

Introduction to 18 Restored Truths – Bible Study Series

May 4, 2013

As members of God's Church we must maintain a sound spiritual footing in order to qualify and become part of God's ruling family when His Kingdom is soon to be established on the earth by His Son Jesus Christ. This series will provide the doctrinal, historical and prophetic direction God's Church needs to withstand the prevalent lukewarm spirit dominating within the Church today.

This Bible study is an introduction to the material that will be covered in this series. Without this introduction this Bible study series would still be very beneficial and very important on its own. However, this introduction will set the stage for making the following Bible studies very relevant to our lives and the times we are living in. This important series is called the Restored 18 Truths.

The idea of this series originated in a sermon given by the late Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God, Herbert W. Armstrong. He titled his sermon *Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era*, which he delivered on December 17, 1983. In that sermon Mr. Armstrong explained the purpose of the 6th era of God's Church and how spiritual knowledge and information was restored into it. God's Church down through history had lost much biblical truth since Jesus Christ founded it on Pentecost in 31 AD. In his sermon Mr. Armstrong listed a total of 18 truths that were restored back into God's Church after centuries of being lost.

There are six questions we need to ask as we get into this Bible study today:

- 1 - What are the 18 restored truths?
- 2 - Why did these truths need to be restored?
- 3 - How were these truths restored?
- 4 - When were these truths restored?
- 5 - Where were these truths restored?
- 6 - Who restored these truths?

To properly answer these questions we first need to take a historical survey of the Bible. We need to understand the chronological order of events of God's Word that are essential to answering these six questions. Once these questions are answered then we can delve into each of the 18 truths to understand what they are and why it was so important for God to have restored them. Let's begin our historical survey of the scriptures by turning to John.

John 1:1. This is the beginning of the Bible. It is not Genesis 1:1. It is John 1:1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* (vs 2) *He was in the beginning with God...*

We have two individuals, two beings, being spoken of here. We have the Word and we have God. (vs 3) *All things were made through him...[Referring to the Word] and without him nothing was made that was made.*

This historical survey of time must begin by looking at these Scriptures with two beings, God and the Word. But those two beings did not remain alone.

They were joined in existence by what the Bible describes as an angelic host. These verses deal with the creation of the earth, when God first created the earth. It provides some very important information that shows the angelic host was in existence before the earth was created. Job 38:4 - God asked Job: *Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding.* (vs 5) *Who determined its measurements...[Job] surely you know? Or who stretched the line upon it?* (vs 6) *To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its corner-stones?* (vs 7) *when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

Why would the morning stars sing together and all the sons of God shout for joy? Over the magnificent creation of the earth. What this shows us is that after John 1:1 God and the Word are accompanied by angels.

After God created the earth, He placed on this earth government and He put someone in charge of it. That individual He put in charge of it was named Lucifer. Understand first, there was God and the Word; who then created the angels; followed by the original creation of the earth. To rule over the earth God placed Lucifer.

Isa. 14:12 *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How you are cut down to the ground, you who weaken the nations.*

Hold your place in Isaiah and turn to Ezekiel because you need to know something about Lucifer and his origins. Let's read the first half of the verse which is talking about Lucifer, an anointed cherub.

Eze. 28:15 *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created.*

Satan, formerly Lucifer, was a created angelic being, which tells us that the angels that sang and shouted for joy were beings created by God and the Word. Remember, it says all things were created by Him, referring to the

Word. Nothing was made without Him. So the angelic host were created beings. Lucifer was put on this earth to rule over it.

Notice it says in Isaiah that he had fallen from heaven. What is that about? Isa. 14:13 *For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne...*

This tells us Lucifer was put in charge of the earth. 'My throne' refers to the highest level or position of leadership.

...above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the farthest sides of the north. (vs 14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High.

Clearly Lucifer was not happy with the throne God had given him and ruler-ship over the earth. Lucifer wanted to rule everything. That is what it means when he says 'I will be like the most High.'

Satan is very specific that he was given ruler-ship over the earth in the temptation of Christ. Let's break into the flow of the story.

Luke 4:5 *Then the devil, taking him... [That's Christ] up into a high mountain, showed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.*

Christ has this view of all the nations on the earth at the time of his temptation. The devil said to him: (vs 6) *All this authority... [All this ruler-ship over the nations that I have] I will give to you...*

How could Satan give that authority to Christ if he didn't possess it?

...and their glory: for this has been delivered to me and I give it to whomever I wish.

Do you want to know why we have so many bad leaders in the world today? It is because Satan is behind their appointment. Satan is in charge of the earth. Even though he rebelled against God he has remained in charge of the earth. Notice the impact Satan has had and notice how Satan rules the world he is in charge of.

