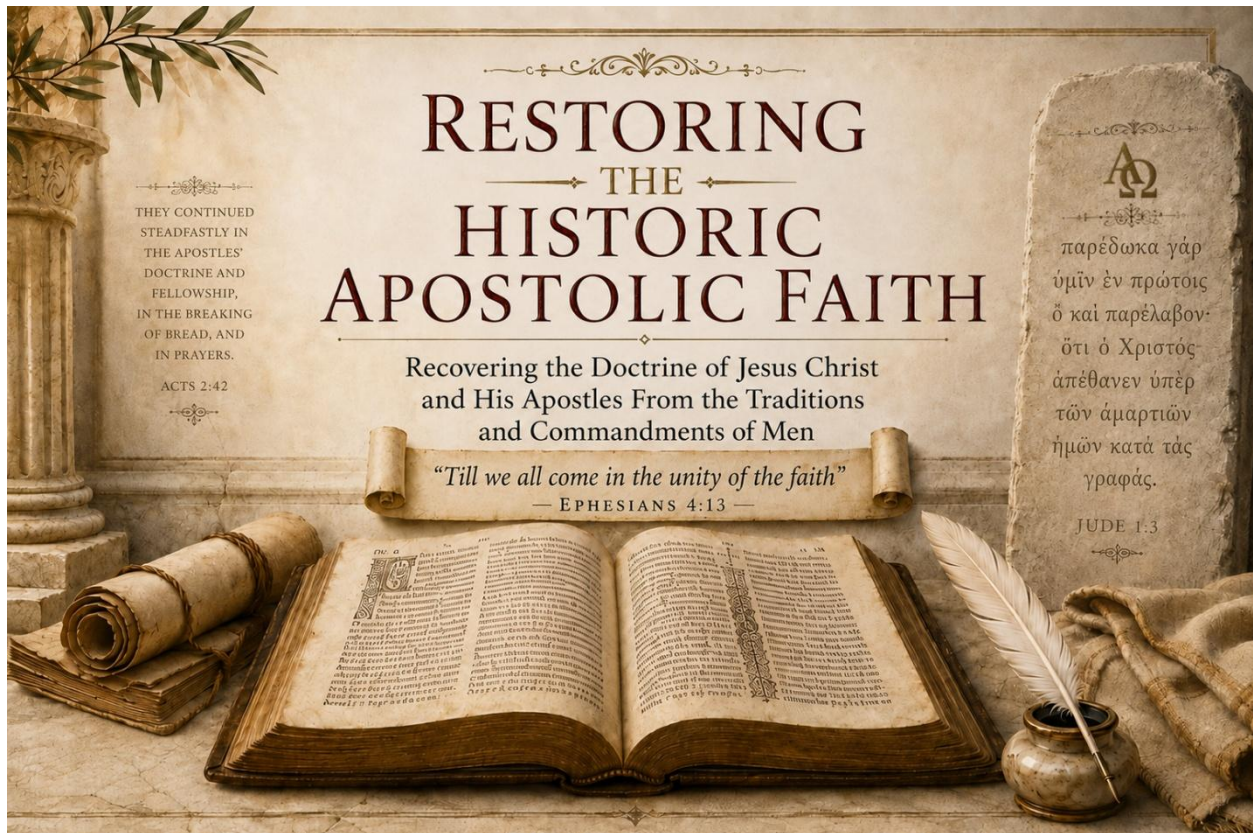




“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
—Acts 2:42

Restoring Oneness Apostolic Truth In the Last Days

Comprehensive Study Guide Series

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Restoring the Historic Apostolic Faith

Preface

Recovering the Doctrine of Jesus Christ and His Apostles From the Traditions and Commandments of Men

This study is a concise companion to *Doctrines and Commandments of Men*. That study identifies many of the departures; this one explains why restoration is necessary, what must be restored, and how believers can return to Apostolic truth without creating another religious system of human control. The scriptures cry out for the historic apostolic foundation.

“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.”

—Jeremiah 6:16

Introduction: Why Restoration Is Necessary

The Apostolic faith was not created by later denominations, religious organizations, councils, or theological systems. It was delivered through Jesus Christ and His Apostles and established in the church from the Day of Pentecost.

Yet Scripture repeatedly warns that believers can depart from truth, replace divine commandments with human traditions, and retain the appearance of religion while losing its original doctrine and power.

Restoration is therefore not the invention of something new. It is the recovery of what was present at the beginning.

