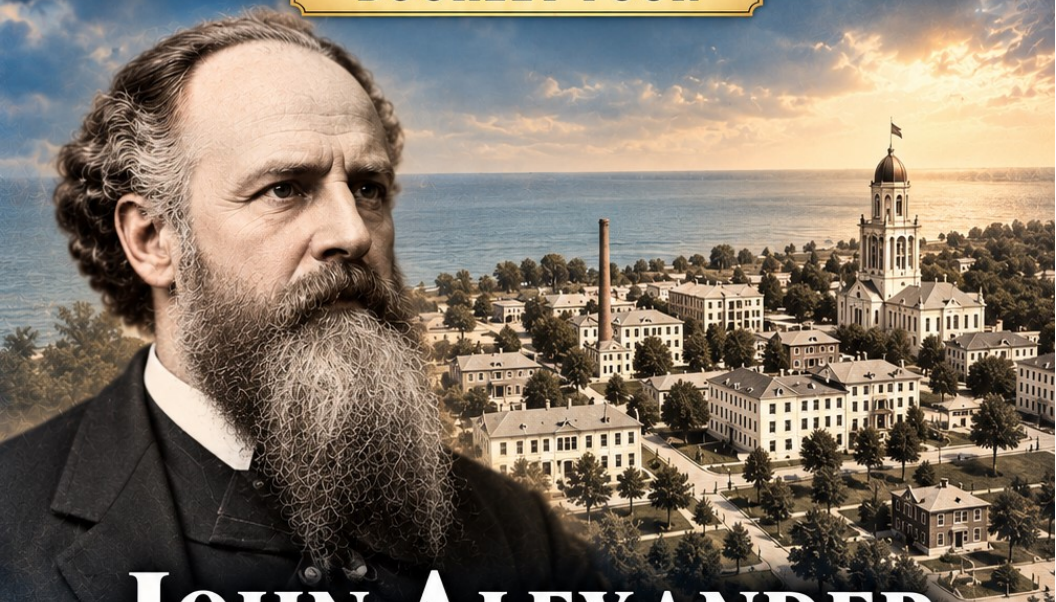


THE RETURN OF THE LATTER RAIN MOVEMENT

BOOKLET FOUR



JOHN ALEXANDER DOWIE ELIJAH THE RESTORER

Zion City, Divine Healing, and the Early Claims
of Restored Apostolic Authority



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Foundational Scriptures: Malachi 3:1; Malachi 4:5–6; Luke 1:16–17; Matthew 11:13–14; Ephesians 2:19–22; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 2 Corinthians 11:13–15; Jude 3.

Central Truth: Genuine spiritual authority comes from Jesus Christ and remains subject to His Word. Neither claims of divine healing, prophetic identity, nor religious accomplishments authorize anyone to establish a new apostolic foundation for the church.

INTRODUCTION

Before North Battleford, There Was Zion City

When examining the origins of modern teachings concerning restored apostles and prophets, many people begin with the Latter Rain revival of 1948.

Others begin with the New Apostolic Reformation of the late twentieth century.

However, the history of these ideas reaches much further back.

More than forty years before the North Battleford revival, a Scottish-born minister named John Alexander Dowie was proclaiming divine healing, establishing a religious movement, and advocating the restoration of apostolic Christianity.

Dowie became one of the most influential and controversial religious personalities of his generation.

He attracted followers through his preaching on divine healing and holiness.

He established a church organization that extended beyond the United States.

He founded an entire city in Illinois intended to demonstrate his understanding of Christian society.

He eventually claimed that God had appointed him to fulfill the role of Elijah the Restorer.

Later, he assumed the title of First Apostle in a restored apostolic order.

These claims are important because they demonstrate that the idea of restoring extraordinary apostolic and prophetic authority did not originate at North Battleford in 1948.

Dowie's ministry also illustrates how a movement emphasizing biblical themes can develop increasingly extraordinary claims concerning its leader.

Our purpose is not to deny that God heals or to dismiss every person who benefited from Dowie's ministry.

