

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT (1) 2 Kings 20-24

Introduction:

1. When good King Hezekiah of Judah died, his son, Manasseh, came to the throne.
 - a. Manasseh was as evil as Hezekiah had been good.
 - b. He worshipped idols as well as the sun, moon and stars.
 - c. He practiced witchcraft and consulted mediums.
 - d. He even set up an idol of Asherah in the temple of God.
 - e. He filled Jerusalem with innocent blood.

2. Manasseh's son, Amon, came to the throne when the evil king finally died.
 - a. Amon "did evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done."
 - b. His own servants conspired against him and killed him.

3. Josiah, Amon's son, was made king when he was only eight years old.

"And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (2 Kings 22:2).

4. Josiah began a movement to restore the true worship of the true God.
 - a. He had the temple of God repaired and the rubbish removed.
 - b. The Book of God's Law was found in God's house where it had been lost.
 - c. Josiah destroyed idols throughout the land.
 - d. He kept the Passover in the way it was supposed to be done.
 - e. He called Judah back to God and His Word.

5. The Protestant Reformation broke the power of the papacy.
 - a. The Bible was restored to its rightful place of authority.
 - b. The right of believers to study and understand the Bible for themselves was maintained.

6. Protestants, however, came to differ on many points.
 - a. They formed religious parties around strong leaders.
 - b. They locked their teachings into creeds which became as binding as the Bible.
 - c. They were soon divided into many conflicting denominations.

7. A cry arose to return to the Bible and restore simple, New Testament Christianity.
 - a. Protestants aimed to reform the Roman Catholic Church.
 - b. These wished to restore the original church of the Bible.

- c. They believed true unity could come only by faithfully following the New Testament pattern.

Discussion:

I. THE RESTORATION PLEA WAS FIRST SOUNDED IN BRITAIN.

- A. Churches of Christ existed in England as early as the Reformation.
- B. The Haldane Movement in Scotland was an attempt to restore.
 - 1. Robert and James Haldane were wealthy brothers who used their fortune to preach the Gospel.
 - 2. They took the Bible as their only guide.
 - 3. They organized believers into congregations with elders.
 - 4. They kept the Lord's supper every Lord's day.
 - 5. Sadly, they divided over infant baptism.

II. THE RESTORATION HAD ITS GREATEST SUCCESS IN AMERICA.

- A. Conditions were right for the Restoration plea to take hold.
 - 1. America had almost unlimited religious freedom.
 - 2. Many of the first settlers came for religious reasons.
 - 3. The earliest Americans were bold, independent people.
 - 4. The Bible was the one Book known and revered by all.
- B. Various attempts at Restoration were made in different areas.
 - 1. James O'Kelley of North Carolina broke with the Methodists in 1794.
 - 2. O'Kelley's followers accepted five principles:
 - a. Christ is the only head of the church.
 - b. "Christian" is the only correct name for believers.
 - c. The Bible is the only acceptable guide in religion.
 - d. Christian character is the only test of fellowship.
 - e. Private judgment is the right of all believers.
 - 3. O'Kelley never gave up infant baptism, but many of his followers accepted the full truth of the Gospel.
- C. Abner Jones and Elias Smith broke with the Baptists in New England.
 - 1. Jones, a doctor in Vermont, was a member of the Free Will Baptist Church.
 - a. He believed man made creeds should be discarded.
 - b. He believed the Bible should be the only guide.
 - c. He believed followers of Christ should be called simply Christians.

2. Elias Smith, a Baptist preacher, joined Jones, and established churches throughout New England.
- D. John Wright came to Indiana from North Carolina in 1810.
1. He, his father, and brother established ten Free Will Baptist churches and formed the Blue River Association.
 2. They soon rejected the Baptist creed in favor of the Bible as their only guide.
 3. They rejected the Baptist name and taught believers should be known as “friends,” “saints,” or “Christians.”
 4. They began to call the congregations “churches of God” or “churches of Christ.”
 5. They baptized for remission of sins, had the Lord’s supper every Lord’s day, and sang without instruments.
 6. Fifteen congregations of German Baptists gave up their name and their errors on baptism to unite with them.
- III. THE LARGEST RESTORATION MOVEMENT WAS LED BY BARTON W. STONE IN KENTUCKY.
- A. Stone was a well educated Presbyterian preacher.
1. When he was ordained, he agreed to follow the creed only so far as it followed the Word of God.
 2. In 1801, a great revival broke out in Cane Ridge where Stone preached.
 - a. Fifteen to twenty thousand attended a camp meeting.
 - b. Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian preachers all worked together to save sinners.
- B. Stone and four other preachers were dismissed from the synod for teaching that sinners had the power to come to Christ.
1. “The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery” contains Restoration principles.
 2. The Bible was their only guide.
 3. Their emphasis was on unity based on the Bible.

Conclusion:

1. The Restoration plea is a “Back to the Bible” plea.
2. If we obey the same plan of salvation today which was taught in the first century by inspired men, we will be added by the same Lord to the same church they were (Acts 2:36-47).
3. We will be simply Christians, members of the church of Christ.