

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

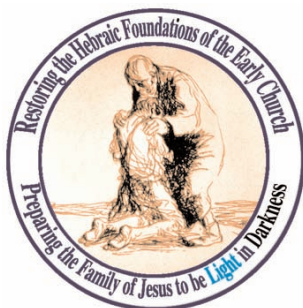
Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."
(Matthew 18:19,20)*



LESSON 1

Introduction to the Hebraic Restoration



Restoration Ministries International

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Introduction to **The Hebraic Restoration**

Have you noticed that our Father is restoring the relational intimacy and spiritual power that the earliest followers of Jesus once experienced? Why Now? Because God Keeps His Promises!

During the past sixty years God has been fulfilling His promises to the Jewish people as He restores them to Israel. *“Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again’”* (Ezekiel 11:17).

As He fulfills His promise to the Jews to restore them to the land of Israel one last time, our faithful Father is revealing to a Gentile world the Hebraic foundations which enabled the earliest followers of Jesus to be so relationally intimate and spiritually powerful.

Christianity didn’t spring up in a vacuum. In fact, all of the faith practices we see in the Newer Testament were already being practiced by what we call the **“Hebraic Stream”** of Judaism before the coming of Jesus.

Those of the Hebraic Stream were the faithful remnant who were awaiting fulfillment of Hebrew Scripture prophecy: the atonement of Jesus the Messiah, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

The Purpose of Restoration Ministries International

1. Awareness

Proclaiming through written word and media presentation the Hebraic founda-

tions of understanding and practice upon which the early Church was founded.

2. Equipping

Providing practical resources for God’s people to live out His restorative truths to fulfill His purposes.

Each of the books, videos, Hebraic articles and other training materials produced by Restoration Ministries International is one segment of a family of information related to what our Father told us to call **“The Hebraic Restoration”**. Through these truths our Father is revealing the trust-based obedient lifestyle of our father Abraham.

***By trusting** Avraham, when he was put to the test, offered up Isaac as a sacrifice. Yes, he **offered up his only son**, he who had **received the promises**, to whom it had been said, “What is called your ‘seed’ will be in Isaac.” For he had concluded that **God could even raise people from the dead!** And, figuratively speaking, he did so receive him (Hebrews 11:19,CJB).*

As you endeavor to understand that which our Father is restoring today, you’ll need to see *yourself* as He does — as a child of Abraham. The first Hebrew, Abraham, trusted God in love-grounded obedience, willing even to sacrifice his son at God’s command. Therefore, God *called him out* into covenant union with Himself, and

through him poured out precious promises for all his children to come.

When most people hear the word “church”, they think of a building. Yet, our Father sees His Church, the *ekklesia* or “called-out ones”, as the sons and daughters He has *called out of the world system*.

We are to be like our spiritual father, Abraham, whose life pattern of love-grounded obedient trust led him out of Ur to the Promised Land. We followers of Jesus are called out of the world to live in Covenant union with our Father. In fact, it might be said that the Church (the called out ones) began with Abraham our father, and became empowered at Pentecost.

The Hebraic Stream of Judaism, those who sought to relate to God as their ancestor Abraham, put their trust in the Messiah. As you will see later in this series, God had been revealing for some time *before* the coming of Jesus the faith practices embraced by the early Church.

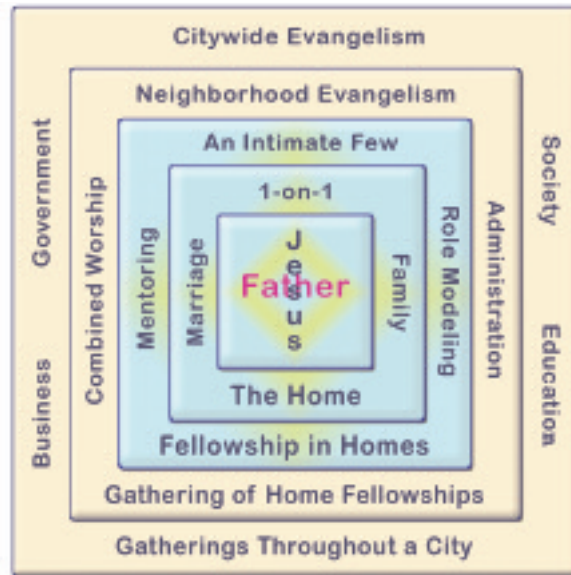
It is these foundations that our Father is restoring to those who hunger for the relational intimacy and spiritual power of the first followers of Jesus. As He keeps His promises to restore the Jews to the land of Israel one last time, our merciful Father is revealing the foundations of the early Church — “**The Hebraic Restoration**”.