1. The Apostles' Doctrine Is the Foundation

The early church was established upon the doctrine delivered by the Apostles of Jesus Christ. After receiving the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, the believers “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). The Apostles were not offering private opinions, later denominational traditions, or philosophical interpretations. They delivered the gospel, commandments, order, and revelation they had received from Jesus Christ. Paul therefore instructed the churches, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,” and praised those who kept the ordinances as he had delivered them (1 Corinthians 11:1–2). He also commanded believers to “stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). These were Apostolic traditions—not customs developed centuries later and given the authority of Scripture.

The church must therefore be measured by the Apostolic foundation rather than by what has become familiar in modern Christianity or even within the modern Oneness movement. Paul wrote that believers are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). No organization, pastor, council, Bible college, or respected teacher has authority to alter that foundation. Jude exhorted the church to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). The Apostolic faith does not need to be reinvented, modernized, or supplemented with commandments of men. It must be recovered, preserved, obeyed, and faithfully delivered to the next generation.

Many teachings found within the modern Oneness Apostolic movement have strayed from that historic foundation and must therefore be examined one by one. Some have been reinvented through later theological systems, some represent serious distortions of biblical truth, and others are entirely man-made with no Apostolic foundation at all. The purpose of *The Present Kingdom* is to shine the light of Scripture upon these teachings, identify where they have departed from the faith of the Apostles, and then clearly present the historic Apostolic position where one exists. Where Scripture supports a doctrine, we seek to establish it; where Scripture opposes it, we seek to expose it; and where Scripture gives no commandment at all, we seek to prevent men from creating one. The goal is to restore the original teachings of Jesus Christ and His Apostles as they were intended to be believed, practiced, and preserved.

2. Departure From Apostolic Truth Was Foretold

Jesus Christ and His Apostles repeatedly warned that the church would experience departure from sound doctrine. Paul told the Ephesian elders, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29–30). He later warned that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,” but would gather teachers who would satisfy their own desires and “turn away their ears from the truth” (2 Timothy 4:3–4). Departure does not always begin with the complete rejection of Christ. It often develops gradually as human philosophy, cultural pressure, financial interest, institutional authority, and religious tradition are mixed with the truth until the original Apostolic doctrine becomes obscured.

The fact that a teaching is old, widespread, or accepted throughout an organization does not prove that it came from the Apostles. Paul warned that “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1), while Peter declared that false teachers would “privily bring in damnable heresies” **and make merchandise of believers through covetousness** (2 Peter 2:1–3). This warning is plainly reflected in many churches today, where money is mentioned from the beginning of the service to the end through tithes, offerings, pledges, special collections, and repeated financial appeals. The emphasis can become so constant that raising money appears more important than reaching lost souls, feeding the flock, caring for those in need, and preaching the gospel in its fullness.

Obligatory monetary tithing became deeply embedded in the modern Pentecostal movement during its early twentieth-century development, when Pentecostalism was still predominantly Trinitarian. When the Oneness movement emerged, it rejected Trinitarian theology but largely retained the inherited practice of compulsory tithing without thoroughly reexamining whether Jesus or His Apostles had ever established it for the New Testament church. After more than a century of repetition, many Apostolic believers now regard tithing as standard and unquestionable church practice, even though its Old Covenant foundation and its conflict with voluntary, cheerful New Testament giving carry serious biblical implications.

Error frequently enters subtly before becoming established publicly and institutionally. The church must therefore remain watchful, testing every doctrine and practice by Scripture rather than assuming that modern Christianity—or even the modern Oneness movement—has automatically preserved the faith without alteration.

3. Restoration Requires Separating Scripture from Tradition

Jesus condemned the religious leaders of His day because they elevated human tradition above the commandments of God: “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:9). Not every tradition is wrong, for Paul instructed believers to hold fast to the Apostolic teachings they had received. The issue is whether a tradition originated with Jesus Christ and His Apostles or was introduced later through culture, philosophy, Catholicism, Protestantism, denominational habit, or institutional convenience.

Restoration therefore requires every doctrine and practice to be tested honestly by Scripture. We must ask whether Jesus taught it, whether the Apostles commanded or practiced it, and whether it agrees with the whole testimony of the Word of God. A belief does not become Apostolic merely because it has been preached for generations, accepted by an organization, or defended by respected ministers. Paul warned, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men... and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

True restoration involves both removing what men have added and recovering what men have neglected. We must reject commandments that God never gave, while also restoring doctrines, order, holiness, spiritual gifts, and responsibilities that the modern church has abandoned or diminished. The goal is not to create another tradition, but to return the church to the authority of Scripture and the faith once delivered unto the saints.