Rev. 12:3 *And another sign appeared in heaven. Behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads...*

Clearly we are talking about Satan the devil here. (vs 4) *His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born...*

That is talking about Jesus Christ. But it says his tail drew a third of the stars. Satan was able to influence and convince a third of God's angelic host to follow him. Stars are symbolic of angels as we saw in Job.

Here is a description of the world we live in and this is something very few people in this world understand.

(vs 9) *So the great dragon was cast out that serpent of old called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him.*

This prophecy about Satan being cast out of heaven is reference to a future event to occur at the fifth trumpet during the final six months of Great Tribulation. Notice an important descriptor about Satan – called the Devil and Satan who deceived the whole world. We live in a deceived world. It is important we never forget this fact. What was the result of Satan's rebellion? Turn to Genesis 1:1

This verse deals with the original creation of the earth. It ties in with what we read in Job. Verse 2 jumps forth in time. There is quite a gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...*

Remember, in Job the angels sang and shouted for joy. They were obviously happy at what God created. God did not create what we are about to read: (vs 2) *The earth was... [It is better translated became] without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters...*

Clearly the earth is in existence, but what condition is the earth in? The words without form and void mean waste and empty. We could read verse 2 like this - *The earth became wasted and empty.* How did it get in that condition? It became in that condition because of the rebellion of Satan the Devil. God's creation was destroyed. God had to re-create the surface of the earth.

The earth was created, was in existence at the time of verse 2; but it was in a condition of waste and emptiness. Everything on it had been destroyed. It was covered with water. It was dark. God had to then re-create the earth. We read about that creation which took place over the course of seven days. On day six mankind was created.

Gen. 1:26 *And God said let us... [‘Let us’ refers back to God and the Word:] let us make man in our image... [It was a physical image of God] according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*
(vs 27) *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female created he them.* (vs 28) *God blessed them and God said to them be fruitful and multiply... [Make more human beings] fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.* (vs 29) *And God said, see, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is on the face of the earth and every tree in which the fruit yields seed: to you it shall be for food.* (vs 30) *And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps upon the earth where there is life I have given every green herb for food. And so it was... [Animals were created to be plant eaters]* (vs 31) *And God saw everything that he had made and indeed it was very good...*

All that God does is very good. God is not the author of confusion. God does things decently and in order. We see that in the re-creation of the earth. That is exactly what we read in Genesis chapter 1.

Gen. 2:1 Now we see where God created the Sabbath day. *Thus the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were finished... [He finished His re-creation]* (vs 2) *And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had done and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.*

That's how the Sabbath was created, when God rested. That's why we rest on the Sabbath. That's why we refrain from doing our work, from doing our activity, from doing the things we like to do.

(vs 3) *Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it... [This is a period of time that has been set apart by God] because in it he rested from all his work which God created and made...[Verse 4 ties in with our historical survey]*
(vs 4) *This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created in the day the Eternal God made the earth and the heavens...*

We have covered quite a number of years in just a few pages and a few verses of the Bible. This historical survey has brought us to the creation of man. Man is now on the earth.

If we look further we see what God tells the created man to do. (vs 15) *And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.* (vs 16) *And the Eternal God commanded the man; saying, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat... [God is very generous]* (vs 17) *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.*

Out of all the trees in the Garden of Eden from which Adam was free to eat accept one tree which he was commanded not to eat from. If he did eat it would have disastrous consequences for his life. Of course, Adam was not alone. God created Eve. The two of them lived in the garden and, as we know, Eve was confronted by the serpent and deceived into eating from the very tree God said not to eat from. She was able to convince her husband to do the same. So they sinned. They violated God's command. They disobeyed God and God was not pleased. This decision had disastrous consequences for them as well as the rest of human creation which would come from them.

Gen. 3:22 *And the Lord God said, behold, the man has become like one of us...[Notice the word 'us' there referring to God and the Word] to know good and evil...*

What this means is the man took the prerogative, to define for himself what is good and evil.

...and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever...

He would have been like Satan. He would have lived forever in sin. God was not going to allow this to happen.

(vs 23) *Therefore the Eternal God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken.* (vs 24) *So he drove out the man and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life...*

With this, God cut off man's access to Him, to His truth, and to His Spirit. This was the outcome of Adam and Eve disobeying God. Not only that, they died and every human being who has followed them has died. After hundreds and hundreds of years of being cut off from God, the world turned into a very nasty and dangerous place to live.

We will read about what living life apart from God, and being cut off from God, produces. Gen. 6:5 *Then the Eternal saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...*

Everything man did was evil, was wrong, and was injurious to him and those around him.