Nor is it to suggest that every person influenced by him accepted his later teachings.

Our purpose is to examine the historical development of his ministry, understand his claims, and evaluate the biblical questions they raise.

The central issue is not whether Dowie was a gifted speaker, a successful organizer, or a man who believed strongly in divine healing.

The central issue is whether his claims to prophetic and apostolic authority were supported by Scripture.

1. JOHN ALEXANDER DOWIE — HIS EARLY LIFE

John Alexander Dowie was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on May 25, 1847.

His family later emigrated to Australia.

As a young man, Dowie developed an interest in Christian ministry and eventually returned to Scotland for theological education.

He subsequently entered Congregational ministry in Australia.

During his early ministerial years, he became increasingly interested in the relationship between prayer, sickness, and divine healing.

He came to believe that divine healing should occupy a central place in Christian ministry.

This conviction would shape the remainder of his life.

In the nineteenth century, the divine healing movement was already developing among various Protestant Christians.

Dowie did not invent the belief that God heals in response to prayer.

However, he became one of its most visible advocates.

His preaching combined strong denunciations of sin, calls to holiness, and an emphasis upon God's power to heal.

These themes attracted people who believed that established churches had neglected important biblical truths.

Yet Dowie's theology would eventually go beyond preaching divine healing.

His ministry increasingly emphasized the restoration of the church to what he believed was its original apostolic condition.

That emphasis would become central to his later claims.

2. THE RISE OF HIS DIVINE HEALING MINISTRY

Dowie's ministry expanded through his preaching and reports of healing.

He established a healing association in Australia and subsequently traveled to the United States.

In 1888, he arrived in America.

He eventually established a ministry in the Chicago area, where his healing services attracted increasing attention.

Dowie taught that Christians should look to God as their healer.

He strongly criticized reliance upon medical treatment and promoted a form of divine healing teaching that frequently discouraged medical intervention.

His position must be distinguished from the biblical teaching that God heals.

Scripture clearly presents God as the source of healing.

James 5:14–15 (KJV)

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

The passage encourages prayer and faith in God.

It does not establish that receiving medical care demonstrates unbelief.

Neither does it authorize a minister to guarantee that every sick person will be healed.

Dowie's ministry raises an important distinction.

A biblical truth can be emphasized in a manner that goes beyond what Scripture actually teaches.

We should believe in divine healing without creating doctrines that Scripture does not establish.

We should also recognize that reported healings, even when genuine, do not prove every teaching of the person through whom prayer was offered.

God's power must never be confused with human infallibility.

3. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS CHURCH

During the 1890s, Dowie's growing ministry developed into a more formal religious organization.

In 1896, he established the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, later known as the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church.

The word *Catholic* in its name was used in the sense of universal Christianity, rather than identifying the organization with the Roman Catholic Church.

Dowie believed that existing churches had departed from important features of New Testament Christianity.

He sought to establish a church that emphasized holiness, divine healing, and restored biblical practices.

The movement developed a strong organizational identity.

Its followers looked to Dowie for spiritual leadership.

His publications communicated his teachings to audiences beyond Chicago.

One particularly important publication was *Leaves of Healing*.

Through these publications, Dowie presented his interpretation of Christian doctrine, reported activities within the movement, and defended his leadership.

His movement illustrates how religious restorationism can develop.

A leader identifies practices he believes have been neglected.

He calls believers to recover those practices.

He establishes an organization devoted to that purpose.

Over time, the question may shift from restoring biblical teaching to restoring special offices or authority structures.

That transition deserves careful examination.

The desire to follow the New Testament does not justify claiming powers or offices beyond those established by the New Testament.

4. ZION CITY — AN ENTIRE COMMUNITY BUILT AROUND A RELIGIOUS VISION

One of Dowie's most remarkable accomplishments was the establishment of Zion City, Illinois.

The community was developed on land near Lake Michigan, north of Chicago.

Settlement began in 1901.

Dowie envisioned Zion as a community organized according to his religious principles.

