Corinthians 5:11 that we must not fellowship if these sins are persisted in. Several other passages list other things that we are not to fellowship (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Romans 16:17; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:16-19; Titus 1:10-16; 3:10-11; 2 John 9-11; Ephesians 5:11). The above passages clearly indicate that there are sins, false doctrines, and unchristian attitudes which, if persisted in and not repented of, after loving teaching, we must not fellowship with. Also, there is strong emphasis in the Word of God upon:

- 1) Proper preaching of sound doctrine.** (Titus 1:11; Romans 16:18; Philippians 1:15; Matthew 15:9; Galatians 1:6-9; Acts 20:29-30; 1 John 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:1-4; Matthew 15:13-14; 2 John 9-11; 1 Peter 4:11; 3:15).

- 2) **To continue in the doctrine of the Apostles.** (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:5-7; 2 John 4-6, 9; 2 Timothy 3:10; 1 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:9; 1 Corinthians 15:2).
- 3) **There is a Pattern—a Doctrine to be followed.** (1 Corinthians 1:10; John 17:20; 1 Samuel 15:21-23; Romans 15:5-6; Philippians 2:2; Genesis 6:14-22; Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5; Exodus 40:16; 2 Kings 5:14; 1 Chronicles 28:11-12; 15:13-15; Joshua 22:28).
- 4) **To be of the same mind—speaking the same things.** (2 Timothy 1:13; 1 Corinthians 4:6; John 12:48; Revelation 20:12; 1 Kings 22:14; Numbers 22:18, 35; 23:20, 26; Isaiah 8:20; 1 Peter 4:11).

#### **WE SHOULD MAKE NOTHING A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP WHICH GOD DOES NOT**

An example of this is found in Romans 14-15 where an issue was brought up about eating meat offered to idols and observing certain days as holy. It draws a distinction between some brothers being strong and others being weak. The Word clearly states that under the circumstances given in these two chapters that the strong should accept the weak (14:3; 15:1). Those whom God accepts, we should accept.

#### **GOD DOES NOT REQUIRE PERFECTION IN FAITH AS A CONDITION OF SONSHIP OR FELLOWSHIP**

Our fellowship with God certainly doesn't depend upon "sinless perfection." The inspired Apostle John clearly shows that walking in the light is not perfection because we have to have our sins continually cleansed (1 John 1:7). But that fellowship with God is maintained by our continually walking in the light. The following examples show this concept:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. These Christians were in fellowship, but called carnal. God called them "saints."
- 2) Hebrews 5:11-14. These Christians were immature, but in fellowship. They needed to be awakened to their need of growth.
- 3) 1 Peter 2:1-2. These are new Christians that need to grow, but were in fellowship.
- 4) 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 3:10. These Christians needed their faith perfected, but God praised them.

All of these needed more teaching and better understanding. There must be a willingness to accept those who do not have the same degree of faith as I do, but are trying to learn and grow.

#### **GOD DOES NOT REQUIRE PERFECTION IN ACTION AS A CONDITION OF SONSHIP OR FELLOWSHIP**

The church at Corinth was greeted as loving brethren, but they had many imperfections in their actions. Quite a list could be compiled that show this as a fact.

- 1) They had division among them (Ch. 1).
- 2) They had open immorality in their midst unchecked (Ch. 5).
- 3) They were going to law against brethren (Ch. 6).
- 4) They were misusing their liberty in Christ (Chs. 8-10).
- 5) They were abusing the Lord's Supper (Ch. 11).
- 6) They had confusion in their worship (Ch. 12-14)

7) They were misusing the Spiritual Gifts given to them (Ch. 14).

8) Some were denying the resurrection (Ch. 15).

And yet, the fellowship was still there. In the one instance of the unrepentant immoral brother, they were told to withdraw fellowship from him. Some things must be recognized as a growing and learning process, while others must be dealt with quickly.

### **UNITY WITH DIVERSITY IS AN ACTUAL FACT OF LIFE**

From our past reference to Romans 14-15, it is apparent that there were some at Rome that believed it was wrong to eat meat. Yet, in Acts 10:10-15 and 1 Timothy 4:4-5, God tells us that all foods are acceptable for us to eat and enjoy. 1 Timothy 4:1-3 actually states that those who teach such as a doctrine to be followed have departed from the faith. Yet, the Holy Spirit tells us to accept that person who would not eat meat. The same was true of those observing certain days (Galatians 4:10-11). They were wrong, but God said to accept them. Other Jewish activities were tolerated as long as they were not bound on others. The Holy Spirit guided Paul in resisting Judaising teachers trying to have Titus circumcised (Galatians 2:1-10; Acts 15:1-32). But then, Paul turned around and had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3).