(vs 6) *And the Eternal was sorry he had made man on the earth and was grieved in his heart...*

God doesn't like to see human beings having to experience the results of sin, experiencing the results of their actions cut off from him. (vs 7) *And the Eternal said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the birds of the air for I am sorry that I made them.*

God was not pleased with the outcome of the creation. God was not pleased with mankind. Mankind had corrupted himself terribly. We know that in Matthew and a couple of other places in the New Testament Christ references the end time being just like the days of the flood. If you want to know what the days of the flood were like, what society was like at the time of the flood, look at the world you are living in today. Everyone is corrupt. Everyone's thoughts are continuously evil. We are here! We are living in the days of Noah. We are living in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. That's where we are today. We are in the days of Noah. We are in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

So God sent the flood and He destroyed the earth. Noah and his sons repopulated the earth. Notice that the nature of mankind did not change. Gen. 11:1 *Now the whole earth had one language and one speech...*

Everybody spoke the same language. Everybody understood what the other person was saying. There was no need for translators. Everybody had the same language.

(vs 4) *And they said let us build a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens. Let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth...*

People were very aware of the conditions of the flood, of what had happened. They wanted to build themselves a tower that would go up to the heavens, up to where God lives.

(vs 6) *And the Eternal said, indeed, the people are one and they all have one language; and this is what they begin to do. Now nothing they propose to do will be withheld from them. (vs 7) Now let us...[Again notice the word 'us'] go down there and confuse their language that they may not understand one another's speech. (vs 8) So the Eternal scattered them from there over all the face of the earth and they ceased building the city.*

The main thing they were worried about actually did happen to them. They ended up being scattered over the face of the earth, all speaking different languages. (vs 9) *Therefore its name is called Babel...[Which means confusion] because there the Eternal confused the language of all the earth and from there the Eternal scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*

God slowed down the activities of mankind by making it very hard for people to communicate among themselves because of differing languages.

The point is: The nature of mankind did not change. Mankind was still cut off from the tree of life. Mankind still wanted to do his own thing. Mankind was still evil. It is very important to keep in mind God has a plan. The God family has a plan they are working out here on earth. This plan was being worked out even through the events we have covered concerning human beings from Genesis 1 through Genesis 11. Between Eden and the flood God's truth was preserved through the line of Seth. Seth was one of Adam's sons. However, after the flood God chose others to work through. While the vast majority of mankind was cut off from the tree of life, cut off from God, cut off from understanding God's purpose, God selected certain individuals to work through. One of those individuals God chose to work through after the flood was Abraham, who is introduced as Abram in Genesis 12.

Gen. 12:1 Now the Eternal had said unto Abram get out of your country and from your family, and from your father's house to a land I will show you. (vs 2) I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great. You shall be a blessing. (vs 3) I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (vs 4) So Abram departed as the Eternal had spoken to him.

This is a tremendous quality. It shows Abram's obedience to God. It shows Abram saying 'You said it God. Therefore I will do it.' Is this your attitude toward God's Word? It should be. It needs to be. If it's not either you will repent of your rebellious behavior and your refusal to be told what to do; or you will eventually receive eternal death. It is very serious business we are involved in as members of God's Church. Eventually the whole world will be under the same expectations once those expectations have been explained to them.

Here we notice more information concerning God's promise to make Abraham a great nation. We know that Abraham did not have a son. He was almost a hundred years old with no heir.

Gen. 17:1 When Abram was ninety nine years old the Eternal appeared to Abram and said to him I am Almighty God; walk before me and be blameless. (vs 2) And I will make my covenant between me and you and will multiply you exceedingly... [It's talking about physical descendants] (vs 3) Then Abram fell on his face and God talked with him saying (vs 4) As for me, behold, my covenant is with you and you shall be a father of... [Notice -] many nations. (vs 5) No longer shall your name be Abram, but you shall be called Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations...[That is what the name Abraham means] (vs 6) I will make you exceeding fruitful and I will make nations of you and kings shall come from you...

Notice that, kings, rulers of nations, shall come from Abraham's body, his descendants. (vs 7) *And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto you and to your descendants after you.* (vs 8) *Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger; all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*

You know today the Arabs claim the land they are living in today, along with territory called the modern nation of Israel, the Jews. They claim this land for themselves, but the Bible is very specific this area of the world is an everlasting possession for the descendants of Abraham. The Arabs would say they are the descendants of Abraham and that is true. But they are not the rightful descendants to whom this promise is being made.

We read in Gen. 22:12 where Abraham secures these blessings God promised him. Abraham was told to go sacrifice his only son Isaac, the very heir who would carry on after Abraham's death. Abraham did what God said. He was stopped on the verge of killing Isaac before Abraham was stopped. (vs 22) *And he said...[Referring to the angel of the Lord] do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from me.*

Right there is the type of commitment we need to have in order to be able to serve God. You have to be willing to give it all up. That includes family too. These blessings were given to Abraham, God's blessings, were passed on to his son Isaac who in his turn passed them on to his son Jacob. Jacob, just before his death, passed these birthright blessings on to his son Joseph by giving them to Joseph's two sons.