The city was intended to demonstrate what he believed Christian society should look like.

It included homes, businesses, industrial activities, educational institutions, and church facilities.

Residents were expected to observe religious and moral standards established by the movement.

The community discouraged or prohibited activities that Dowie considered contrary to holiness.

To supporters, Zion represented an extraordinary attempt to establish a Christian community.

To critics, its organization raised concerns about the concentration of religious, economic, and civic power.

Both perspectives are important to understanding the historical setting.

Dowie was not merely the pastor of a congregation.

He exercised considerable influence over the spiritual and practical lives of people who had moved to a city associated with his ministry.

This created a serious question concerning the limits of pastoral authority.

The New Testament instructs pastors to shepherd God's people.

It does not give pastors ownership over the lives of believers.

1 Peter 5:2–3 (KJV)

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

The biblical pattern is shepherding by example, not exercising personal dominion over God's people.

When a minister's authority extends into nearly every aspect of a believer's life, the potential for spiritual abuse becomes considerable.

The establishment of Zion City demonstrates both Dowie's organizational ability and the dangers inherent in concentrating religious authority around one personality.

5. FROM MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT TO ELIJAH THE RESTORER

One of the most revealing aspects of Dowie's ministry was the development of his understanding of his own spiritual identity.

He did not begin his public ministry by announcing himself as the First Apostle of a restored apostolic order.

His extraordinary claims developed as his ministry expanded.

Historical discussions of Dowie's prophetic identity include his use of language concerning the Messenger of the Covenant, followed by his more clearly documented declaration that he was Elijah the Restorer.

The exact chronology and meaning of the earlier designation require careful examination of his original publications.

Nevertheless, the biblical language involved raises an important question.

Malachi 3:1 (KJV)

Behold, I will send my messenger; and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

This passage refers to a messenger preparing the way and to the Lord who would come to His temple, described as the Messenger of the Covenant.

The New Testament applies the preparatory messenger portion of this prophecy to John the Baptist.

Matthew 11:10 (KJV)

For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

The distinction matters.

John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord.

He was not the Lord whose coming he announced.

Within Christian interpretation, the coming of the Lord and the covenant language of Malachi 3:1 are understood in relation to Jesus Christ.

Therefore, any modern minister applying the title Messenger of the Covenant to himself must be examined carefully.

We should not assume that Dowie explicitly claimed to be Jesus Christ merely because language associated with this prophecy appears in accounts of his ministry.

The precise meaning of his claim must be established from his own statements.

But the larger concern remains.

When a minister begins applying unique biblical prophetic titles to himself, the church must determine whether Scripture authorizes that identification.

A biblical title cannot become a personal office merely because a religious leader claims divine revelation.

The question is not whether the person sincerely believes the claim.

The question is whether God has established it in His Word.

6. THE DECLARATION OF ELIJAH THE RESTORER

On June 2, 1901, Dowie publicly declared that he was Elijah the Restorer.

This was a major development in his ministry.

He was no longer presenting himself merely as a preacher of divine healing or the leader of a restorationist church.

He was claiming a distinctive prophetic identity.

The title drew upon biblical passages concerning Elijah and the restoration of all things.

Malachi 4:5–6 (KJV)

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The New Testament provides essential guidance concerning the fulfillment of this prophecy.

The angel told Zacharias that John the Baptist would minister in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Luke 1:17 (KJV)

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Jesus also identified John the Baptist in relation to the promised Elijah.

Matthew 11:13–14 (KJV)

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

These passages establish that John the Baptist fulfilled an Elijah-like ministry in preparing the way for Jesus Christ.

Christians may differ concerning additional prophetic implications of Malachi.

However, no passage identifies John Alexander Dowie as Elijah the Restorer.

The burden of proof rests upon anyone claiming such a unique prophetic identity.

A person's conviction that God has appointed him to fulfill prophecy does not establish that the claim is true.

The church must examine the claim against Scripture.

Dowie's declaration illustrates the danger of moving from preaching biblical prophecy to assigning oneself a unique position within that prophecy.