### **THE ATTITUDE WITH WHICH A PERSON HOLDS DIVERSE DOCTRINES OR PRACTICES MAKES A LOT OF DIFFERENCE**

If a person is a new Christian, he is expected to study, learn, change, and grow. He is regarded as weak in the faith because of his inadequate knowledge. He is however to be accepted, nourished along, and his imperfections tolerated. It is a time of forbearance (Ephesians 4:1-2). However, a factious person is different! He tries to push his ideas as doctrines of God. He tends to divide the people of God and bring shame upon God and His people. Such a one is to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh!

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

It is important that we study out these principles and learn how to apply them correctly so that we can maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace! Because some have not seen or understood these principles from scripture and have a fleshly outlook about things, they have been the instigator of all kinds of divisions.

It is very important that we understand that unity is not an option, but a necessity! This unity can only come through Christ, forbearing with one another, showing God's love to one another as we continue to grow more and more into the image of Christ. We can certainly be in harmony and fellowship with one another while we help and encourage one another to have the same mind and judgment and come to speak the same things. Diversity of beliefs and actions will always be in a growing church.

Lesson Eleven

***The Great Challenge:  
Application of the Restoration Principle***

***“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*** (James 1:21-22).

We believe that the restoration of New Testament Christianity is a GRAND IDEAL! But is it more than an IDEAL? Is it practical? Can it be accomplished? Can people really return together to a purely New Testament concept of Christianity as first given by God? One thing for sure, there have been those who have given their minds and hearts to attempt such, and there are those who are continuing to do so. Could any honest person object to such spiritual principles as:

- 1) Wearing only the name of Christ to the exclusion of all human names;
- 2) Faith in the living, reigning, interceding Christ being the only creed of the church;
- 3) The New Testament of Christ being the only book of discipline accepted by the church;
- 4) The complete authority of Christ over His church being recognized and restored;
- 5) Christ’s one church being exalted above all man-made institutions and organizations;
- 6) All the commands of Christ being obeyed by his people;
- 7) The ideals of Christ being exemplified in the lives of all who wear His name;
- 8) Unity in the one body of Christ (the church) by faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ that replaces all man-made ways of getting into their man-made churches.

Are these not worthy goals to strive for? Are not these things within our ability (with God’s help) to see accomplished? I am happy to be a part of such an effort that is being made today. I am grateful for those who have made the efforts before me. I am hopeful that there will be many more that will follow after us in this regard.

**SHOULD DIFFICULTIES DISCOURAGE SUCH AN EFFORT?**

In any effort to bring about change, there are difficulties to be worked through. Sometimes, these difficulties can be quite challenging. Should we allow difficulties to stop us from such a worthy ideal? Should we quit trying because others have tried and failed? The greatest code of human conduct ever given is what we call the “Golden Rule.” (Matthew 7:12). Do men live up to this rule at all times? Should we no longer teach or try to practice it because many have failed in the past? Should difficulty stop us from advocating and striving to practice New Testament Christianity? I think the answer is obvious!

**THE CHIEF CHALLENGE OF RESTORATIONISM**

The challenge, we believe, is two-fold in nature: (1) People must first want to accept the Bible as the only authoritative guide; (2) and then, to deal with the challenge of how do we determine Bible authority of what we believe and practice. Men in the past who have had a strong belief in the Authority of the Bible have wrestled with this second concept. Out of their

study and sincere desire to be pleasing to God, they have come up with expressions (slogans) that help to give some guidance in these matters. Examples:

**“In matters of Faith, Unity; In matters of Opinion, Liberty; In all things, Love.”**

(Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 8-9).

**“We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where it is silent.”**

While these expressions are of general value in our efforts to get back to the Bible as an authority, yet they leave some important questions unanswered. For example:

**1) How do you determine when something is a matter of faith and what is a matter of opinion.** Thus, further clarification is needed in order for application to be made. Efforts were made to clarify further. Matters of Faith are determined by:

- a) Commands
- b) Approved Apostolic Examples
- c) Things Necessarily Inferred.

But even with this further clarification is needed. For example:

- a) How do we know when a command applies to us today or not? ( 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 2 Timothy 4:13, 21)
- b) How do we determine the incidentals and the essentials of approved examples? (Acts 20:7-8)
- d) What determines when something is necessarily inferred? (Acts 20:7)

**2) What is meant by the silence of the Scriptures?** “Where the Bible is silent, we are silent.”

Efforts were made to clarify by the two following statements:

- a) “What God commands, we command; what God does not command, we do not command.”
- b) “We must not fail to command ALL that God commands; and we must not command ANYTHING that God does not command.”

During the Reformation Movement, there were two approaches taken towards the Bible.

