

THE RESTORATION PLEA (1)
Jeremiah 6:16

Introduction:

- 1. Keith Sisman of Cambridge, England wrote a book called Traces of the Kingdom.**
 - a. Brother Sisman passed away last year (2016).**
 - b. He was a businessman, a preacher of the Gospel and a church historian.**
 - c. He utilized the vast resources of the Cambridge University and British National Libraries for his research.**

- 2. Brother Sisman traces the history of the churches of Christ in Great Britain from the first through the 17th centuries.**
 - a. The Lord's church flourished in England, especially from the late 1300's through the 1600's, despite persecution.**
 - b. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church carried out these persecutions in which thousands were tortured, imprisoned and killed.**

- 3. Historians generally do not distinguish the churches of Christ from movements such as Lollards, Anabaptists and Puritans.**

- 4. Some confuse churches of Christ with the Baptists in the 1600's.**

- 5. Churches of Christ had a distinct identity from other churches.**
 - a. Their aim was to go back to the Bible and restore the New Testament church (Isaiah 8:20; Hebrews 8:5).**
 - b. They rejected original sin and infant baptism (Matt. 18:3).**
 - c. They immersed for the remission of sins (Act 2:38).**
 - d. They rejected transubstantiation and ate the Lord's supper as a memorial every first day of the week (1 Cor. 11:24,25).**
 - e. They met in autonomous congregations with elders, deacons and evangelists (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Eph. 4:11).**

- f. They were known for memorizing and preaching the Bible.
 - g. They used the Scriptural term “churches of Christ” to distinguish themselves from other groups (Rom.16:16).
6. In the late 1600’s, they compromised with Calvinistic churches to stand against the Church of England and lost their identity.
7. There have been many efforts in history to restore the true faith.

Discussion:

I. THE RESTORATION PLEA IS FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

A. King Hezekiah of Judah sought to restore the true worship in Judah during the 8th century BC (2 Chronicles 29-31).

- 1. The worship of God in the temple had ceased in the days of his father, Ahaz.
- 2. He called all Israel to Jerusalem to keep the Passover for “they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner” (2 Chronicles 30:5).
- 3. Hezekiah also restored the priesthood to its rightful place (2 Chronicles 31:2-4).

B. King Josiah again restored the true faith in Judah in the 7th century BC (2 Kings 22,23).

- 1. He ordered the temple be repaired and restored.
- 2. The Book of the Law was found in the rubble.
- 3. When read, it brought about a movement to restore the true worship throughout Israel (2 Kings 23:1-3).
- 4. Idols were burned and the high places were destroyed (2 Kings 23:4-20).

II. THE RESTORATION PLEA IS ALSO FOUND IN CHURCH HISTORY.

- A. New Testament writers warned there would be an apostasy.**
 - 1. Paul spoke of a great falling away (Acts 20:29,30; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:1-3).**
 - 2. Peter, John and Jude all warned of a great apostasy (2 Peter 2; 1 John 2:18; 4:1; Jude 3-19).**

- B. The simplicity of New Testament Christianity was gradually changed.**
 - 1. The church's government was corrupted (Acts 14:23).**
 - a. One elder became the bishop over a church.**
 - b. Eventually, a bishop of a large church would become the head of all the churches in an area.**
 - c. The corruption evolved until the bishop of Rome claimed supremacy over all the churches.**
 - d. The organization of the Roman Catholic Church was a parallel to the government of the Empire.**
 - e. A priesthood evolved as in Judaism and the pagan religions.**

 - 2. The worship was also gradually changed to be like Judaism and paganism (John 4:24;17:17; Acts 2:42).**
 - a. The Lord's supper was changed from a memorial to a sacrifice - transubstantiation (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).**
 - b. Choirs and instrumental music replaced congregational, acappella singing (Ephesians 5:18,19; Colossians 3:16).**

 - 3. Other changes included:**
 - a. Martyrs became "saints" and prayers were offered to them (1 Cor. 1:2; Ephesians 5:20).**
 - b. Mary was proclaimed "the mother of God" and**

- a mediator (Jn. 2:4; Matt. 12:46-50; 1 Tim. 2:5).
- c. Priests were forbidden to marry (Hebrews 13:4).
- d. Popes and church officials became civil rulers and landowners (John 18:36; Romans 14:17).

III. VARIOUS EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE CHURCH WERE MADE.

A. The Waldenses were led by a wealthy merchant of Lyons, France named Peter Waldo in the 12th century.

- 1. The New Testament was translated into French.**
- 2. The New Testament, not the pope, was the authority.**
- 3. The Lord's supper was observed weekly.**
- 4. Congregations had bishops (elders) and deacons.**
- 5. Pope Innocent III. ordered a crusade against them in 1208 and many thousands were killed.**

B. John Wycliffe pled for a return to the Bible in the 1300's.

- 1. Wycliffe, a professor at Oxford, made the first complete translation of the entire Bible into English.**
- 2. His followers were nicknamed "Lollards."**
- 3. They taught the Bible is the only authority and rejected the authority of the pope.**

C. John Huss and his followers in Bohemia were influenced by the teachings of Wycliffe in the early 15th century.

- 1. Huss taught Christ was the only head of the church and the New Testament was its only guide.**
- 2. Huss received a guarantee of safety to attend the Council of Constance in 1415, but it was not kept, and he was burned at the stake by the Catholic Church.**

Conclusion:

- 1. Today, we are blessed to have the freedom to follow the Bible.**
- 2. If you have not obeyed the Gospel, do so today.**