7. FROM ELIJAH THE RESTORER TO FIRST APOSTLE

Dowie's claims did not end with the title Elijah the Restorer.

By the early twentieth century, he was publicly identified as the First Apostle of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion.

Contemporary sources document the use of this title, although the precise sequence of organizational changes and the development of Dowie's apostolic claims must be distinguished.

The title was not merely a descriptive reference to missionary work.

It was associated with the proposed restoration of apostolic office and authority.

The movement envisioned a restored apostolic structure under Dowie's leadership.

This is a crucial historical development.

Long before the New Order of the Latter Rain emerged in 1948, a religious leader was advancing the belief that extraordinary apostolic offices needed to be restored.

The idea was not new to Dowie, either.

Earlier nineteenth-century restorationist movements had already advanced teachings concerning restored apostles.

Dowie developed his own understanding within that wider religious environment.

The biblical question is whether the New Testament teaches that the church must periodically restore foundational apostolic government.

Ephesians 2:19–20 (KJV)

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

The church is described as having been built upon a foundation.

Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.

The foundational ministry of the apostles and prophets cannot be separated from the revelation of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His church.

The church certainly requires continuing ministry.

It needs evangelists, pastors, teachers, and the genuine operation of spiritual gifts.

But the existence of these ministries does not prove that a new governing apostolic order must be established.

A modern leader cannot acquire foundational authority simply by claiming an apostolic title.

Nor can a claim of divine revelation establish that the church must submit to a newly appointed spiritual hierarchy.

Every such claim must be measured against Scripture.

8. DOWIE WAS NOT THE FIRST TO ADVOCATE RESTORED APOSTLES

Although Dowie is an important figure in the history of restorationist claims, he did not originate the idea of restoring apostolic offices.

During the nineteenth century, various Christian movements questioned whether the established churches possessed the complete ministry described in the New Testament.

One important example involved Edward Irving and the religious movement associated with the development of the Catholic Apostolic Church.

That movement recognized a restored body of apostles during the nineteenth century.

Its teachings included the expectation that God was restoring elements of the early church in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic Apostolic Church developed its own structure of apostolic and prophetic ministries.

Its doctrines and organization were distinct from Dowie's later movement.

Nevertheless, its existence demonstrates that claims concerning restored apostles preceded Dowie by several decades.

Historian D. William Faupel has identified theological influences upon Dowie that included Edward Irving and the Catholic Apostolic Church.

This historical background is important.

It shows that Dowie's restorationist thinking developed within a broader religious environment rather than appearing without precedent.

However, historical influence must be established carefully.

The existence of similar teachings does not prove that every later movement copied the earlier movement directly.

Nor does it establish that all restorationist groups shared the same doctrine.

The recurring issue is the claim that the church requires the restoration of extraordinary spiritual offices in order to recover its original authority.

That claim must be tested by Scripture regardless of which movement promotes it.

9. THE PROBLEM OF EXTRAORDINARY SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

Dowie's ministry raises a question that has appeared repeatedly throughout church history.

What happens when a religious leader begins to identify his personal authority with the authority of God?

A pastor may faithfully preach the Word of God.

A minister may pray for the sick.

A Christian leader may establish churches, schools, or missionary organizations.

None of these accomplishments makes that person infallible.

None gives him the right to establish doctrine independently of Scripture.

The danger increases when disagreement with the leader becomes identified with rebellion against God.

At that point, biblical accountability may be weakened or rejected.

The New Testament presents a different model.

2 Corinthians 4:5 (KJV)

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Paul did not present himself as the object of Christian devotion.

He preached Jesus Christ as Lord.

Likewise, the authority of a pastor is ministerial and accountable.

It is not an independent source of revelation.

Galatians 1:8 (KJV)

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.

Even an apostle was not authorized to introduce a different gospel.

How much less should a modern minister claim authority to establish teachings beyond the Word of God?

The test of a ministry is not how many followers it attracts.

It is not how impressive its institutions become.

It is not how extraordinary its leader's claims may be.

