

# The Church: Back To The Beginning

## U.S.: 1700s – 1800s

- Many grew tired of divisions (sectarian fighting)
- Began to leave unscriptural traditions
- Renewed focus on Bible

# What made the return to Bible difficult?

- Ignorance

Most people in denominations do not know plan of salvation . . .

- Tradition

Comfortable believing / practicing as they always have; dislike change

- Party loyalty

Feel indebted to leaders; change only if they start 'meddling'

# I. The Church Is The Saved

# Acts 2:38, 40-41, 47

Acts 2 records the beginning

‘The birthday of the church was Pentecost’

– Tenney, NT Survey, 238.

‘That the day of Pentecost marked the beginning of the church seems evident for the following reasons...’ – Chas. Ryrie, Survey... 157

## Acts 2:38, 40-41, 47

- God's part: revelation, Ac.2:1-36
- Man's part: response, Ac.2:37-47

## Acts 11:15

Peter appeals to beginning  
to prove and to teach truth.

I. The Church Is The Saved

II. Apostasy Was Foretold

# Apostasy

- Mt.7:15, false prophets existed; 'insured...'
- Mt.24:5, 24, even Josephus describes them
- Ac.20:28-31, foreign and domestic
- Ph.3:2, dogs
- Col.2:8, cheaters: carry off spoil, lead captive
- 2 Th.2:3, *apostasy* (7, 10)
- 1 Tim.4:1, some will leave truth, love lies



I. The Church Is The Saved

II. Apostasy Was Foretold

**III. Reformation:  
Too Little, Too Late**

# Wyclif

- “Morning-star of the reformation” urged return to Christianity of NT; set himself and his aides to translate the Bible as the sole and unerring guide to true religion. R. Cath. church, finding that heretics made much use of the Bible, had discouraged people from reading unauthorized translations. Wyclif was resolved that the Bible should be available to any Englishman who could read, and every reader be free to make his own interpretation of the Scriptural text (Durant, 36).
- Catholic reaction to translation: “The jewel of the clergy has become the toy of the laity.”

# Luther - theses

- . Professors commonly nailed debate propositions and topics for discussion on doors of buildings.
- . Luther wrote in Latin, wanting academic debate.
- . Within 2 weeks his students printed them in German, sent them to every village.

# Luther – Diet of Worms

- Eck asked Luther if he would recant his heresies. Luther agreed to retract any that should be proved contrary to Scripture.
- Eck: “Martin, your plea to be heard from Scripture is the one always made by heretics. You do nothing but renew the errors of Wyclif and Huss ... How can you assume that **you** are the only one to understand the sense of Scripture?...”

# Luther – Diet of Worms

- Luther: “...Unless I am convicted by the testimony of Sacred Scripture or by evident reason (I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other), my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against my conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen” (Durant, 361).

# Luther – Diet of Worms

Luther's profession contradicted his practice...

- “Though his theology was founded with trusting literalness on the Scriptures, his interpretation unconsciously retained late medieval traditions.”  
... “His rebellion was far more against Catholic organization and ritual than against Catholic doctrine; most of this remained with him to the end” (Durant, 371).

I. The Church Is The Saved

II. Apostasy Was Foretold

III. Reformation: Too Little, Too Late

**IV. Back To The Beginning**

## Some say it cannot be done.

‘Patterns in the NT are not readily discernible.  
Which pattern in the NT do we follow? ...the  
pattern of incest in the church at Corinth?  
...should we be divided like Corinthian  
Christians?’

- Paul condemned incest and division at Corinth (1 Co.3:1-3; 5:5).
- 1 Co.1:2, includes us (Jd.3) ... (4:6, 17).
- 1 Co.3, 5: <sup>1</sup>maintain unity; <sup>2</sup>withdraw...



# Restoration is common biblical concept

- Gn.40:13, 21, job
- 2 K.5:10, health
- Mt.17:11, spiritual
- Gal.6:1, individuals
- 1 Co.4:21, congregations . . . 2 Co.12:20

Can we do what these brothers / churches did?

Mt.15:13-14

1 Jn.2:24

- Galatians / Corinthians *read* what Paul wrote.
- Corinthians *repented* (2 Co.2, 7...).
- They were *restored* / *returned* to NT plan.