The Bereans provide the proper example for every believer and every church. Scripture says they “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). They did not reject teaching merely because it was unfamiliar, but neither did they accept it simply because a respected minister delivered it. This stands in sharp contrast to many churches today, where doctrines are handed down through previous generations, Bible colleges, organizations, and longtime pastors, then treated as unquestionable because they have been taught for many years. In some places there is little interest in examining these teachings, and honest questions are discouraged or interpreted as rebellion. Yet the Bereans were called noble precisely because they tested what they heard by Scripture. A church that will not permit its doctrines to be examined has placed tradition above truth.

4. Restoration Must Reach Doctrine and Practice

Restoration cannot be limited to repeating Acts 2:38 while retaining non-Apostolic teachings and practices in nearly every other area of church life. Repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost are essential, but the Apostolic faith includes far more than the initial experience of salvation. The early church possessed a complete pattern of doctrine, holiness, ministry, fellowship, giving, spiritual authority, church order, mission, and expectation. True restoration must therefore reach both what the church believes and how the church lives. The following list of targeted restorative areas is non-exhaustive; full teachings on these subjects and many others can be found at our website: ThePresentKingdom.com

The True Oneness and Full Deity of Jesus Christ

The church must restore the full Apostolic revelation that Jesus Christ is not merely an anointed man, a lesser divine being, or a second person beside the Father. He is the one true God manifested in flesh. “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). At the same time, we must reject the modern conceptual-Son teaching promoted by David K. Bernard that reduces the pre-incarnate Son to nothing more than a plan or blueprint in the mind of God. Jesus Christ is the Word who was God, the Image of the invisible God, and the One by whom all things were made. Apostolic restoration must preserve both the absolute Oneness of God and the full deity, continuity, and preeminence of the Son from creation to eternity. We reject the doctrines of divine flesh as well as the eternal Son. The Son of God was the firstborn of every creature from the creation as the Word, Light, and Image of God in which the Father dwelt ever since God said. “Let there be light.”

Biblical Inward and Outward Holiness

Holiness begins in the heart, but it must also appear in the life. Scripture teaches purity, modesty, sobriety, separation from the world, humility, and visible obedience. Yet biblical holiness must be distinguished from manufactured holiness, which creates detailed rules and treats cultural preferences as commandments of God. Restoration requires the church to uphold genuine outward holiness without legislating every shoe, collar, sleeve, hairstyle, accessory, or personal application from the pulpit. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14), but holiness must remain rooted in Scripture rather than denominational habit or personal preference.

Male and Female Order and Ministry

God created mankind male and female and established distinctions in responsibility, appearance, headship, and ministry. Men are called to masculine conduct and appearance, and women to feminine conduct and appearance. Scripture also places the governing and authoritative teaching offices of the church upon qualified men. Paul wrote, “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man” (1 Timothy 2:12), and grounded this order in creation rather than temporary culture. Women remain essential to the church and may pray, prophesy, testify, instruct younger women and children, serve the saints, and labor in many areas, but restoration must reject the modern practice of placing women in pastoral and authoritative teaching roles over men.

Voluntary New Testament Giving Rather Than Mandatory Tithing

The Apostles taught generous, willing, cheerful giving—not a mandatory ten-percent monetary tithe. Paul wrote, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity” (2 Corinthians 9:7). The modern tithing system imports an Old Covenant commandment into the church, changes nearly every feature of it, and often uses fear, curses, and promises of financial reward to enforce payment. Restoration must return giving to its Apostolic purposes: supporting legitimate ministry, caring for widows and the poor, helping suffering saints, advancing missions, and meeting genuine needs.

Pastoral support should correspond to the actual labor being performed. Some pastors preach a few services each week, handle limited pastoral responsibilities, and yet expect full-time financial support without maintaining outside employment or giving themselves fully to the work of ministry. Rather than continually visiting the sick, ministering in prisons, counseling families, reaching the lost, teaching the saints, and laboring in the community, some spend much of their time traveling from meeting to meeting, evangelizing in other churches for additional offerings, attending conferences, and pursuing leisure while the local congregation continues supporting them as though they were engaged in full-time ministry. Scripture teaches that those who genuinely labor in the gospel may rightly live of the gospel, but it does not create an entitlement to full-time support for part-time work. A minister who gives himself continually to prayer, doctrine, pastoral care, evangelism, and the needs of the flock deserves generous support; one who performs only limited duties should either accept support proportionate to that labor or work with his own hands, as Paul did. Ministry must never become a means of avoiding honest labor while enjoying travel, comfort, luxury, and financial dependence upon the saints.

Biblical Pastoral Oversight Without Control or Lordship

Pastors are called to feed, guide, protect, and serve the flock, but they are not permitted to lord over God's heritage. Peter instructed elders to take oversight "neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3). Pastoral authority must remain subject to Scripture and must not be used to control every personal decision, create commandments God never gave, silence honest questions, or demand unquestioning loyalty. Restoration requires approachable, accountable, servant-minded pastors who lead through truth, example, and care rather than fear and domination.