Its doctrine and practices must remain faithful to Scripture.

10. DIVINE HEALING AND THE DANGER OF EXTREME TEACHINGS

Dowie's emphasis upon divine healing contributed to his widespread influence.

He helped bring the subject of healing through prayer before large audiences at a time when many Christians believed that churches had neglected this aspect of New Testament ministry.

His publications and public meetings contributed to a wider discussion of faith, prayer, sickness, and the continuing power of God.

This influence should not be overlooked simply because Dowie's later claims became controversial.

Many people were encouraged to pray for the sick and to believe that God was still able to intervene in human suffering.

His emphasis also contributed to the religious environment from which later Pentecostal healing ministries developed.

However, Dowie's strong opposition to conventional medical treatment created serious questions.

Believing that God heals is not the same as believing that every form of medical treatment is contrary to faith.

The Bible records miraculous healings.

It also recognizes ordinary human means of care.

Paul advised Timothy concerning a recurring physical problem.

1 Timothy 5:23 (KJV)

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

The passage demonstrates that practical measures concerning physical health were not automatically rejected.

The central issue is whether a minister has biblical authority to make universal demands that Scripture does not make.

When a personal conviction becomes a requirement imposed upon every believer, it may become an unscriptural burden.

The same principle applies to many other areas of Christian life.

A church may teach holiness without inventing new commandments.

It may encourage fasting without making extraordinary fasting practices a test of salvation.

It may preach divine healing without condemning believers who receive medical treatment.

The Word of God must remain the standard.

11. THE COLLAPSE OF DOWIE'S LEADERSHIP

Despite the remarkable growth of his movement, Dowie's leadership eventually entered a period of serious crisis.

Financial difficulties, internal disputes, and questions concerning his administration produced increasing opposition.

By 1906, Wilbur Glenn Voliva, who had served within the organization, became a central figure in the effort to remove Dowie from control.

A bitter struggle developed over the leadership and property of Zion.

Legal proceedings and public accusations followed.

Dowie's authority within the organization collapsed.

He died in Zion City on March 9, 1907.

The history of his final years provides an important lesson.

Religious accomplishments do not eliminate the need for accountability.

A minister may build an impressive organization and still make serious errors in judgment or leadership.

A church may possess extensive property and institutions without proving that every teaching of its founder is biblical.

The collapse of Dowie's leadership does not, by itself, prove that every religious conviction he held was false.

However, it demonstrates the instability that can develop when an organization becomes excessively dependent upon one individual.

The church must never be built upon the supposed indispensability of a human leader.

1 Corinthians 3:11 (KJV)

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ.

12. JOHN G. LAKE — A DOCUMENTED CONNECTION TO EARLY PENTECOSTALISM

One of the most significant connections between Dowie's movement and early Pentecostalism involved John G. Lake.

Lake became associated with Dowie's ministry during the 1890s.

In 1901, he moved to Zion, Illinois, where he lived and worked within the religious community.

He was involved in Dowie's church organization and became familiar with its emphasis upon divine healing.

These connections are important because Lake later became a prominent Pentecostal healing evangelist.

Following the decline of Dowie's leadership, Lake became involved with the emerging Pentecostal movement.

He subsequently participated in missionary work in South Africa and became associated with the development of Pentecostal Christianity there.

This provides a documented historical connection between the Zion movement and early Pentecostalism.

However, it does not mean that Lake accepted every doctrine Dowie taught.

Nor does it prove that Lake carried Dowie's claims concerning Elijah the Restorer or the First Apostle into his later ministry.

The historical connection concerns individuals, religious experience, and the transmission of certain emphases, particularly divine healing.

It must not be expanded into claims that the evidence does not establish.

The significance is that people who had been shaped by Dowie's religious environment later participated in the emerging Pentecostal movement.

Thus, Dowie's influence did not end when his personal leadership collapsed.

13. F. F. BOSWORTH — FROM ZION CITY TO THE HEALING REVIVAL

Another important connection involved Fred Francis Bosworth.

