

From Where I Sit . . .

“Restoring The Old Paths”

The New Testament church, as conceived of in the mind of God and recorded in His Holy Word is perfect in every detail. It was carefully laid out in the mind of God as the perfect plan for sharing with the world His *manifold wisdom* in Christ Jesus (**Eph. 3:10**).

His plan for Christ’s body, the church is without fault, and it’s complete description is found in His Word. It is described as a pure “bride of Christ” in Ephesians Chapter 5, and as a church that even *“the gates of hell shall not prevail against”* (**Matt. 16:18**).

Read any description in the book of Acts or the Epistles and you’ll find congregations of *“like precious faith”* who continued stedfastly in the “apostles doctrine” (**II Peter 1:1; Acts 2:42**). Unfortunately, you’ll also find churches that already had problems creeping in. The plan was perfect, but there were no perfect churches. Each generation was but one step away from apostasy and many letters were written by the Apostles to instruct them in the perfect will of God.

We learn in **Judges 2:10** that after the death of Joshua, a generation came along that *“knew not God.”* An untaught generation can get away from God. Even so these early churches of New Testament times needed to continuously look back to the pattern, and be certain they were abiding in the Apostles’ teachings. Just like with the familiar game of “Gossip,” each generation that imitates only what the ones before them did could be straying farther from the original. At the end of the game, we’re often amused at what the original word was, and just how far the message got changed.

This process of returning to the original is a familiar one to us all. It’s called **“Restoration,”** and means very simply a **return to a standard**, or to the original. It’s like stripping off stains on furniture to find the real wood. Religiously, Restoration is a return to the church as God always intended for Her to be. No one can doubt that Jesus established His one body – the church – at Pentecost. Nor can we doubt the hundreds of changes that the church experienced at the hands of men.

Thus we would expect even in our generation to find the need to go back to see To Restore as perfectly as we can the church as it is described in the New Testament. The question is, “Does the Lord expect us to go back to the original pattern?” Is “Restoration” a valid plea? If it’s not important and necessary, then we should stop right where we are and allow each person to follow his own set of opinions. If it is a valid and Biblical plea that we go back, to restore the First Century Church today, then we should pursue it as of greatest importance.

The reader must be cautioned that an effort to restore the church to its original plan will call for a drastic overhaul in the religious community today. What would God have us do? Be tolerant of different views and just learn to peacefully coexist? Or attempt to restore the church to its original purity and simplicity? We would do well to heed the words of the Lord in **Jeremiah 6:16** *“Thus saith the LORD, 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. But they said, We will not walk therein.*

. . . Terry Broome

Printed in the *Broad Street Banner*, Volume XX, Number 24, June 15, 2005.