Rejection of Mega Churches

Apostolic churches must abandon the megachurch model as it creates a wide separation between the platform and the people, turning worship into a performance in which the pastor becomes the central personality and the congregation becomes an audience of spectators. The New Testament church was never designed to revolve around one gifted speaker while hundreds or thousands of believers remain largely unknown, uninvolved, and spiritually undeveloped. In an impersonal system, individuals can attend for years without forming a meaningful relationship with their pastor or discovering where they fit within the body of Christ. Their gifts, callings, burdens, and abilities may never be recognized or developed because ministry has been concentrated in a small professional class. People who are struggling can easily be overlooked, weaker members can disappear without anyone noticing, and genuine pastoral care is replaced by programs, branding, production, and carefully managed services. The church may grow in attendance while becoming weaker in fellowship, discipleship, accountability, and personal spiritual formation.

The megachurch structure can also encourage pride, financial ambition, and the building of personal kingdoms. A pastor may become reluctant to train and send capable men into other communities because their departure would reduce attendance, influence, and income. Instead of multiplying churches and releasing ministers into the harvest, gifted men can be kept close as permanent assistants within one expanding institution. Large buildings, expensive productions, celebrity culture, and visible numerical success can create the impression that greatness is measured by crowds, wealth, and recognition rather than faithfulness, humility, and obedience to God. This atmosphere can produce competition between ministers, elevate personalities above the body, discourage correction, and make the church dependent upon one man's image or charisma. Apostolic ministry should not be about what one man can gather around himself, but about equipping the saints, developing every member, sending laborers into the harvest, caring personally for the flock, and allowing Christ—not the pastor, the platform, or the institution—to remain the true center of the Church.

The pattern of the New Testament also points toward smaller, more personal gatherings where genuine discipleship can flourish. Following Pentecost, believers **"continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house"** (Acts 2:46). Their fellowship extended beyond large public assemblies into the intimacy of their homes, where relationships were strengthened, burdens were shared, and every believer could actively participate in the life of the church. Even during His earthly ministry, Jesus often divided the multitudes into smaller groups before feeding them (Mark 6:39–40; Luke 9:14–15), demonstrating the value of orderly, personal ministry rather than treating the crowd as one anonymous mass. The New Testament emphasis is not upon building increasingly larger congregations centered around one platform, but upon building spiritually healthy believers who know one another, minister to one another, exercise their God-given gifts, and grow together as the body of Christ. A church may assemble corporately for worship and instruction, yet its true strength is found in personal discipleship, mutual fellowship, and shepherding that reaches every individual rather than merely addressing the crowd.

The New Testament certainly records occasions when Jesus and the Apostles preached to great multitudes. These were primarily evangelistic gatherings, public proclamations of the Gospel, or extraordinary occasions when large numbers assembled to hear the Word of God. However, these events should not be confused with the ordinary pattern of local church life. Once churches were established, believers met regularly in homes, knew one another personally, exercised their individual spiritual gifts, and received pastoral care within the life of the local body. Large evangelistic gatherings have their place, but they were never presented as the normal model for shepherding the flock of God.

Sending Men into the Field Rather Than Hoarding Them

Pastors must not hold gifted and qualified young men within one congregation merely to preserve attendance, labor, income, or personal influence. The purpose of ministry is to prepare others for the work of ministry. Paul instructed Timothy to commit Apostolic teaching “to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). Qualified men should be trained, tested, and sent into communities where the gospel is needed. Their departure should not be treated as disloyalty or “sheep stealing,” but as the multiplication of the kingdom of God.

Jesus said:

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;
Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”
—Matthew 9:37–38

Perhaps the shortage is not always because there are no willing and qualified men ready to labor, but because some pastors refuse to train, release, and send them into the field, preferring instead to keep their gifts, labor, families, and financial support within their own congregation. This was never the intention of the Gospel that Jesus promoted. His message was clearly about reaching new frontiers and expanding the kingdom at all costs. This is significant violation of the entire Gospel principle that requires repentance and a reversal of the mentality that exists in the modern Apostolic churches of today.

Marriage, Family, and Church Discipline

The church must restore biblical teaching concerning marriage, divorce, remarriage, family order, and discipline. Marriage is intended to be lifelong, while Jesus plainly gave an exception for fornication. Couples who enter the church already remarried should not be commanded to destroy their present homes because of sins committed before the new birth. At the same time, believers must remain faithful after conversion and cannot use grace to justify adultery. Church discipline must also be restored for serious, established, and unrepentant sins such as fornication, drunkenness, idolatry, extortion, destructive division, and false doctrine. Discipline must be based upon Scripture and credible evidence—not pastoral preference or man-made standards—and its purpose must be protection and restoration.