- a) **Martin Luther**—He wanted to retain in the Lutheran Church those things formerly practiced in the Roman Catholic Church that were not expressly condemned.
- b) **Zwingli**—He wanted to abolish everything that the Bible does not authorize.

To further illustrate this problem:

- a) The Bible is silent about church buildings, multiple cups at the Lord’s Table, incense, Candles, pews, Organs, Hymnbooks, Choirs, Bible Classes, TV preaching, blackboards, etc.
- b) Are these all in the same category?
- c) TV preaching is not mentioned, must we reject such?

The principle of silence is illustrated in Hebrew 7:14.

- a) The Old Testament did not forbid priests from being appointed from other tribes.
- b) It just simply said that priests were to be from the tribe of Levi.
- c) Unless God gives additional information about priest from another tribe, the only authority they had was to appoint them from Levi.
- d) The Hebrew writer used this argument to prove that Jesus could not have been a priest after the Aaronic Priesthood because He was not from the tribe of Levi.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Restoration has its great difficulties and challenges, but this is no reason not to strive for a complete restoration of New Testament Christianity. A lot of past efforts on the part of sincere people have failed to even come close to what they had envisioned. But why can't we build on their efforts to continue to push for a complete return. The concept has a common sense appeal to an open mind. Why shouldn't we join together in a great effort to make application of the restoration principle and do our part to bring people back to God.

## Lesson Twelve

***Restoration: A Continuing Challenge***

***“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.”*** (Hebrews 6:1-3)

Restoration is a perfectly good word and is used often in our conversations with one another about various things. But when this word is used with reference to the religion of Christ, it is describing that effort to recover the original religion given by Christ—because it has been lost by the indifference of men. The original pattern was given by divine inspiration to the Apostles of Christ and written down in our New Testament. Restoration is a valid concept because:

- 1) Original Christianity was divinely given by God for the good of mankind;
- 2) It cannot be improved upon by man;
- 3) Therefore, man needs to get back to what God originally gave!

Restoration is an IDEAL—something being sought for that was perfect when first given by God. Then, is complete restoration going to ever happen? Can it be fully and completely realized? The answer would obviously be “NO!” Even though Jesus challenges us to be “perfect” as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), it is something we know we will never reach. But if we are content to strive for anything less than perfection, have we lost our true goal given to us by the Lord?

Let’s look at three concepts for a moment and analyze which of the three fits us. Are we willing to look closely at our outlook?

- 1) **The Ideal.** This represents complete or perfect restoration. We have arrived!
- 2) **Working towards the Ideal.** We are constantly striving, searching, struggling, and working towards attaining the complete restoration.
- 3) **Unconcerned about the Ideal.** We have accomplished some and are satisfied with the status quo...just maintaining where we are.

Which of the last two statements describes you? Shouldn’t we be always striving toward the goal of perfection? Should we not want to see a complete restoration of New Testament Christianity?

**WHAT IS REQUIRED TO HAVE THE CHURCH RESTORED?**

Restoration infers that there has been a departure from the original and there is a desire to bring it back to what it was originally. If the church fell away into apostasy, then what is required for it to be restored again?

- 1) To require again what it took to bring the church into existence in the first place. How did people come into the church? What made them a part of the body or church of Christ? The answer is basically found in Acts 2:22-47.
  - a) They had the Gospel (good news) of Christ preached to them.

- b) They were called upon to believe that Jesus is both Lord and Christ and the willingness to confess it.
- c) When they asked what they must do, they were told to repent and be baptized (burial with Christ in water) for the removal of their sins.
- d) They gladly received the message and were baptized.
- e) The Lord added them to the apostles, whom God placed into the church.
- 2) Once the church comes into existence again, then, it becomes necessary to worship according to God's instructions—correct activities and with a correct spirit.
- 3) It then, is necessary for the church to begin to do the good works that God ordained for it to do, such as: Preaching the Gospel to the whole world, Benevolence towards all, the building up of the body of Christ, etc.
- 4) God's children are to present their bodies as living sacrifices unto Him—to live godly and righteous lives before all.
- 5) They are to constantly maintain that unity and oneness that God has given them in Christ.
- 6) The church is to be the pillar and ground of the truth—keeping their message pure.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God has given us His divine pattern for the church. We must follow that divine pattern if we want the blessings of God. While efforts may help to restore all of the basics of Christianity, it will never be possible to say..."We have arrived!" There will always be the challenge—onward towards perfection! The reason—the human element will always hinder us. Yet, it is important to:

- 1) Constantly seek only for truth;
- 2) Constantly seek only to teach truth and all the truth;
- 3) And as well constantly seek to practice it fully as we come to know and understand God's truth.





