

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

Volume 6, Issue 7

July 2008

## How Long?

Art Nelson

### Introduction

It seems that everywhere you turn there is a lot of talk about us needing revival—this revival meeting, that revival meeting, this place, that place. But, is that true? Do we need revival? The meaning of the word, revival, is to “bring to life”. Does the true 'church', the Ekklesia, of Jesus Christ need to be “brought to life” or is it already alive. When Jesus brought forth His Ekklesia, it was alive. We have the evidence of that in the book of Acts. Did it ever die? Is not Jesus able to sustain His Body with life? From the first has there not been a people of the Lord maintained by His Spirit as a testimony in the earth? Could it be that what people are really saying is that their dead, denominational meetings need to be revived, “brought to life”? Does the Lord ever intend to do that? I don't think so. The Lord Jesus is building His Ekklesia, His Church, and it has nothing to do with the denominations for it is One.

### Restoration NOT Revival

The word 'revival' is not used in the New Testament at all. That is probably because when God brings life to something it doesn't need to be brought to life again, that is, 'revived'. However, what we do need is 'restoration', which is a New Testament word. This is because of man's ability to mess things up—to mix the impurity of the old nature and carnal desires with the purity of God's purposes so that there are occasions when the purity of God's work needs to be 'restored'.

**Thayer's Greek Definitions** present the definition of “restore” this way:

- 1) to render, i.e. to fit, sound, complete
  - 1a) to mend (what has been broken or rent), to repair
    - 1a1) to complete
  - 1b) to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust
    - 1b1) to fit or frame for one's self, prepare
  - 1c) ethically: to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be

So, the meaning of “restore” is to mend, to complete, to put in order, to equip. This is a more encompassing definition than we have been using. The Ekklesia of Jesus certainly needs to be restored, that is, put in order, completed and equipped.

## Restoration Ministries

Jesus gave us “restoration ministries”. They are commonly called the “five-fold ministries” and are listed in Ephesians 4:11. But, look at the reason that they were given by the Lord:

### Ephesians 4:12-13 NASB

(12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

(13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

The so called five-fold ministry is to equip, build up, and bring to completion the Body of Christ. This fits the definition of “restore”--the five-fold ministries restore the Body of Christ. But, to what are they restoring us?

## True Restoration

Jesus walked the earth in a physical body that was limited by time and space. His resurrection body is spiritual and unlimited. His ascension body is a many membered collective of believers that transcends Heaven and earth. When Paul said we are the Body of Christ, he wasn't stating a theory or making a symbolic statement. He was stating a fact, a spiritual reality.

As we are built together into the Body, we also have to learn to function together as a body. That is where the five-fold ministries help us. They are 'restoring' the spiritual body to the criteria of the physical body; in other words, they are making the spiritual, collective body of Christ functionally real in the earth just like His physical body was functionally real. This requires:

1. One Head giving identity and direction to the body;
2. One unity of purpose and function;
3. One in knowledge and understanding of the ways and desires of God;
4. One sonship in which we participate;
5. One inheritance which is our provision;
6. One calling to which we are called;
7. One God who is our Father.

When God said that He would 'sum all things up' in Christ Jesus, He meant it—One New Man manifesting the glory of God to all of the heavens.

Because the One New Man is made up of many members, the members have to learn to function together in the purposes of God—how to be directed by one Head. We will not have “restoration” without the operating functions of the five-fold ministry because that is their purpose—their job function.

This is one of the reasons that our denominations cry out for revival. They refuse the process of restoration. They refuse to recognize or receive the five-fold ministry. Their very structure prevents the five-fold ministry from doing their job. So, they cry for revival instead.

## Discerning the Times

God has intentioned His One New Man—the living Temple of God through the Spirit. No one and no thing will change God's intention. It is going to happen whether we like it or not, whether we are ready or not, whether it fits into our denominational perspective or not. Our only option is whether we are built into it or not.

The End Days are accelerating. God's plans and purposes are coming together to complete His intention. We sometimes forget that we are not living in a haphazard history but, instead, God is working all things to bring His purpose to completion. We have come to the place where those with discernment cry out “how long, O Lord, before it is done?”

There is that which is within us that cries for intimacy, for relationship, for fellowship with the Lord and with all who are a part of the Lord. The denominations have given us carnal counterfeits, illusions of unity; but, they don't satisfy our cravings for reality. We search but we can't find. We become disillusioned with “church” and all of its trappings and we cry out to the Lord.

Long ago I heard a bible teacher say that the only way that you can be “dis-illusioned” is if you are living in an illusion to begin with. That is why so many are leaving the denominations disillusioned—they have been provided an illusion by the denominational structure and it doesn't satisfy.

Does that mean that the denominations need to be “revived”? No—no—no! It means that the Ekklesia of Jesus needs to be “restored”. The Ekklesia has always been alive and well; just hidden as a remnant among the people of God—held in captivity to the world and the carnal church system.

There was a time when the Israelites were taken captive by Babylon and removed from their land according to the purposes of the Lord. They remained captives for 70 years.

### Jeremiah 29:4-7 NASB

(4) "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon,

(5) 'Build houses and live *in them*; and plant gardens and eat their produce.

(6) 'Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease.

(7) 'Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.'

The Lord was telling them that they were going to be captives for a long time and to make the best of it. Live normal lives, build houses, plant gardens, have families and especially pray for the welfare of the city where they were. *For the season of captivity* they were to concentrate on

living where God had put them even to the point of praying for the welfare of Babylon.