The Present Kingdom of Jesus Christ Rather Than Dispensationalism

The Bible teaches Present Millennialism: Jesus Christ is reigning now through His church and that His visible Second Coming brings the present age to its final conclusion. At His coming, the dead are resurrected, the living saints are changed and caught up together to meet Him, the wicked are judged, and the present heavens and earth are destroyed by fire. There is no separate earthly thousand-year kingdom after His return; the resurrection, judgment, and end occur together, after which the new heavens and new earth appear and the everlasting state begins.

This must not be confused with Preterism, which teaches that the prophetic coming of Christ and related judgments were already fulfilled in the past and, in its full form, leaves no future bodily and visible return of Jesus Christ. Present Millennialism teaches the exact opposite: Jesus Christ will yet return bodily and visibly upon the clouds of heaven “with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30). At His coming, the dead will be raised, the living saints will be gathered together with them to Him to receive their reward, the final judgment will occur, and the present heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire. Afterward will come the everlasting state in the new heavens and new earth. All of these events remain future; what is present now is Christ’s kingdom and reign through His Spirit-filled church body.

The Visible Post-Tribulation Coming of the Lord

The church must reject the secret pre-tribulation rapture and return to the plain teaching of Jesus. Christ placed His coming and the gathering of the elect “immediately after the tribulation” (Matthew 24:29–31). Paul described the same visible and audible event: the Lord descending with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, followed by the resurrection and catching away of the saints (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). The rapture is not a separate secret event years before Christ’s return. It is the final gathering of the saints at His glorious appearing.

The Resurrection as the Christian Hope—not Death

The Apostolic hope is not death or immediate translation into heavenly glory. It is the resurrection of the dead at the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus declared four times in John 6, “I will raise him up at the last day.” Paul likewise said that his hope was “that there shall be a resurrection of the dead” (Acts 24:15). Death is not the believer’s hope; it is the last enemy to be destroyed. Restoration must return the church’s attention to the day when the sleeping saints hear His voice, the mortal puts on immortality, and believers become like Christ at His appearing.

Hell: Righteous and Proportionate Final Judgment Through Conditional Immortality (CI) —not Eternal Conscious Torment (ECT)

Perhaps one of the worst man-made doctrines ever imposed upon the Oneness Apostolic Church is the doctrine of eternal conscious torment. It deserves that distinction for at least three reasons.

First, it is one of the most horrific, mind-bending, and morally grotesque doctrines ever conceived: the idea that God will preserve the wicked alive forever for the purpose of endless torture and suffering. **Second**, it stands alongside the Trinity as one of the doctrines most contrary to the revealed character and nature of God, who is holy, just, merciful, righteous, and whose judgments are true. **Third**, for some strange reason, it has become one of the most deeply ingrained and untouchable doctrines in the church. To even question its validity is often treated as though a person is denying the faith itself, and many are made to fear that asking honest questions about eternal torment might place them in danger of the very fiery torture pit the doctrine describes.

That is not biblical confidence. That is doctrinal intimidation. A teaching that cannot survive honest examination by Scripture should never have been given unquestionable authority over the conscience of the Church.

God is perfectly just, and His judgments must agree with His own standard of a just balance. Scripture says, “A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight” (Proverbs 11:1). Eternal conscious torment imposes infinite suffering for finite sins and gives eternal life to the wicked even though Scripture reserves immortality for the redeemed. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life” (Romans 6:23). Restoration must uphold real, fearful, final judgment while rejecting the idea that God preserves the wicked alive forever for endless torture. The biblical end of the lost is death, destruction, perishing, and exclusion from eternal life.

The ‘**god**’ of eternal conscious torment is not the God revealed in Scripture, because that character is incompatible with God’s justice, mercy, love, and righteous judgment. The true God will require every person who rejects Him to pay the full and exact penalty for sin, according to his works and knowledge, but justice demands the full price—not the full price plus an infinity of additional suffering that can never be completed, satisfied, or brought into balance. That level of suffering is incomprehensible to the human mind, not reasonable, and not consistent with the nature of the God whose entire creation came into existence by the God who *is* love. Heaven and earth will pass away, yet many believe that the works of darkness, sin, and evil itself will be kept intact, alive, and taken beyond the bounds of this defiled, terminated creation and into another realm to be repurposed for no other reason than abhorrent, infinite suffering.

