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RESTORING THE CHURCH - PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH LIFE

Restoration of The Church

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this lesson is to help the believer get a vision for what God wants to do in and through the church in these days so that they can intelligently commit themselves in time, energy and stewardship to the strengthening, rebuilding and development of a strong, united, victorious local church.

KEY VERSE:

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

Acts 3:19-21

I. WHAT DOES THE WORD “RESTORATION” MEAN?

- A. The word “restoration” literally means to bring something back or to put something back into its former or original state. It means to repair, renew, to put back into existence or use. It means that whatever has been lost, misplaced or stolen is now put back into existence, a former condition or use.

- B. When applied to the church the word restoration refers to the recovery to the church of truth that has been lost. It speaks of a reviving of New Testament Christianity and a renewing of New Testament experience.

II. WHAT IS THE NEED FOR “RESTORATION” IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CHURCH?

- A. The general condition of the church today is much different than that of the early church.
 - 1. The early church was a powerful church (Acts 2:40-41; 8:7, 39; 19:11-13).
 - 2. The early church has a tremendous measure of truth (Acts 2:42).
 - 3. The early church had a high level of Christian character (Hebrews 6:1-2).
- B. The church experienced a decline through the centuries.
 - 1. Many lost their first love (Revelation 2:1-7).
 - 2. There was a decline in emphasis on the supernatural.
 - 3. There was a lessening of the dependence on the Spirit.
 - 4. There was a spirit of compromise that diluted the church.
- C. Many doctrines were either lost to the church or declined to mere ritual and form.
 - 1. The Gifts of the Spirit.
 - 2. The Fivefold Ministry.
 - 3. Plurality of Elders.
 - 4. Priesthoods of All Believers.
 - 5. And many others.

III. WHAT ARE GOD’S PROMISES CONCERNING RESTORATION?

- A. God will restore His city to a place of faithfulness and righteousness (Isaiah 1:21 - 27).
- B. God will accomplish this before the return of Christ (Acts 3:19-21)

1. The word “restitution” is synonymous with “restoration”. This statement refers to the end of the Church Age when God will bring back to the Church those things which were lost. This time of restoration and restitution will immediately precede the second coming of Christ (Acts 3:21; Ecclesiastes 3:1; Acts 1:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1).
2. The things to be restored before Christ’s coming are those things specifically referred to in the Prophets. If the prophets made predictions concerning this time, then they will surely come to pass. The Church should be eagerly searching the prophetic Scriptures for clues to our position in God’s timetable.

A word of warning is in order at this point. Some feel that the Devil will be restored. This is a typical example of the natural mind trying to interpret restoration apart from the prophets. Nowhere in the Scriptures can a prophetic voice be found predicting the restoration of Satan. Such thinking therefore must be rejected. This rule of interpretation should be applied to any restoration theory (See Revelation 20:10 and 14).

IV. WHAT ARE GOD’S PRINCIPLES THAT GOVERN RESTORATION?

- A. God’s restoration always involved returning more than was taken (Exodus 22:1-13; Luke 19:18).
- B. God’s restoration is always perfect and complete (Mark 3:5; 8:25).

V. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH CONCERNING THE RESTORATION OF THE NATURAL JEW?

- A. God originally separated Israel to be the channel of His kingdom through which the Messiah would come (Galatians 3:19-29).
- B. When Israel rejected the Messiah as a nation God took the administration of the kingdom from them and gave it to the church (Matthew 21:43).
- C. When Israel rejected Messiah, they were cut off as branches from the tree of faith (Romans 11:17-24).

- D. The Church of Jesus Christ is now the people of God and the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).
- E. Whenever natural Jews receive Christ as Saviour and Lord, they are grafted back into the tree of faith, they become part of Israel of God and they become one with other Jews and Gentiles in the church, the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22).
- F. The Bible teaches a spiritual restoration of Israel by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant. It is not a restoration of the Mosaic Covenant ritualism (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28-32; Romans 10:1; 9-13; 11:23-26; Acts 16:31). See chart.

CONCLUSION:

The Bible is basically a Bible of Restoration. Genesis, the “Book of Beginnings”, shows us the origin of many things. The Revelation, the last book of the Bible, tells us the final state of all things. The Bible’s basic plot is simple: it is the story of a God-created man whom wilfully violated God’s love, thereby alienating himself from God. God then initiated a wonderful plan that would ultimately restore the fallen man to a relationship with his Creator. Between Genesis 3:24 and Revelation 21:3 and 4, we see the panorama of restoration in its fullest sense. It is in the church where we are going to see God finish this great and glorious plan. It is the church, the Bride of Christ, that will be prepared and ready for the Lord’s return (Revelation 19:7).