Gen. 48:15 *And he blessed Joseph...[Jacob blessed Joseph] and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day (vs 16) the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads...[Referring to Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh] Let my name be upon them and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth...*

Manasseh was the older son, Ephraim the second son. Yet Jacob turned the blessing around so that the greater blessing went to the second son and a great blessing went to the firstborn son. (vs 17). We know about that because Joseph objected to what was going on. (vs 19) *His father refused...[To switch his hands] and he said I know my son. I know it. He also...[Referring to Manasseh] shall become a people and he also shall be great, but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.*

As you know when Jacob pronounced this blessing they were in Egypt. They remained in Egypt for nearly 400 years until God sent Moses to take them out. After the Israelite people were led out of Egyptian captivity in the book of Exodus we read about the purpose for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Israelites have come out of Egypt; they have gone through the Red Sea and are about ready to receive the Ten Commandments. Nevertheless, this is God's purpose for the Israelites anciently. Ex. 19:5 *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant then you shall be a special treasure to me above all peoples for all the earth is mine...*

Out of all the peoples on the earth, God had selected Israel. (vs 6) *And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.* The Israelites agreed to this purpose, to this covenant, but as we will see they were unable to keep their word.

You need to understand the Israelites had no special physical characteristics, other than their bloodline, and the promises God made to their forefathers for selecting them as a special people. Moses writing in Deut. 7:7 said, *The Eternal did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people...[You weren't a great nation]* (vs 8) *Because the Eternal loves you and because he would keep the oath which he swore to your fathers, the Eternal has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh King of Egypt.* (vs 9) *Therefore know that the Eternal your God, he is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.* (vs 10) *And he repays them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hates him. He will repay him to his face.*

God keeps His promises. God did not forget about the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Just keep in mind, Israel was unable to keep its part of the agreement with God.

We see that God punishes Israel for their actions as we read in Deuteronomy 7. Also it is important to remember Israel split into two different nations. You had the northern kingdom which consisted of the ten tribes of Israel. Then you had the southern kingdom of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. They were the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom was punished first. That's what we read about here. Notice the reason they were punished.

2 Kings 17:5 *Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. (vs 6) In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan and in the cities of the Medes...*

He took them into the region of northern Iraq and Iran today. That's the area anciently where the northern ten tribes were carried to. (vs 7) *And so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods...*

Or they respected other gods, the very gods the God who brought them out of Egypt said not to respect and worship. (vs 8) *And walked in the statutes of the heathen whom the Eternal cast out from before the children of Israel and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.* This is the reason the northern kingdom was punished.

A hundred twenty years later the kingdom of Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity. Now we'll read the reason their captivity. Jer. 17:1 *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond it is graven on the tablet of their heart...*

There is quite a bit of symbolic wording there. It shows you that a heart without God's Holy Spirit is like a stone. So the sins are being written with a pen of iron and a diamond which are hard and can actually pierce the surface of a hard heart.

...and upon the horns of your altars. (vs 2) While their children remember their altars and their wooden images by the green trees on the high hills... [Those are references to idolatrous and pagan worship, practices, and images] (vs 3) *O my mountains in the field... [Referring to Judah] I will give as plunder your substance and all your treasures, and your high places for sin within all your borders. (vs 4) And you, even yourself, shall let go of your heritage which I gave you and I will cause you to serve your enemies in a land you do not know; for you have kindled a fire in my anger which shall burn forever.*

The southern kingdom of Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity, which we know today as the country of Iraq. God follows through. If you obey God, He blesses you. If you disobey God He punishes you and the history of ancient Israel and Judah prove this to be the case.

As you know the ancient ten tribes of Israel are considered to be lost. We understand this not to be the case. They continued their migration and we will discuss this as part of this series later on.

The Jews stayed in Babylonian captivity for 70 years. Then they returned back to the area of Jerusalem and Judah from where they were taken. For about 400 years or so they lived in that area and built a second temple to

replace the one which was destroyed by the Babylonians. It was to this area Jesus Christ came over 400 years after the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. We read about this in John 1, back to the chapter we started with.

We are going to read about the Word. John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth...*

We understand that Word, who became flesh was the man Jesus Christ. Christ had five purposes for His first coming. Mr. Armstrong lists these in his last book *Mystery of the Ages*, on page 216, if you would like to read a more detailed explanation for each purpose.

1) Christ came to replace Satan on earth's throne.

Satan, as we saw in the first part of the Bible study, was given ruler-ship over the earth. Even though he rebelled against God, God did not remove him from the throne and his authority he had been given over this earth. He was still in charge of this earth. Christ came to replace him and this was the purpose of His 40 days and 40 nights of fasting.