That belief forces us to face a question few dare to ask openly—often for fear of shame, condemnation, or having their faith and spiritual maturity questioned by pastors or fellow believers. So, we will ask it plainly here, on behalf of the many sincere Christians who have long carried it quietly in their hearts. Truth and justice demand that this question be asked openly and placed squarely into the ECT belief system:

“How can I enjoy eternity in heaven knowing that my own friends and relatives are out there somewhere being tortured and are suffering without end?”

Any person who is honest with themselves would have to admit that this scenario would make it difficult to enjoy heavenly bliss with Jesus. If fact, it seems reasonable that at some point one would call Jesus aside and pose the question, “Jesus, Isn’t one zillion years enough already? Then imagine the “Jesus” of ECT responding, “I’m sorry my child, this is just the beginning — there is never enough... there is no end.” The Bible does not teach this evil, and nobody (*especially* Jesus) could wish this kind of unimaginable suffering even on their worst enemies. There are those who have been so indoctrinated that they would actually respond, “God is sovereign.” To which we would agree, but God is not evil.

Fortunately, *the wages of sin is death and everlasting destruction. The soul that sinnith, it shall die.* Only the righteous put on immortality. That is scripturally explicit, and makes hell a reasonable response to sin by the Just Judge of the wicked.

HELL — WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY vs. ETERNAL CONSCIOUS TORMENT

A Comparative Biblical Infographic — KJV





CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY — THE TRUTH



1. Eternal life is a gift
“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
— Romans 6:23



2. God alone has inherent immortality
“Who only hath immortality”
— 1 Timothy 6:16



3. The saved receive life; the lost perish
“Should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
— John 3:16



4. The soul can die / be destroyed
“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”
— Ezekiel 18:4
“Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
— Matthew 10:28



5. Final judgment is everlasting in result
“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord”
— 2 Thessalonians 1:9



6. The lake of fire is the second death
“This is the second death.”
— Revelation 20:14



BIBLICAL CONCLUSION:
The righteous receive immortality.
The wicked *die, perish,*
and are *destroyed.*

ETERNAL CONSCIOUS TORMENT — THE LIE



1. Claims the wicked live forever in torment



2. Gives immortality to the lost, even though Scripture gives immortality to the redeemed



3. Turns ‘death’ and ‘destruction’ into endless life in suffering



4. Imposes infinite punishment for finite sins



5. Often built from symbolic passages while ignoring many plain scriptures



6. Conflicts with God’s just balance
“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.”
— Proverbs 11:1



7. Presents a distorted view of God’s character
God is just, merciful, and righteous.





DOCTRINAL ERROR:
endless torment gives eternal life to the lost and contradicts the plain language of *death, perishing,* and *destruction.*

COMPARE EVERY DOCTRINE BY SCRIPTURE.



THE BIBLE TEACHES
CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY —
ETERNAL LIFE FOR THE SAVED,
FINAL DESTRUCTION FOR THE WICKED.



“For the wages of sin is death...”
— Romans 6:23



“...everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord”
— 2 Thessalonians 1:9



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5. Restoration Must Recover Spiritual Power

The Apostolic church possessed more than correct terminology. It possessed the power of the Holy Ghost.

“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.”

—Acts 4:33

The early church experienced:

- Healings
- Miracles
- Deliverance
- Prophecy
- Tongues and interpretation
- Spiritual discernment
- Bold evangelism and outreach
- Genuine fellowship
- Care for the poor
- Participation by the whole body

Modern churches may preserve outward forms while becoming so controlled, structured, commercialized, and platform-centered that the gifts of the Spirit are silenced.

Restoration must recover both **Apostolic doctrine and Apostolic power**. Doctrine without spiritual life becomes cold formalism. Spiritual activity without sound doctrine becomes deception. The church needs both Spirit and truth.

6. Restoration Begins with Repentance

Restoration requires more than discovering error. It requires admitting it and turning from it.

Pastors must be willing to examine inherited teachings and make corrections regardless of the difficulties or consequences.

Organizations must place Scripture above institutional preservation.

Believers must reject error even when it has become familiar or routine.

Churches must be willing to change practices that produce income, authority, prestige, or social acceptance when those practices cannot be supported by Scripture.

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.”

—Revelation 2:5

Repentance is not merely for sinners outside the church. Christ repeatedly called churches themselves to repent.

7. When Institutions Refuse Restoration

The desire should be to bring reform wherever possible. Believers should approach pastors respectfully, search the Scriptures together, and seek correction without pride, gossip, or unnecessary division.

But institutional refusal cannot become an excuse for continued compromise.

When organizations and churches will not return to Apostolic truth, faithful believers may need to gather in smaller assemblies, homes, or new local works where biblical doctrine, accountability, fellowship, and the gifts of the Spirit can be restored.