However, that season was destined to end according to the plan of God and Jeremiah continued by telling them when it would.

### Jeremiah 29:10 NASB

(10) "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.

When the *season of captivity* was coming to an end God stirred the hearts of some of His true prophets, such as Daniel, about the ending of the season of captivity and the beginning of the *season of restoration*. The new season began with the beginning of the rebuilding of the Temple of the Lord.

During the days of Constantine the new covenant people of God were also taken into captivity to the State, to a compromise of religious mixture, to "Mystery Babylon". However, that season of captivity is over and we have entered the season of restoration of the Living Temple of the Lord.

With the Israelites, the first groups to start the Temple restoration stuttered in their commitment and dedication and after a period of time the work stopped until the Word of the Lord came through Haggai.

### Haggai 1:3-4 NASB

(3) Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

(4) "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house *lies* desolate?"

Paneled houses in those days were very luxurious accommodations. The people that should have been rebuilding, restoring, the Temple were instead focusing on their own prosperity and ease. As a consequence, the House of the Lord was neglected.

Likewise, the same thing has happened to us. The Spirit began to move to restore the Living Temple made up of living stones. The call to come out of Babylon came at the Protestant Reformation; but those that began to come out still operated from a carnal viewpoint and instead of embracing the unity of the Spirit they embraced division by doing exactly what Paul condemned the Corinthians for doing—gathering around a teacher by saying "I am of \_\_\_" fill in the blank.

God has continued His plan to bring forth the Body of Christ in the earth. While there have been "sprinklings" of the Holy Spirit at various times, it appears to me that this began in earnest with the Pentecostal movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, instead of following the Spirit into the process of being built together, the Pentecostals stagnated into another denomination. Then, the Lord poured forth His Spirit in the Charismatic movement and He did this all across denominational lines. Out of this was the beginnings of the building together of living stones.

**[NOTE:** I relate this process to the outpourings of the Holy Spirit because, "*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.*" (1 Corinthians 12:13-14 NASB)]

But carnal, worldly desires hijacked the Charismatic movement. It broke into two main groupings: the Shepherding group and the Prosperity group. Both of these detracted from the purpose of God in the restoration of the Living Temple. The Shepherding group did this by trying to implement fleshly procedures and a hierarchical structure to the principles of the Body. The Prosperity group simply emphasized money and played on the carnal desire to be rich. Both of these groups have now deteriorated into an 'independent' denominational structure. As a consequence the work of building the Living Temple has stopped.

Now the words from Haggai echo in our hearts and we cry: "How long do we dwell in our paneled denominational houses while the House of the Lord lies desolate?"

## Consider Our Ways

Haggai goes on with the Word of the Lord by telling them to "consider your ways". This certainly applies to us too.

### Haggai 1:5-6 NASB

(5) Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!

(6) "You have sown much, but harvest little; *you* eat, but *there is* not *enough* to be satisfied; *you* drink, but *there is* not *enough* to become drunk; *you* put on clothing, but no one is warm *enough*; and he who earns, earns wages *to put* into a purse with holes."

Their ways had resulted in these things because they were neglecting the restoration of the house of the Lord. Now, think of this list in spiritual terms:

1. planted much—harvested little;
2. eat—but not enough for satisfaction;
3. drink—but not enough;
4. dressed—but not warm enough;
5. made money—but can't get ahead.

Does that not describe our spiritual condition—our lack of satisfaction?

The next words from Haggai tell us why they are in the conditions that they are in.

### Haggai 1:9-11 NASB

(9) "*You* look for much, but behold, *it comes* to little; when you bring *it* home, I blow it *away*. Why?" declares the LORD of hosts, "Because of My house which *lies* desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.

(10) "Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce.

(11) "I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands."

The Lord says that He had done this to them because of their lack of obedience in restoring His house. They look for much—but it comes to little because He has blown it away.

God has called a drought

1. on the land;
2. on the mountains;
3. on the grain;
4. on the new wine;
5. on the oil;
6. on the produce of the ground;
7. on men;
8. on cattle;
9. on all of the work of our hands.

When we bring that forward as a spiritual application to us, no wonder that there is so little spiritual productivity in America. God, Himself, has given us a drought brought on by our own lack of concern for the restoration of the Living Temple of the Lord.

It is time for us to repent—change our mindset—regarding the Temple of the Lord. We are living stones that must—**must**—be built together as a dwelling for the Spirit. Nothing less will satisfy. Nothing less will be fully blessed by the Lord. It is the fullness of time—all things are coming to completion. How long, O Lord? How long?

**Note:** I would recommend further study about the word of Haggai from Neil Girrard, our brother in the Lord. Here is a link to the introduction to his series (from here you can access the series articles) <http://paidionbooks.org/girrard/church/btt00.html> -----Art

© 2003-2008 by Art Nelson and [Lifestream Teaching Ministries](http://www.lifestreamteaching.com)

Previous issues of Present Truth are on the website: [www.lifestreamteaching.com](http://www.lifestreamteaching.com)

For comments or questions contact Art Nelson at this address:

[artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com](mailto:artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com)

You have permission to copy and distribute these materials provided:

- 1) no changes are made to the content, and, 2) they are not sold.

**Removal instructions:**

This is a free teaching letter, without cost or obligation.

If you have received this teaching letter in error or if you desire not to receive "Present Truth" teaching letter please reply with "remove" in the subject area.