2) Christ came to announce the gospel of the good news of the kingdom of God

3) Christ came to pay the death penalty for the sins of all mankind. Christ was the perfect sacrifice. He, as Creator of mankind, the One who actually did the creating, was the One who was the unblemished lamb. Only He could pay our death penalty for us.

4) Christ came to be resurrected. It is through Christ's resurrection we can receive eternal life.

5) Christ came to establish God's Church on the earth. God's Church had not been in existence through the period of time we just covered in the first part of the Bible study. When God wanted to work with an individual, He chose an individual and He worked with him. Those individuals are going to join with the members of the New Testament Church to one day form God's ruling family.

But in the Old Testament time there was not a Church as we understand the Church today. The ancient Israelites were a congregation of the Old Testament, but the Israelites failed their responsibilities as we saw. There were only a few faithful and true individuals God worked with in the Old Testament. Now Christ was going to establish the New Testament Church.

The Church simply refers to the 'called out ones', the ones God has selected to come out of this world and to become part of His Church. The people make up the Church. Matt. 16:18 - Christ said: *And I also say to you that*

you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades... [Or the grave] shall not prevail... [Or be victorious] against it.

Christ was going to establish the Church. That Church will be based on Him and it will begin with Peter, who is the small stone. If you study this passage out you will see this. Christ was going to establish His Church based on Himself, on the teachings He brought from God the Father. His Church was going to begin under the leadership of the Apostle Peter. Once this Church started it would never physically die out. This is what it means when it says the gates of hell or hades shall not prevail against it. In other words, God's Church would always be in physical existence. There would never come a time when it would physically die out. We read about the establishment of this Church in Acts.

Acts 2:1 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place...*

Christ had told them to wait in Jerusalem for ten days. Christ's instructions were being followed. (vs 2) *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting.* (vs 3) *And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire and one sat upon each of them.* (vs 4) *And they were all filled with Holy Spirit and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

This was a most miraculous event. These individuals could not speak certain foreign languages but they were now able, under the power and inspiration of God's Holy Spirit in them to begin to speak and converse in other languages. This was necessary as the apostles went out to various parts of the earth to take the message of the gospel of the kingdom of God to the world. We see in verse 41 the Church took off in a great way. It got off to a tremendous start with the giving of the Holy Spirit.

After Peter delivered his sermon. Acts 2:41 *Then those who gladly received his word... [Who gladly responded to what Peter had said] were baptized: and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.* Or 3000 people were added to God's Church. But you must realize it didn't take long for the god of this earth, Satan the devil, to begin to take aim on God's Church because the Church of God poses a great threat to this wicked being

This is roughly about twenty years following the account in Acts 2. Notice what the Apostle Paul says. Gal. 1:6 *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel...*

Who calls us? God the Father does. People were turning away from His calling, turning to a different gospel, turning away from the gospel of the kingdom of God to another gospel. As Mr. Armstrong said they turned from

the gospel Christ brought to a gospel about Christ. In other words they turned from the message of God establishing His kingdom on the earth to a message about Christ the person. Those are two different messages. It is a very subtle turn or twist Satan was able to put over on people to deceive. They were turning to a different gospel. (vs 7) *Which is not another: but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert... [Or distort] the gospel of Christ...*

False ministers within God's Church responsible for distorting the message Christ brought. They turn it from a message about God's kingdom to a message about God's messenger. This is the message people in traditional Christianity today consider to be the gospel. It is a gospel about Christ instead of a gospel about God's kingdom. Here is where we have the starting point of truth in God's Church being lost.

In Revelation 2 and 3 we have been provided with a historic record, given in advance to John, about God's Church. It provides us with a view of the good, the bad, and the ugly which has occurred in God's Church down through the centuries. When John received this historic record he was living during the first of it.

As we prepare to read through portions of this historic record, it is very important we realize God's Church is living during the final part of this historic record. John was living at the beginning of the history of God's Church. Today we are living at its end. This is very important to understand. There are large numbers of people in God's Church today who do not believe Revelation 2 and 3 represent a history of God's Church. They don't believe in Church eras as Mr. Armstrong called them.

Let's read through some of this history. This is vital information to understand in the context of why Biblical truth needed to be restored back in God's Church. We are just going to read the relevant of each era as it applies to this context.

We begin with the first era called Ephesus. These are Christ's words to John. Remember this is history was given in advance. Now it is history which mostly has already happened.

Rev. 2:2 - Christ says: *I know your works...*

Works are peoples' actions. Keep this in mind as we go through chapters two and three.

...I know your works, and your labor, and your patience and that you cannot bear those who are evil: and that you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not and have found them liars...