Each of the Restoration Ministries materials is designed to stand alone to equip followers of Jesus to apply these foundational truths and principles to their lives. Yet, the real strength of each portion is found in both its *content* and its *interrelationship* to the other facets of the Hebraic Restoration.

The Restoration Diagram

Relational Priorities of the Early Church

The diagram on the next column represents the Hebraic relational priorities that were embraced by the earliest followers of



Jesus. The diagram may be pictured like a layer cake. The first and foremost layer is your relationship with our Father and His Son, Jesus. As you proceed outward from the center, each relationship is dependent on the quality of the relationship of those *closer to the center*.

The inner three rings, our Father and Jesus, the Home, and Fellowship in Homes are the core relationships in which relational intimacy is experienced as extended spiritual family.

The outer two rings concern corporate administrative and coordination purposes. In fact, when the inner three priorities are healthy in the way God intends, the outer two relational rings are effective in fulfilling our Lord’s broader purposes. Then, from the outer two rings, followers of Jesus can be sent forth to impact other nations.

PRIORITY #1 — OUR Father and Jesus

A biblically Hebraic understanding of your relationship with your Father, and His Son, Jesus, can best be understood as a *pilgrimage to salvation*. Your pilgrimage begins when you respond to the wooing of the Holy Spirit. He draws you to accept the stipulations that our Father offers in the

New Covenant that's made possible through the shed blood of Jesus, our atoning sacrifice. Your spiritual journey culminates when you stand before God's throne, and your name is announced to the hosts of heaven. This is the "day of salvation".

Jesus makes clear how you can enter into this Covenant:

"Whoever trusts in Me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who trusted in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified" (John 7:38,39).

The only Scripture in existence when Jesus revealed this truth was the Older Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures. The foundation for our salvation is found in the Older Testament, and made clear in the Newer Testament as a continuum.

[We discuss this more fully in a later lesson. You may also find the Gospel which the earliest followers of Jesus embraced in our Hebraic Article, [The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation](#), as well as in our video training series, *Jesus In Your Home*. The article and video are free downloads from our website, or may be purchased on DVD.]

Our training materials are worthless to you if you have not embraced the Covenant our Father offers us in His Word. Only through this Covenant can you receive the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowers you to live as a *stream of living water* — walking out your obedient trust in love and pleasing our Father.

We strongly encourage you to prayerfully and thoughtfully go through *The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to*

Salvation. It is vital that you embrace the Covenant relationship which Jesus has made possible. So many false, man-centered gospels have been developed in the past few centuries. Many today are embracing them to their eternal destruction. (See Matthew 7:21-23.)

You can recognize deceptive gospels because they omit the covenant stipulations Jesus speaks of in John 7:38,39 — God's requirements for your salvation which are introduced in the Older Testament.

PRIORITY #2 — YOUR HOME

The earliest Hebraic followers of Jesus understood clearly that God ordained *the home* to be the basic building block for spiritual development. A father/husband was the primary influence in the spiritual development of his family. All other relationships supported him in this role, and nothing competed with his responsibility nor compensated for his irresponsibility.

So much of Christendom today "outsources" wives and children for others to teach. This was never God's intent, and violates so much of His Word pertaining to the relational intimacy of the home and parental influence in spiritual growth.

A. Marriage — Our Father designed the marriage covenant to be the *physical representation* of your *spiritual covenant* with Him. In this light, marriage is the second most important covenant you can make. God established marriage to mirror in the physical world the intimacy and union a couple spiritually experience with their Beloved Bridegroom.

A Hebraic-Christian marriage of the early Church reflected a couple's relationship with God. This union could be summarized by declaring, "If you want to know the extent of my relationship with

Jesus Christ, see it in the love He has given me for my spouse.”

A man is to love his wife just as Jesus would love her. No less is demanded of him as a Spirit-filled follower of Jesus: “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*” (Ephesians 5:25). And a woman is to **lovingly respect** her husband as she would her Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24). No less is demanded of her in union with Jesus.

The relational intimacy shared by a married couple represents both their individual and collective relationship with their Lord. So vital an illustration of intimacy is marriage that God refers to Himself as the husband of His wife Israel. And, Jesus is called the Bridegroom of His Bride, the Church.

Marital love is an enduring commitment that is meant to deepen and grow throughout the years of marriage. Similarly, your union with the Holy Spirit should increasingly draw you (whether single or married) into deeper loving trust in God.

God has designed a husband to draw strength from his wife, his nurturing companion. She is the life partner who is suitable to complement him, just as a husband is the provider, protector and life companion God has given her so that they *together* will fulfill His plans and purposes.