Bosworth moved to Zion City during the early twentieth century and became associated with Dowie's church.

He was a skilled musician and served as a band director within the Zion organization.

His experience in Zion exposed him to Dowie's emphasis upon divine healing and religious restoration.

During the period when Dowie's movement was declining, Pentecostal preaching reached Zion.

Charles Parham conducted meetings in the community in 1906.

Bosworth became associated with the developing Pentecostal movement and later entered evangelistic ministry.

He eventually became widely known for his preaching on divine healing.

His book *Christ the Healer* became influential among Christians interested in the subject.

Bosworth also became associated with the healing revival of the mid-twentieth century.

He was connected with William Branham's healing campaigns, providing another identifiable historical link between earlier divine healing movements and the postwar healing revival.

This connection deserves careful attention.

Dowie influenced the environment in which Bosworth developed.

Bosworth later became a prominent healing evangelist and participated in the revival networks that preceded the Latter Rain movement.

However, these connections do not prove that Dowie's apostolic claims were transmitted unchanged through Bosworth to North Battleford.

A documented personal or ministerial connection is not the same as proof of complete doctrinal continuity.

The historical record should be allowed to establish what it can demonstrate, without adding conclusions beyond the evidence.

14. HOW DOWIE'S INFLUENCE EXTENDED BEYOND ZION CITY

Dowie's influence was not limited to his own denomination or to the city he established.

His emphasis upon divine healing helped shape a wider religious conversation.

His followers and former associates entered other Christian movements.

Some became involved in Pentecostal ministry.

Others continued within independent healing and restorationist traditions.

Through these individuals, certain emphases associated with Zion reached audiences that Dowie himself never addressed.

This is one reason Dowie deserves attention in a study of modern restorationist Christianity.

His influence illustrates how religious ideas can move between organizations through people, publications, and personal relationships.

A movement may decline while some of its teachings or practices continue elsewhere.

Nevertheless, we must distinguish several different kinds of influence.

Personal influence occurs when individuals who participated in one ministry later become involved in another.

Theological influence occurs when particular teachings are adopted, adapted, or developed by later ministries.

Organizational continuity occurs when institutions or networks maintain an identifiable relationship.

These are not interchangeable.

The presence of personal influence does not automatically establish organizational continuity.

Likewise, two movements may teach similar doctrines without having a documented direct connection.

Careful historical study requires these distinctions.

They will become increasingly important as we examine the healing revival, the New Order of the Latter Rain, and later movements emphasizing restored apostles and prophets.

15. WAS DOWIE THE BEGINNING OF THE LATTER RAIN MOVEMENT?

No.

John Alexander Dowie did not establish the New Order of the Latter Rain.

That movement emerged in connection with the 1948 revival at North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

Dowie died more than forty years before those events.

It would therefore be historically inaccurate to describe him as the founder of the Latter Rain movement.

However, his ministry provides an important example of earlier restorationist teaching.

His claims concerning Elijah the Restorer and restored apostolic authority demonstrate that similar concepts existed long before 1948.

Furthermore, the documented connections involving John G. Lake, F. F. Bosworth, and other early Pentecostal figures demonstrate that the Zion movement influenced the broader religious environment from which later healing and Pentecostal ministries developed.

The historical question is not merely whether two movements taught similar doctrines.

It is whether their teachings were connected through identifiable individuals, publications, institutions, or other documented channels of influence.

Some connections between Dowie's movement and early Pentecostalism can be established.

Other proposed connections to later movements require additional evidence.

We must not confuse similarity with direct descent.

Nevertheless, the recurrence of claims concerning restored apostles and prophets raises an important biblical question.

If the church was established upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, why must that foundation continually be restored?

If Jesus Christ remains the head of His church, why should believers accept claims that a new governing class of apostles is necessary to complete His work?

These questions must be answered from Scripture rather than from the claims of religious leaders.

16. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESTORING BIBLICAL PRACTICE AND CLAIMING NEW AUTHORITY

There is an important difference between calling the church back to biblical truth and claiming that God has established a new source of spiritual government.