Those are tremendous qualities to have as members of God's Church. (vs 3) *And you have persevered and had patience and have labored for my name's sake and have not become weary...*

How important is that today in this final era? There are things in verses 2 and 3 you should be able to personally relate to in your own life. (vs 4) *Nevertheless, I have this against you that you have left your first love...*

Christ admonishes this era it is not as committed as it needs to be. (vs 5) *Remember therefore from where you have fallen. Repent and do the first works or else I will come to you quickly and move your lamp-stand from its place, unless you repent.* Of course that happened. People didn't repent, which is the solution for solving human problems.

Move on to the second era, Smyrna, one of two eras about which Christ doesn't have anything negative to say. This era was under tremendous pressure from forces within God's Church and from without.

Rev. 2:9 *I know your works, tribulation, and poverty; but you are rich...[That is referring to spiritual richness] and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan...*

They are of the church of Satan. That's what false Christians are. (vs 10) *Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison...*

Christ is referencing some form of government persecution. ...*that you may be tested and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life.* This is excellent instruction on how to handle hard spiritual times.

We move to the third era, Pergamos, and read the following.

Rev. 2:13 Christ again says: *I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast to my name... [Which is a good thing] and did not deny my faith even in the days in which Antipas, my faithful martyr, was killed where Satan dwells...*

People in the third era had to deal with martyrdom as they held fast to Christ's truth. But - (vs 14) *I have a few things against you because you have those there that hold...*

That can be translated ‘hold fast.’ It is the same Greek word used to tell Philadelphians to hold fast.

...the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to put a stumbling-block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality...

Here you have people in God’s Church holding fast to false doctrine. (vs 15) *You have also those that hold fast the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.* (vs 16) *Repent: or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.* He’s talking about those who hold fast to false doctrines.

Moving into the fourth era, Thyatira: Rev. 2:19, Christ says again: *I know your works, and love, service, faith and your patience, and as for your works the last are more than the first...*

Referring to the fact that the works of the people in the latter part of this era were much better than the works of the people in the first part. (vs 20) *Nevertheless I have a few things against you because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols...*

So we go from people holding fast to false doctrines to people teaching false doctrine in God’s Church. (vs 23) *I will kill her children with death and all her churches shall know that I am he who searches the mind and heart and I will give to each one of you according to your works.*

It can’t be stressed enough that God pays attention to what we do. God knows what we do whether it’s in the open or whether it’s in secret behind closed doors with the lights turned out. God knows.

Let’s move on to the fifth era of God’s Church which is called Sardis. Keep in mind all the things we have covered in the history of God’s Church up to this point. People have held fast to God’s truth but people have also let go of it; people have gone through hardship and persecution to hold fast while false doctrine was being introduced into God’s Church; and false doctrine has been taught by the ministry within God’s Church. What impact did all this have on God’s Church? The impact of hundred of years of false doctrine, apostasy and persecution led to what we are going to read now about the fifth era.

Rev. 3:1 - in the second half of verse 1 Christ again tells the people: *I know your works that you have a name that you are alive but you are dead...*

Didn't Christ say that the gates of the grave wouldn't prevail against His Church? Yes, He did. You need to understand when Christ says to Sardis 'you have a name that you are alive' – alive refers to physical life. This era of God's Church is physically alive, but they are spiritually dead. The reason this spiritually dead condition has resulted from all the compromise, corruption, and apostasy that has impacted the teachings Jesus Christ established His Church way back in the first century. Christ tells this era: (vs 20) *Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain...*

There were still some elements of true doctrine still being followed in this era. ...*that are ready to die...*

In essence, you could say the fifth era was on life support. Even the true doctrines which still remained were about to die.

...for I have not found your works perfect before God. (vs 3) Remember therefore how you have received and heard. Hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, if you will not wake up, I will come upon you as a thief and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

People who don't repent in this era will be lost in time.

Compare what you just read with the sixth era, Philadelphia. Rev. 3:8, again Christ says: *I know your works: I have set before you an open door...*

We know this is an open door for taking the gospel of God's kingdom to the world as a witness. Paul wrote the open door was an opportunity to teach God's truth. This era had an open door. It's the only one of the seven eras which had such an opportunity.

...and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength and have kept my word and have not denied my name.

This takes us to the seventh and final era, the era in which Jesus Christ would return. Rev. 3:15 - Christ says to this era: *I know your works...*

It is fascinating this is said to each era of the Church. There are other things said to each era also, but this is of great importance. God knows what we do

...I know your works; that you are neither cold nor hot: I could wish you were cold or hot. (vs 16) So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth...

The word ‘will’ means about to. So Christ’s words are translated, “I am about to vomit you out of my mouth.” Christ is about to separate people from Himself. Remember, the Church represents the body of Jesus Christ. Christ is about to expel these people from the body. This is how sick and how fed up He is with their spiritual condition.