It is out of the intimacy and health of a couple’s relationship with their Lord and with each other that they are then able to minister to others. Jesus wants a couple to represent to others the work His Spirit has accomplished in them together. The testimonies of *transformation into Christ-likeness* that an individual or couple share are the stimulus for encouragement and hope to others.

B. Family — We can’t emphasize this too strongly: Your home is the primary

building block for Christian growth. All your other relationships should supplement your home in this purpose. Be careful that other relationships or activities don’t displace your home as the key means of spiritual development for each person in your family. Nor should other people or programs compensate for your shortcomings in this responsibility.

The Hebraic followers of the earliest Church recognized that their relationship with their Lord and the relationships in their homes were inseparably linked:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk [or drive!] along the road, when you lie down and when you get up (Deuteronomy 6:5-7).

Children are a heritage and reward from the Lord. Fathers are commanded to “*bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4). This command is given to no other.

A *father* is the key influence in the sex-role identification of his children. He is God’s primary influence in whether his children enjoy healthy marriages that glorify our Father, or end up promiscuous in heterosexual or homosexual relationships.

Also, no one has the motivational influence on a child that a *mother* has. A mother imparts nurture and motivation to her children in a way that no outside caregiver can (Proverbs 1:8, 31:26). Until the 1900’s **education** was defined as “the relationship a mother has with her children”.

God’s life purpose for a child is best guided by parents who intimately know their children’s unique personalities and inclina-

tions. Those insights sharpen only as purposeful time and loving effort are spent with their children. Then they can shepherd their children into the life decisions and vocation that are best suited for each child.

[See [He Has Showed You](#) for more on God's responsibilities for the home. Also discussed is the support role of the extended spiritual family of a home fellowship.]

PRIORITY #3—Your Fellowship IN HOMES

God is reestablishing a key element of the early Church: fellowship in homes as an *extension of your home* for spiritual growth and supportive relationships. The earliest followers of Jesus met in homes with glad and sincere hearts to break bread and to "*spur one another on toward love and good deeds*" (Hebrews 10:24).

The home fellowship relationship of the early Church is a seven-day-a-week commitment to one another. This was *extended spiritual family*, much like the clan in tribal societies.

Before the coming of Jesus, the Hebraic followers of Jesus fellowshiped in homes first to support and uphold *communal righteousness*. As spiritual extended family, their physical and spiritual lives were interconnected. They knew from the Older Testament (Psalm 14:5, Psalm 32, Proverbs 15:29, Malachi 3:18, and affirmed again in the Newer Testament, 1 Peter 3:12) that God refuses to hear the prayers of the unrepentant and unrighteous. But those who confess their sins and turn from them are made righteous through God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Then He readily answers their prayers (James 5:16-18).

Early followers of Jesus knew from the Hebrew Bible that one person's sin impacted the lives of others. They saw from examples like David numbering his troops (1 Chronicles 21), Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16), and Achan hiding the

devoted items (Joshua 7), that God held His people *communally responsible* for each other. One person's sin and unrepentance hindered the prayers of the whole faith community from being answered.

Unlike the relatively impersonal nature of the Temple, fellowship in homes as extended spiritual family provided relational intimacy and mutual accountability to each other. Upholding communal righteousness in home fellowships is the focus of our Lord's words about His Church in Matthew 18:15-20. It's not sin *per se*, but the *failure to repent* that causes a person to be removed from fellowship. Repentance renews the righteous responsiveness to God that brings about answered prayer. And isn't answered prayer what got the earliest "called-out ones" noticed?

The second reason for fellowship in homes parallels the purpose of the clan in Hebrew society — *relational load-bearing*. An individual belonged to a family, a family to a clan, the clan to a tribe, and the twelve tribes made up the nation of Israel.

Home fellowships functioned like clans to provide personal care for the individual and family, and linked them to the larger and less personal relationships. As you can see from the Restoration Diagram, this is what fellowship in homes as extended spiritual family accomplishes.

Fellowship in homes deepens supportive relationships to point one another toward greater dependency on God. And in their relationship as extended spiritual family they are able to fulfill the 54 *one-anothering* passages, such as love one another and comfort one another, found in the Newer Testament.

Marriages and families that have been torn apart by death or divorce can be nurtured in the extended family of the home fellowship. Within this safe intergenerational

environment, mentoring and role modeling by elder/ sages, those who have lived their life for Christ and acquired wisdom, can guide those younger in their walk with the Lord. Through the family and through home fellowships, our Father is restoring sacrificial load-bearing love to relationships.

Remember, the nation of Israel's ability to respond to God's purposes was based on their relational progression from individual, to family, to clan, to the twelve tribes that comprised the nation.