Restoration does not require permission from an organization or church that has itself departed from the Apostolic pattern.

At the same time, those beginning new works must avoid reproducing the same abuses—authoritarian leadership, financial exploitation, personal kingdoms, unaccountable ministry, and new commandments of men.

8. What Caused the Drift?

The departure of the modern Apostolic church did not happen all at once. It developed gradually as inherited traditions, organizational interests, financial systems, cultural pressures, and human authority were permitted to stand beside the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Apostles.

One of the most serious turning points was the mixing of law and grace in order to justify mandatory tithing.

The Apostles taught generous, willing, Spirit-led giving:

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”
—2 Corinthians 9:7

Yet modern churches returned to precepts of the Law, particularly Malachi, and imposed an Old Covenant financial obligation upon New Testament believers. They took commandments given to Israel, under the Levitical priesthood and temple system, altered nearly every feature of them, and then presented the result as Apostolic doctrine.

Paul treated the mixing of law and grace with great severity.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”
—Galatians 1:8

The Galatian error was not a complete rejection of Jesus Christ. It was the addition of legal requirements to the gospel of grace. Paul declared that those who imposed such obligations were perverting the gospel.

He later warned:

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”
—Galatians 5:3

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”
—Galatians 5:4

The principle cannot be limited only to circumcision. Men do not have authority to select one commandment from the Mosaic covenant, impose it as a binding obligation upon the church, attach Old Covenant blessings and curses to it, and then claim that grace remains untouched.

When the modern Apostolic movement embraced mandatory tithing, it introduced a mixture of law and grace into the church. If Paul's warning is taken seriously, such a mixture places those who knowingly teach and enforce it under the curse he pronounced upon those who pervert the gospel.

This may help explain why so much deception has been permitted to enter the movement.

9. When Money Became the Focus

Once mandatory tithing became established, churches gained a predictable and enforceable system of income. Pastors and organizations could appeal not merely to generosity, compassion, and genuine need, but to fear.

Believers were told that they were robbing God if they did not pay.

They were warned that they would lose divine protection, suffer financially, or fall under a curse.

They were promised prosperity and blessing if they complied.

Giving was gradually transformed from an expression of love into a financial obligation enforced through religious fear.

This changed the priorities of many churches.

Instead of money serving the gospel, the gospel began serving the financial system.

Church growth meant more contributors.

Larger congregations meant greater income.

Larger buildings, more elaborate facilities, higher salaries, expensive conferences, luxurious lifestyles, and institutional expansion became visible measures of success.

Some ministers shifted from building the kingdom of God to building personal kingdoms around their own names, churches, influence, income, and comfort.

The ministry became a means of avoiding ordinary labor rather than an opportunity for sacrifice.

Paul worked with his own hands when necessary:

“Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.”

—Acts 20:34

He warned the elders of Ephesus:

“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.”

—Acts 20:33

Peter likewise commanded ministers to oversee the flock:

“Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.”

—1 Peter 5:2

The Apostolic ministry was not built around wealth, luxury, titles, and financial entitlement. It was built upon service, sacrifice, labor, suffering, generosity, and the saving of souls.

10. Personal Kingdoms Replaced Kingdom Mission

The church exists to preach the gospel, make disciples, care for the needy, develop ministry, and establish living bodies of believers.

Yet when money becomes central, people can be treated as resources rather than souls.

Young men may be held within a congregation because their labor and giving are valuable.

Qualified ministers may not be released to begin new works because their departure would weaken the pastor's local kingdom.

Widows, struggling families, the poor, and those in genuine need may receive little direct support while enormous sums are spent on buildings, décor, platforms, productions, and ministerial lifestyles.

Pastors may compete for attendance, recognition, and financial strength rather than cooperate for the advancement of the gospel.

The church may speak constantly about "the kingdom" while operating primarily to preserve an institution and support those at the top of it.

Jesus warned against religious leaders who:

"Devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer."
—Matthew 23:14

Religion becomes especially corrupt when it takes from those who can least afford to give while using the language of divine obligation to justify the taking.

The Apostolic mission was the saving of souls—not the increasing of one minister's savings.

11. The Congregation Was Trained to Defend the System

Many sincere believers have been taught from childhood that mandatory tithing is one of the clearest marks of obedience to God. They have heard Malachi preached repeatedly while receiving little or no teaching about the actual tithing system under Moses or the voluntary pattern of New Testament giving.

As a result, people may defend the very system that burdens them.

They may accuse those who question tithing of being greedy, rebellious, or unwilling to support the work of God. They may believe that rejecting a mandatory percentage means rejecting generosity altogether.

This is the power of religious tradition.

A teaching repeated often enough can begin to feel like Scripture even when the Apostles never taught it.