So – there you have the history of God’s Church. It is no longer in advance. Most of it has already happened. The final part of this historic record is happening right now. Mr. Armstrong was very clear in his sermon about the restoration of biblical truth into God’s Church.

Where in the Bible does it talk about the restoration of God’s truth? Matt. 17:9

Christ is coming down the mountain from showing Peter, James and John the transfiguration where He appeared in his glorified state along with Moses and Elijah. Of course, this was something He wanted them to see. But Christ commanded them: *Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man is risen from the dead...*

Christ didn’t want these three disciples telling anybody what they saw until Christ had been crucified and resurrected. (vs 10) *And his disciples asked him saying why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first.*

Hold your place and go to Malachi 4 and we will read the scripture the disciples were referring to.

Mal. 4:5 Malachi wrote: *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord...*

Elijah had been dead many years before Malachi wrote this. We don’t read in the Bible where Elijah will be resurrected prior to the return of Jesus Christ, so obviously this is speaking of someone else.

(vs 5) *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord...*

This pinpoints the timing of this prophecy. (vs 6) *And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children...*

Who are the fathers? The fathers are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whom we read about earlier in this Bible study.

...and the heart of the children... [Their descendants] to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.
Or with utter destruction.

This is the scripture the disciples were asking Christ about. The word ‘turn’ in Malachi means to turn back, not necessarily with the idea of returning to the starting point. It is a word when you study into it, refers to repentance or turning back to God.

Matt. 17:11 *Jesus answered them and said to them indeed Elijah is coming first and will restore all things...*

Christ affirms what is said in Malachi 4, that Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. This is the purpose of Elijah. The word first means firstly in time, place, order, or importance. The word ‘restore’ means to reconstitute or to re-establish in health, home, or organization. This individual is going to have to come first. Then when he comes he will reconstitute all things.

When something is reconstituted it simply means it is re-established or restored. People working to restore a building, car or piece of furniture always try to restore back to its former condition. The question is what was Elijah to restore? It says all things. The word ‘all’ there refers to the whole, all things, the complete restoration of all things.

We’ll talk about this in just a moment. Let’s move to Matt. 17:12 because you need to understand the scope of what Christ is talking about here and what restoration means.

Matt. 17:12 *But I say to you that Elijah has come already...*

It seems like there is a contradiction going on here. He says indeed Elijah is coming first and will restore all things; but then He says Elijah has come already. The implication being that Malachi 4:5 has already occurred. But Christ goes on to explain himself

...and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of man is about to suffer at their hands...

Christ is talking about something that occurred in his time while He was alive on the earth. (vs 13) *Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist.* John the Baptist represented the Elijah in verse 12,

but the Elijah of verse 11 was an individual to come before the return of Jesus Christ, in essence, someone who was to come nearly 2000 years after what we are reading in Matthew 17:11.

Let's take a look now at Malachi 3:1. It is a prophecy that applies to John the Baptist, but also it is a prophecy that pertains to the Elijah who would come before Christ's second coming.

Malachi 3:1 *Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight. Behold, he is coming says the Lord of hosts. (vs 2) But who can endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap.*

The point in reading you these two scriptures in Malachi is to show and emphasize God sent a human messenger before Christ's first coming and a human messenger was to be sent again before Christ's second coming. The second messenger was to restore all things, which is something the first messenger did not do.

As we review the history of God's Church, where, possibly, in this history could a restoration of all things have taken place? Let's be very clear. The restoration has to take place within God's Church. Why? Because the world is deceived by Satan the devil. The world does not have access to the tree of life. The world is cut off from God. The only people God is working through right now is in His Church. So a restoration of all things has to take place within God's Church. It is where God is working today and has been since Christ established God's Church in 31 AD. If we turn to Revelation 3 we can easily pinpoint where a restoration of all things takes place in the history of God's Church.

Rev. 3:1 Second half: *I know your works that you have a name that you are alive but you are dead*

As we said earlier this is speaking of the fifth era of God's Church called Sardis. They are physically alive. Christ promised the Church would never physically die out, but spiritually they were dead. The Church had lost knowledge, information, and truth. Compare this with what we read about the sixth era of Philadelphia.

Rev. 3:8 *I know your works. See I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it...*

This is an opportunity to take a message of God's truth out to others. This is what the open door refers to and cannot be done if there is no truth in the Church. Christ goes on to say: *For you have a little strength and have kept my word and have not denied my name.*

We know the actions, and the words Christ spoke concerning the actions of Philadelphians is not negative. He says the same about the brethren of Smyrna. The reason for this is because people kept the truth; they didn't compromise it; they didn't let it go. They didn't let it be infringed upon, even if they had to suffer in doing so.