Following this pattern, the Church is built on the individual, family, fellowship in homes, congregation, and congregations throughout a city. The ultimate outpouring of this relational model into their city will enable congregations to impact their society, education system, business spheres, government and ultimately, their nation and the world.

The goal of Restoration Ministries International is to equip God's children to live out the relational intimacy and spiritual power of the inner three rings of the Restoration Diagram. From these three flow the outworking that impacts greater spheres of influence.

***"I will bend Judah as I bend my bow
and fill it with Ephraim.
I will rouse your sons, O Zion,
against your sons, O Greece,
and make you like a warrior's sword."***
(Zechariah 9:13)

The prophetic fulfillment of Zechariah's words is being carried out in the Hebraic Restoration. Throughout the world our Father is sending forth a Hebraic understanding of the Scriptures to undo the heathen influence of the converted Greek philosophers of the second and

third centuries in the Church. Hellenist distortions of God's Word have held the Church captive for centuries. Through a philosophical approach to truth, the men referred to as "Church Fathers" reconciled Plato and Christianity, introducing a myriad of pagan practices which are now embraced as "Christian." Their anti-Semitism diminished the rich root of relational truth our Father wanted us to recognize and appreciate in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Paul had warned the Church against pagan intrusion that distorts His Word:

Watch out, so that no one will take you captive by means of **philosophy and empty deceit**, following **human tradition** which accords with the **elemental spirits of the world** but does not accord with the Messiah (Colossians 2:8,CJB).

Many of the creeds that now divide God's children into over 23,000 competing denominations are a result of the infiltration of Hellenist philosophy via the "Church Fathers". Creeds hammered out in councils using philosophical arguments can be mentally agreed with but your life won't be changed.

The early Church would have understood "doctrine" to be the message of Scriptural truth in Jesus for which one would be willing to die. To know someone's doctrine, you must observe his way of life. And this is our Father's goal:

***For those who trust His Son, Jesus,
to reflect Him in their daily lives
as they walk responsive to His Spirit.***

A Word of Encouragement

Our Father is restoring the "sons of Zion" who trust in Him as He has revealed Himself throughout ALL of Scripture. Their trust is evidenced through their lifestyle

and the righteous choices they make in service to their Lord.

Jesus encouraged all who would follow Him, *“I will build my church.”* No church can be built unless Jesus is the Cornerstone. Church life and practice must once again encompass the foundational Hebraic understanding upon which our Lord, the apostles, and the writers of the Newer Testament built.

The church of Jesus Christ was never meant to be divided by human creeds, traditions, or knowledge. The influence of Greek theory and philosophy, and the centuries of anti-Semitism within the church have hindered the return to our Hebraic roots.

As the Hebraic Restoration continues, the true Church — the collective “called-out one” — will be built upon Jesus, living by the power of His Spirit, and manifesting the trusting obedience of the God-fearing Jews who committed their lives to the Messiah Jesus in the early Church.

May God bless you as you incorporate this material into your life through the power of His Spirit for the glory of Jesus Who is worthy of all praise.

Acknowledgments

This work represents a spiritual pilgrimage. As with any pilgrimage, there have been years of preparatory groundwork before the first step toward the objective was ever made. We are grateful for our parents, who raised us to look to the interests of others even to our own hurt. We recognize in our hearts many humble servants of Jesus who, even before we had accepted God’s grace, role-modeled lives that reflected Him.

We are grateful for the men and women who, during our seminary years, demonstrated by their own lives that mere “content conveyance” does not

come close to the relational sacrifice that Christ calls for in His followers. Thank you, Christy and Betty Wilson and Charles Schaufele, who set the standard for us to never retire from service to God.

Our many years at the retreat center prepared us for another milestone along the way: The joyous responsibility and privilege of load-bearing among spiritual brothers and sisters. How we cherish those years of intimate relationship! The incredible variety in the members of the body of Christ with whom we shared as extended spiritual family was preparation for us to more fully appreciate the height and depth and breadth of the love of God. How glorious are His ways, and how infinitely beyond our understanding!

It was our odyssey to Israel, however, that removed the scales from our eyes to expose the subtle anti-Semitism that had subconsciously influenced our pilgrimage. As our dear friend Exie Schlossberg commented, “The brilliant light of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem exposes within you all manner of darkness to confess before the Lord.”

And as we were enlightened about God’s prophetic fulfillment for the Jewish people, God began to reveal His purposes for bringing us to the land of Jesus’s birth. Thank you, Bert and Exie Schlossberg, for opening your home and your lives that we might learn by example the righteous way of the Lord.

As we continue our pilgrimage, it is our prayer that those whom God touches through this work will intensify their hunger and thirst to see Him more clearly through the Hebraic roots of the Church. May their love for God and their service for His glory draw many into His Kingdom!

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