The church should continually examine its teachings and practices.

It should repent when it departs from Scripture.

It should seek the genuine operation of the Holy Ghost.

It should preach the gospel, practice holiness, and remain faithful to the apostles' doctrine.

None of these responsibilities requires the establishment of a new apostolic foundation.

The apostles did not teach believers to expect successive generations of men who would possess authority to redefine the government of the church.

They taught believers to remain faithful to the doctrine already delivered.

Jude 3 (KJV)

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Notice that the faith was delivered.

The responsibility of the church is to preserve and obey that faith.

The church may experience revival.

It may recover neglected biblical practices.

It may witness extraordinary demonstrations of God's power.

But it does not need a new gospel or a new foundation.

Restoration to biblical truth must never become an excuse for introducing doctrines that go beyond biblical truth.

17. WHAT CAN THE CHURCH LEARN FROM JOHN ALEXANDER DOWIE?

Dowie's history provides several important lessons.

A Genuine Biblical Emphasis Can Become an Extreme Doctrine

Divine healing is biblical.

But the truth that God heals does not authorize a minister to impose every personal conclusion he draws about sickness and medicine.

Religious Success Does Not Establish Doctrinal Authority

The ability to attract followers, establish institutions, or build a city does not demonstrate that a leader's extraordinary spiritual claims are true.

Prophetic Claims Must Be Examined

Dowie's declaration that he was Elijah the Restorer required biblical justification.

A person cannot establish his prophetic identity merely by declaring that God revealed it to him.

Apostolic Titles Do Not Create Apostolic Authority

Calling oneself the First Apostle does not establish that God has appointed a new foundational apostle.

The title must be examined in light of the New Testament.

Spiritual Leaders Must Remain Accountable

No minister should place himself beyond correction.

No church should become so dependent upon one individual that biblical accountability disappears.

Positive Influence Does Not Validate Every Teaching

Dowie helped popularize divine healing and influenced individuals who later participated in Pentecostal ministry.

These historical contributions deserve recognition.

However, they do not establish the correctness of his later prophetic and apostolic claims.

Historical Connections Must Be Demonstrated

The relationship between Dowie's ministry and later Pentecostal movements deserves serious study.

However, historical influence should be established through evidence rather than assumed because two movements share similar teachings.

18. THE FINAL TEST IS THE WORD OF GOD

The history of John Alexander Dowie is not merely an account of an unusual religious leader from the beginning of the twentieth century.

It raises questions that remain relevant to the church today.

Can a minister's claim of divine revelation establish a new spiritual office?

Can reports of miraculous healing validate teachings that are not supported by Scripture?

Can an impressive religious organization prove that its leader possesses extraordinary authority?

Can a movement claim to restore the church while introducing a new system of spiritual government?

The New Testament provides the standard by which these questions must be answered.

2 Corinthians 11:13 (KJV)

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

Paul recognized that claims to apostolic authority could be false.

Therefore, the church must not accept such claims without examination.

The same principle applies to prophecy, healing ministries, and spiritual experiences.

We must remain open to the genuine work of God while refusing to abandon the authority of Scripture.

The Holy Ghost does not need human exaggeration to demonstrate His power.

The truth does not need extraordinary religious titles to establish its authority.

Jesus Christ remains the head of His church.

His Word remains the standard.

His apostles established the doctrine upon which the church must continue.

CONCLUSION

From Divine Healing to Claims of Restored Apostolic Government

John Alexander Dowie was a significant figure in the religious history preceding modern Pentecostalism.

He preached divine healing, emphasized holiness, established a growing religious organization, and founded Zion City, Illinois.

His ministry attracted followers and influenced individuals who later became prominent in Pentecostal healing movements.

Among these were John G. Lake and F. F. Bosworth, whose later ministries provide documented connections between Dowie's religious environment and the developing Pentecostal movement.

These positive historical influences should not be ignored.

However, Dowie's claims eventually extended beyond the ministry of divine healing.

He declared himself Elijah the Restorer.