In his final book called *Mystery of the Ages*, Mr. Armstrong provides a historic overview about six of the seven eras of God's Church. You can read his account on pages 282 to 292. Let's read a little section concerning the fifth era of God's Church and the description Mr. Armstrong gives to it. He is speaking, to set up the context, of how God's Church came to the United States, specifically how people had embraced the teachings of Ellen G. White and started the group called the 7th Day Adventists. There was a segment of people amongst those folks who would not accept what Ellen G. White taught. Breaking into the text Mr. Armstrong writes:

*They (referring to those who didn't accept Ellen G. White's teachings) moved their headquarters to Marion, Iowa and then to Stanberry, Missouri. A magazine, *The Bible Advocate*, was published. Their efforts bore some fruit. Small congregations sprang up across the nation. So it was that sometime in the 19th century a small congregation of the true Church of God was established in the peaceful Willamette Valley in Oregon. They were farmers without formal education. They lacked trained ministers to teach and guide them; but they had the name Church of God, and they faithfully kept the Sabbath day. Remember, the Sabbath is the defining mark of God's people. God's Church had come a long way across the turbulent centuries since the day of Pentecost. It was weak and lacked influence. Years of persecution and compromise had taken their toll. Much truth had been lost, but they had stayed the course. [This explains Christ's words 'you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.' Physically they were alive. Spiritually they were dead.] In the Willamette Valley they waited. It was nearly time for the baton to change again into the hands of those God would call to do his end-time work.*

The Bible makes clear the condition of God's Church between the end the Sardis era and beginning of the Philadelphia era is the only time when biblical knowledge and understanding could be restored back into it.

Who did God use to restore biblical knowledge and information back into God's Church? He used one man, Herbert W. Armstrong.

In his sermon, entitled *Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era*, Mr. Armstrong asks the following questions:
"But what was Elijah to restore? Has it happened yet? Has it been restored? What has been restored?"

From that point of the sermon to the end Mr. Armstrong listed the 18 truths. These truths are provided below. They are provided in the order Mr. Armstrong gave them. Mr. Armstrong said in his sermon there wasn't a specific order he put them in. He just listed them in the sermon as he wrote them down in his notes.

Here are the 18 truths:

- Who and what is God?
- What and why is man?
- The Holy Spirit
- The Spirit in man
- The purpose of God
- The firstfruits
- The true gospel
- The government of God
- God's plan (Which is encapsulated in the holy days.)
- Begotten now
- Born again
- The millennium
- The identity of Israel
- Understanding prophecy
- 2nd and 3rd tithe
- Satan
- The identity of mystery Babylon
- Called to be separate.

These 18 truths have been put into an order which paints a very clear picture about how these truths go together. Certainly someone else could come along and put them in a different order and still get the same picture. However, this will be the order each will be covered in this Bible Study series. After giving these restored truths in his sermon Mr. Armstrong said:

"Well, brethren, all those things have been restored. There is the mission of this Church that never applied and has never been done by any other Church (referring to the other Church eras). This gospel of the kingdom has been restored and shall be preached in all the world as

a witness to all nations. Has that been done? Has that been restored? Is that gospel going to the world? Listen on your television tomorrow."

If you turn on your television tomorrow, you will not find anyone taking the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world as a witness as Herbert W. Armstrong did. However, you will find several imitators. Mr. Armstrong restored the 18 truths into the true Church one doctrine at a time, as he said in his autobiography. It is God's work through him that allows God's Church today to understand what it understands today. But true to history this restored truth is again being lost.

As a member of God's Church today what is your responsibility? Jesus Christ has not returned yet and we know Christ said we must endure to the end in order to be saved. Let's conclude this Bible study with two final thoughts.

First: This is what we have to do now!

Rev. 3:11 - Christ says: *Behold, I am coming quickly... [His second coming is not far off] Hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown.*

The Bible calls this crown a crown of victory. You see, we can't hold fast to what we don't understand or what we have compromised with. There has been a lot of compromise in the Church since Mr. Armstrong's death. As pointed earlier, people in God's Church don't believe in Church eras; they don't believe in 3rd tithe anymore; people believe being in the Church of God it is about converting the world. These beliefs are not true. God's Church is compromising these restored truths in its final era. If allowed to go on the Church would eventually become Sardis again. Fortunately, Jesus Christ will return before this happens. You can't hold fast to what you don't understand or what you have compromised. We must follow the truths as Christ established them in God's Church.

Second: We have to follow Peter's instructions.

Not only do we have to hold fast, but Peter says: 2 Pet. 3:18 *We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.*

Growth can only happen when you build on the truths God has restored into His Church. These are the things you need to be doing today, if holding fast to these restored truths are important to you.

As you begin to study this series on the Restored 18 Truths, ask for God's guidance, direction, and understanding. He will happily provide what you ask for.