

RESTORING NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

Text: Isaiah 58:12

INTRO: Christianity as it came from its Founder was perfect, lacking nothing--but inspired writers foretold apostasy, 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-4.

Throughout the ages godly men have sought to restore religious teachings & practices to what they were in the original century of Christianity.

We believe that as long as the seed, the word of God, remains in the world, N.T. Christianity can be restored in every generation.

I. SOME ASPECTS OF 1st CENTURY CHRISTIANITY ARE NOT MEANT TO BE RESTORED.

A. Miracles were meant to be temporary, and cannot be restored.

But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

B. Local customs, clothing styles, modes of travel, etc.

1. The "holy kiss." Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26

Then Joab said to Amasa, "Are you in health, my brother?" And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. But Amasa did not notice the sword that was in Joab's hand. And he struck him with it in the stomach, and his entrails poured out on the ground (2 Sam. 20:9-10) **Judas**

Right hand of fellowship -- Gal. 2:9

NOTE: If you want me to kiss you, let me know and I will do so. If you want to kiss me, I'll let you. But "restoring" a custom that was never universal to begin with is not a need of

Christ's church.

2. Foot washing. John 13:14

Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. (1 Tim. 5:9-11)

NOTE: Jesus served as host at the Passover meal, & washed the feet of His guests. In the days when people wore open sandals, & walked virtually everywhere they went over hot, dusty, unpaved streets, washing their feet when they arrived at your home -- or at least providing cool water for them to wash their feet -- was a common act of hospitality. It was never a church ordinance & there is no record or hint that it was ever practiced as a ritual in a church assembly.

NOTE: If you want me to wash your feet, I'll do it. If you want to, you can wash mine. But not as a ritualistic part of a worship service.

3. Robes, veils, sandals, etc., were never an issue in Old or New Testament times. We do not know as much about their styles as we probably think we do, but we do not need to. Modesty is bound upon us, but their particular styles of dress are not an issue -- and we have no need to try to restore them.

II. MANY THINGS HAVE BEEN RESTORED.

- A. Baptism by immersion for remission of sins.
- B. The organization, work, & worship of the N.T. church.
- C. Weekly communion, acapella (define) singing, etc.

III. THINGS THAT STILL NEED TO BE RESTORED.

A. Daily Prayer & Bible Reading..

Acts 17:11

So continuing daily with 1 accord in the temple & breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness & simplicity of heart, praising God & having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

(Acts 2:46-47).

1 Thess. 5:17

So the churches were strengthened in the faith & increased in number daily. (Acts 16:5).

B. Concern for Lost Souls. Acts 8:1, 4; Rom. 10:1

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel... For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. (1 Cor. 9:16, 19-22).

C. The Spirit of Brotherhood.

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, & sold their possessions & goods, & divided them among all, as anyone had need. (Acts 2:44-45)

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. (Acts 4:32).

NOTE: The things they had in common were more important to each of them than the things in which they differed.

Acts 12:5, when Peter was in prison the whole church prayed for him.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens & so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:1-2).

NOTE: little brother doesn't show up for supper

For as the body is one & has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body --whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. (1 Cor 12:12-27).

OLD DOC BROWN

He was just an old country doctor in a little country town.
Fame & fortune had passed him by, but we never saw him frown.
He'd go his way as day by day he helped us, one and all,
And many a patient forgot to pay altho Doc's fees were small.
One day he had to leave his office, couldn't pay his office rent,
So to a dusty upstairs over the livery stable Doc Brown & his satchel
went,
And on the hitching post outside to advertise his wares
He nailed a little sign that read, "Doc Brown had moved upstairs."

But one day he didn't answer when we knocked upon his door.
Doc Brown's body was lying there, but his soul was there no more.
Just lying there in that old brown chair, on his face, a smile of content,
But the only money we could find on him was a quarter and a copper cent.

When we opened up his ledger what we saw gave our hearts a pull.
Beside each debtor's name old Doc had written these words: "paid in full."

Old Doc should have had a funeral fit for a king.
It's a ghastly joke our town was broke & no one could give a thing
'Cept Jones, the undertaker. He did mighty well
Donating an old iron casket he'd never been able to sell.

And the funeral procession wasn't much for pomp & grace & style
But the wagon loads of mourners stretched out for more than a mile.
We wanted to give him a monument; kind of figured we owed him one
'Cause he'd made our town a better place with all the good he'd done.

So we pulled up that old hitching post where Doc had nailed his sign.
We painted it white & to all of us, it certainly did look fine.
Now the wind & the rain have about washed away our white trimmings of
paint.

There's not much left but Doc's own sign, & it's getting pretty faint.
But that old sign's still standing there, as if in answer to our prayers,
Mutely telling the whole wide world 'DOC BROWN HAS MOVED
UPSTAIRS."

Springhill, LA, October 7, 1973
Smyrna, Atlanta, TX, October 23, 1973 (meeting)
Jonestown, TX, December 26, 1973
Denton, TX, March 25, 1975 (meeting)
La Porte, TX, July 11, 1976
La Porte, TX, February 6, 1983
Germantown, Philadelphia, PA, April 28, 1986
Exton, PA, May 25, 1986
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, December 5, 1997
Fairfield, PA, August 26, 2001
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, September 30, 2001