People may protect it because they fear questioning their pastor, losing fellowship, or bringing a curse upon their family. The system becomes self-preserving because both ministers and members have been trained to regard examination as rebellion.

But truth does not fear examination.

If modern tithing is Apostolic, it should be plainly established from the teachings and practices of the Apostles. If it cannot be, then generations of repetition cannot make it true.

12. God Has Continued Working Among Sincere Believers

The presence of error does not mean that God has ceased saving sincere people within the modern Apostolic movement. God has continued to work through the preaching of repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Many pastors and believers genuinely love God, desire truth, and act according to the understanding they have received. The grace and mercy of God have reached countless people even through imperfect churches and flawed ministries.

This mercy, however, must never be confused with God's approval. The fact that God has worked through imperfect men and imperfect institutions does not justify the errors they teach, nor does it guarantee that those errors will be overlooked on the Day of Judgment. Throughout Scripture, God has often shown mercy in the midst of human weakness while still calling His people to repentance, reformation, and obedience to His Word.

God can save a sincere seeker despite the weaknesses of the institution through which that person first hears the Gospel. Yet once truth is revealed, every believer—and especially every minister—is responsible for responding to it. Sincerity is never an excuse for knowingly continuing in error, nor can tradition, popularity, financial security, or denominational loyalty justify teaching what Scripture does not support.

Jesus said:

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

— Luke 12:48

Ministers who have access to Scripture, receive correction, and come to understand the truth cannot continually hide behind tradition, denominational policy, or the claim that "everyone else teaches the same thing." Greater knowledge brings greater accountability.

But this responsibility does not rest upon ministers alone. **Every believer is personally responsible for studying the Word of God, searching the Scriptures, and learning what God requires of him or her.** No Christian can permanently hand that responsibility over to a pastor, organization, family tradition, or denomination. Pastors are called to teach and shepherd, but each individual must ultimately know the Scriptures for himself, understand God's will for his own life, and determine what God has commanded for all believers. The Bereans were commended because they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether the things they were being taught were so. That same responsibility remains with every Christian today.

Ultimately, every pastor and every believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. On that day, we will not answer for how faithfully we preserved the traditions of our movement, but for how faithfully we believed, taught, and obeyed the Word of God. God's mercy is

wonderful beyond measure, but it should never be presumed upon. When He grants us greater light, He expects us to walk in it. That is why every error, no matter how longstanding or widely accepted, must be corrected when it is exposed by Scripture.

13. A Call to Repentance

The modern Apostolic church must repent of mixing law and grace.

It must abandon the use of Old Covenant curses to obtain money from New Testament believers.

It must restore voluntary, cheerful, generous, need-directed giving.

It must return financial support to its biblical purposes—the gospel, legitimate ministry, widows, the poor, missionaries, struggling believers, and the advancement of the work of God.

Pastors must reject luxury, greed, entitlement, and the construction of personal religious kingdoms.

Organizations must examine whether their financial structures serve the church or whether the church has become a means of sustaining the structure.

Congregations must be taught that supporting the work of God is a privilege and responsibility, but that no man owns their income or possesses authority to threaten them with divine punishment for refusing a commandment the Apostles never gave.

Paul's warning must be taken seriously.

The gospel cannot be mixed with the Law without consequence.

Where law and grace have been combined, the church must return fully to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

Where money has replaced mission, the saving of souls must again become the priority.

Where ministers have built personal kingdoms, they must humble themselves and return the people, resources, and glory to God.

The purpose of restoration is not to destroy the church. It is to remove the deception that has weakened it.

God has preserved sincere believers within the movement, but sincerity alone cannot permanently excuse error. The time has come for ministers and churches to examine what they teach, repent where they have departed, and return to the faith once delivered unto the saints.

The church was not established to increase the savings of religious leaders.

It was established for the saving of souls.

Conclusion: Restoring the Bride Before Christ Returns

Jesus Christ is returning for a church that is pure in doctrine, character, devotion, and spiritual life.

“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

—Ephesians 5:27

Restoration is not religious nostalgia. It is not an effort to reproduce every cultural custom of earlier generations. It is a return to the doctrine, order, holiness, fellowship, mission, and spiritual power established by Jesus Christ and His Apostles.

The purpose is not to create another denomination or organization.

It is not to replace one list of man-made commandments with another.

It is to remove the traditions that have obscured truth and recover the faith once delivered to the saints.

The call of restoration is simple:

Return to the Word.

Return to the Historic Apostles’ doctrine.

Return to the power of the Holy Ghost.

Return to the Present Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Return to the historic Apostolic faith before the Lord appears and brings this present world to its end.