

Lesson 5

THE RESTORATION PERIOD

A.D. 1700 - 1900

*“Thus saith Jehovah, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...”
(Jeremiah 6:16)*

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The Study of History is Profitable.

1. Old Testament writers appealed to history (Deut. 1-3; Psa. 78; Isa. 51:1-2).
2. Jesus (Mt. 12:40-42), Paul (1 Cor. 10:1-12), the author of Hebrews (Heb. 4:1-11), James (Jas. 5:17-18), Peter (2 Pet. 2:4-9; 3:3-5), and Jude (Jude 5-7) all appealed to history to make their point.
3. We follow their example and appeal to history to learn important lessons for the Lord's church today.
4. It has been said: “Those who ignore history are destined to repeat it.” It has also been said: “All we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.”

B. Why This Particular Study Is Profitable.

1. We will study how many men sought to restore true New Testament Christianity instead of simply reforming the errors of man-made doctrines and practices set forth by the Catholic Church.
2. We will study how men made great sacrifices to preach and defend the gospel in order to restore New Testament Christianity.

II. THE NEED FOR A RESTORATION MOVEMENT.

A. Denominations Coming From Europe.

1. After Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas (the New World) in 1492, others (like Ponce de Leon, 1513) came and brought their religion with them; namely, Catholicism. French (Canada) and Spanish (Florida, Mexico, California) Catholic missions were established. A large number of Catholic immigrants coupled with a high birth rate among Catholic families caused a large number of Catholics to be found in the New World. Two features of American Catholicism was the formation of parochial schools to teach children Catholicism and a more liberalized, “free-thinking” Catholicism.
2. Pilgrims and others who came to the New World wanted to exercise their religious freedom. They were practicing the religions of the European Protestant Reformation (review Lesson 4). The colonized eastern seaboard looked like miniature European colonies with European religions. Soon, American settlers dissatisfied with various forms of Protestantism came out of those Churches to form other denominations. American denominations were adaptations of European denominations.

3. Catholicism came first to the New World, followed by...
 - a) The Church of England (Sir Walter Raleigh at Jamestown, Virginia, 1607). The name was changed later to the Episcopal Church in 1789.
 - b) The Presbyterian Church (Alexander Whitaker in Virginia, 1611).
 - c) The Congregationalist Church (pilgrims at Plymouth, Mass., 1620; John Winthrop in Massachusetts, 1630).
 - d) The Lutheran Church (New York, 1623-24).
 - e) The Baptist Church (Roger Williams at Providence, Rhode Island, 1639).
 - f) The Dutch Reformed Church (New York, 1664).
 - g) The Quaker Church or Friends (William Penn in Pennsylvania, 1656).
 - h) The German Mennonite Church and Dutch Calvinist Church (American colonies, 1690's).
 - i) The Methodist Church (Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury at Baltimore, 1784).
- B. Denominations Forming in America.
 1. The Church of God was founded by John Winebrenner in 1825.
 2. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church was founded by William Miller in 1830.
 3. The Mormon Church was founded by Joseph Smith in 1820-30. It follows the Book of Mormon, the Pearl of Great Price, and Doctrine and Covenant.
 4. The Christians Science Church was founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1866. It follows the Church Manuel and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.
 5. The Jehovah's Witness Church was founded by Charles T. Russell in 1870-72. It follows the teachings of the Watchtower Society.
 6. The Holiness Church began between 1880 and 1890.
 7. The Assembly of God Church began in 1914.
 8. Characteristics of the American denominations that differ from European denominations:
 - a) Claim to latter-day revelations.
 - b) Radical and strange views on the nature of Jesus, man, salvation, the end times, the after-life, etc.
 9. Sidney S. Mead's **Handbook of Denominations in the United States** lists hundreds of denomination in existence today.

III. THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT.

A. Causes for the Movement.

1. The increase in reading and studying the Bible since the time of the reformation led many to a great understanding of God's word. As men learned more of God's word, they thought less of man's word (creeds, councils, etc.). They asked, "Why not go back to the Bible and do it the Bible way?"
2. People were dissatisfied with the attempt made at reformation of religion. Something else (restoration) must be done!
3. People grew dissatisfied with denominational doctrines and divisions primarily among three groups: Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian. They saw the division that came from the reformation as contrary to the NT (Jn. 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:4-6).

4. People saw the ignorance and arrogance among the “clergy” and demanded Bible for what was believed and practiced. They desire to go back to the New Testament pattern.
 5. Camp meetings focused on Bible preaching.
- B. Principles of the Movement.
1. As people recognized Jesus Christ as supreme authority in religion and the NT as the only rule of faith and practice, they would automatically reject all human authority and creeds.
 2. A proper distinction was made between the Old and New Testament and the acceptance of the New Testament as the only guide in religion. (Restorationists said something like this: “If a creed says more than the NT, it says too much. If it says less, it says too little. If it says the same, we do not need them.”)
 3. A pattern of the NT church was recognized.
 4. The autonomy of the NT church was recognized.
 5. The unity of true NT Christians based upon a common belief in God’s word was recognized.
 6. Non-denominational Christianity can be established by restoring the 1st Century New Testament church.
 7. Unity can be achieved upon what is revealed in the NT, but division comes from what is not revealed (believer baptism vs. infant baptism, sing vs. instrument, immersion vs. sprinkling / pouring).
 8. The Bible alone!
- C. Men within the Movement.
1. James O’Kelly , a Methodist preacher, opposed the Methodist Church in North Carolina in 1792-94. He wanted to be called “Christian,” recognize Christ as the only head of the church, use the Bible as the only creed, practice Christian character, and retain the right of private judgment and liberty of conscience.
 2. Abner Jones and Elias Smith, both Baptist preachers, opposed the Baptist church in Vermont in 1801-05. They wanted the same as James O’Kelly even though he did not know O’Kelly.
 3. Barton W. Stone was sprinkled in the Church of England (1772) and later became a Presbyterian preacher (1796). He opposed the Presbyterian Church in Cane Ridge, KY, at a camp meeting in August of 1801 where 20,000 to 30,000 were gathered. He left the Presbyterian Church in 1803, formed the Springfield Presbytery, and then abandoned it in 1804 (see “The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery”). He adopted the name “Christian” in 1804 and then was baptized in 1807 after learning the truth on baptism. In 1824 he met Alexander Campbell and in 1826 he published “The Christian Messenger” paper to promote unity among Christians.
 4. Thomas Campbell was born in Ireland in 1763 and came to America in 1807. He was a Presbyterian preacher who left the Presbyterian Church in 1808-09. He said, “Where the Scriptures speak; we speak; where the Scriptures are silent; war silent.” He believed: “That that New Testament is supreme authority for Christians in all matter of faith and practice.” He wrote the “Declaration and Address” (1809) promoting unity based upon a common understanding of the New Testament teaching. He also set forth an important distinction between matters of faith (doctrines taught in the New Testament) and matters of opinion (judgments of men in revealed in the New Testament).

5. Alexander Campbell, contrary to popular opinion, was not the founder of the Church of Christ, nor was he the first to practice restoration. The men mentioned above had already paved the way for restoration in Europe and America. Alexander Campbell, however, did continue the practice of restoration. Campbell came to America in 1809 and in 1811 he and his father formed the “Brush Run” congregation. After studying the subject of baptism, he and his father and other family members were baptized (immersed), June 12, 1812. From 1813 – 1816 they were associated with the Redstone Baptist Association and in 1823 they joined the Mahoning Baptist Association. His paper was called “The Christian Baptist” (1823). Later they severed all connections with the Baptists. He was a great debater (1819-1843), writer / editor (1823-1866), and college president (1841) at this time.
 6. Walter Scott left the Presbyterian Church to become a New Testament Christian.
 7. Jacob Creath, Jr. left the Presbyterian Church and Baptist Church to become a New Testament Christian.
 8. Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, J.A. Harding were New Testament Christians in the late 1800’s in the Nashville area.
 9. Austin McGary preached in Texas and started the “Firm Foundation” paper in 1884.
 10. W.K. Pendleton, Moses E. Lard, J.W. McGarvey, “Raccoon” John Smith and others returned to New Testament Christianity for awhile.
- D. Sacrifices for the Movement.
1. Preachers were given little or no pay.
 2. Preachers travelled long distances (thousands of miles a year) to preach by walking or horseback.
 3. Preachers were attacked by Indians on the frontier.
 4. Preachers preached long hours and held meetings lasting weeks.
 5. Preachers read and studied long hours developing original material.
 6. Preachers printed numerous articles and books calling people back to the Bible on a variety of subjects.