He later assumed the title of First Apostle in a restored apostolic order.

His prophetic claims also involved biblical language concerning the Messenger of the Covenant, which requires careful examination in light of the New Testament's identification of Jesus Christ.

These developments demonstrate that claims concerning restored apostolic authority were circulating long before the 1948 Latter Rain revival.

Dowie was not the first religious leader to advocate restored apostles.

Earlier nineteenth-century restorationist movements had already promoted related ideas.

Nevertheless, his ministry became an important example of how claims of extraordinary spiritual authority could develop within a movement devoted to recovering New Testament Christianity.

Dowie's history also demonstrates the dangers of concentrating extraordinary spiritual authority in one religious leader.

The lesson is not that Christians should reject divine healing.

Neither is it that the church should fear spiritual renewal.

The lesson is that biblical truths must remain within the boundaries established by Scripture.

No minister, however influential, can establish a new foundation for the church.

No prophetic declaration can supersede the Word of God.

No religious organization can replace the authority of Jesus Christ.

The church does not need another Elijah to establish its authority. It needs to remain faithful to Jesus Christ and the doctrine delivered by His apostles.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the truth of Your Word and for the power of the Holy Ghost.

We thank You that You are still our Savior, our Healer, and the Head of Your church.

Help us to seek genuine spiritual renewal without departing from the foundation You have established.

Give us wisdom to distinguish between biblical ministry and claims of spiritual authority that go beyond Your Word.

Protect us from placing our confidence in extraordinary personalities, religious titles, or impressive organizations.

Help pastors to lead with humility, faithfulness, and accountability.

Teach every believer to examine spiritual claims carefully and to remain steadfast in the apostles' doctrine.

May we never confuse the accomplishments of men with the authority of God.

Keep our hearts centered upon Jesus Christ.

Let Your church be filled with truth, holiness, love, and the genuine power of the Holy Ghost.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

HISTORICAL SOURCES AND FURTHER STUDY

1. **D. William Faupel.** "Theological Influences on the Teachings and Practices of John Alexander Dowie." *Pneuma*, volume 29 (2007), pages 226–253.
2. **The Newberry Library.** *Zion City (Illinois) Records*. Archival collection containing organizational correspondence, publications, financial records, photographs, and materials relating to Dowie and Zion City.
3. **John Alexander Dowie.** *Leaves of Healing*. Contemporary periodical documenting his ministry, religious teachings, and organizational developments.
4. **John Alexander Dowie.** *A Voice from Zion*. Published sermons and addresses, 1897–1901.
5. **Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.** *The Gospel of Divine Healing and How I Came to Preach It*. Historical tract by John Alexander Dowie.
6. **"The Genesis of a Modern Prophet."** *American Journal of Sociology*, volume 9 (1903). Contemporary historical examination of Dowie's ministry.
7. **Historical studies of John G. Lake.** Research concerning Lake's involvement in Zion City and his subsequent participation in early Pentecostal ministry.

8. **Historical and biographical studies of F. F. Bosworth.** Research concerning Bosworth's ministry in Zion City, his Pentecostal experience, and his later influence upon divine healing evangelism.
9. **Studies of Edward Irving and the Catholic Apostolic Church.** Historical background concerning nineteenth-century claims of restored apostles and prophets.

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Divine Healing: James 5:14–16; Mark 16:17–18; Acts 3:1–16; 1 Timothy 5:23.

The Messenger of the Covenant: Malachi 3:1; Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2–3; Luke 7:27.

Elijah and Biblical Prophecy: Malachi 4:5–6; Luke 1:16–17; Matthew 11:13–14; Matthew 17:10–13.

Apostolic Authority: Ephesians 2:19–22; Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Corinthians 3:10–11; 2 Corinthians 11:13–15.

Pastoral Leadership and Accountability: Matthew 20:25–28; Acts 20:28–31; 1 Peter 5:1–4; Hebrews 13:17.

Biblical Discernment: Acts 17:10–11; Galatians 1:6–9; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22; 1 John 4:1–6; Jude 3.