IV. RESTORATION MOVEMENT FAILURES.

- A. Progression and Retrogression.
1. Like the men of the reformation movement, the men of the restoration movement uninspired human beings and were therefore subject to mistakes as are all men.
 2. They were right only in so far as they held to the teaching of the NT.
 3. If we teach and practice what these men did, it is not because they taught it, but because it is found in the word of God.
 4. Some men compromised the truth later in life.
 5. Progress in preaching the gospel lead to a desire for organization among churches (1836 to 1842). Progression of the movement soon led to retrogression.
- B. Three Failures.
1. The American Christian Missionary Society. In October, 1849, a convention was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, by some who desired a general church organization to do evangelism. The ACMS was formed and Alexander Campbell (who opposed the Baptist missionary societies in 1823) was elected its first president.

2. Instrumental music. In 1859, L.L. Pinkerton, a minister for a church in Midway, KY., allowed an organ to be used in the worship service. By 1869, some brethren were locked out of church buildings that refused to use the instrument in worship. Those brethren who continued to use the instrument formed the Christian Church and Disciples of Christ. Members of churches of Christ did not. However, today, some among Churches of Christ are using the instrument in worship.
3. The Disciples of Christ Denomination. In 1906, the Disciples of Christ were recognized as a separate denomination from churches of Christ. They use instruments, women preachers, Thursday Lord's supper, the Missionary Society, recreation, pious unimmersed, etc. Some Churches of Christ today are now doing the same things as the Disciples of Christ such as using instruments and allowing unimmersed members.

V. LESSONS LEARNED.

A. Why So Many Denominations Today?

1. America (and the world) is full of human denominations that came from Europe and the reformation period.
2. The problem: one form of human government was rejected (the pope) and replaced by another form of human government (synods, councils, creeds, etc.); one human creed was replaced by another human creed.

B. Restoration Can Come About Through Love For Truth: "The Seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:15). Don't Put A New Patch on An Old Garment (Mt. 9:14-17)!

C. Restoration Can Begin Well and End Poorly.

D. A Word of Warning.

1. Brethren must we warned not to change the NT pattern for the changing world around them. God's word is unchangeable in a changing world.
2. Let us keep the Lord's church free from denominationalism!

E. The NT Church Can Exist and Does Today.

1. Consider two important principles:
 - a) The seed principle. A seed, no matter how old and when it was grown, will produce after its kind when planted (Gen. 1:11-12). The seed of the kingdom can be planted today on good soil, 2,000 years after it was grown, and produce true, New Testament Christians (Luke 8:15; 1 Peter 2:22-23)
 - b) The pattern principle. A pattern, no matter how old and when it is written, can be used to make a product (Ex. 25:9,40; 26:30; Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:2,5). The pattern of the NT can be followed today, 2,000 years after it was written and produce the same product, the New Testament church (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 16:1; 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13; 1 Pet. 4:11).
2. All the identifying marks and characteristics of the Lord's church can exist today with the right attitude and action of God's people.

VI. CONCLUSION.

A. The Faithful Remnant of the Lord's Church.

1. The Lord has always had a remnant of people who remain faithful to him during any period of history (1 Kings 19:18; Dan. 2:44; 1 Cor. 15:24; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 3:4; 2 Tim. 3:10,14).
2. Will you be a part of that faithful remnant?