

INTRODUCTION

I was recently introduced to an Internet tract written by “Pastor” David Martin of the Solid Rock Baptist Church in Bartlett, Tennessee. The title of his tract, as mentioned in the title of this writing, is “*Common Sense Questions A ‘Church of Christ’ Preacher Cannot Clearly Answer.*”

Mr. Martin does not offer anything new in the questions that he sets forth. In fact, he offers the exact same arguments that most Baptists have been leveling at the Lord’s church for years. However, since he does offer “the same old thing”, I thought it would be a good idea to list all of his questions, along with their answers, in a single work; thus the production of this tract. My hope is that it will provide a good source of reference material for faithful Christians when they come in contact with friends, family, or acquaintances who may be Baptists. Also, to our Baptist friends, my prayer is that this tract will cause you to examine the Scriptures a little more closely as you note the answers given in response to Mr. Martin’s questions. Remember, in the end it must be to the Scriptures we turn in seeking our answers to spiritual questions, not to a mere man.

The introduction to Mr. Martin’s tract, which I will not list here for the simple interest of space, is interesting in that it is filled with sarcasm. In it he refers to many of “our” doctrines as “aberrant”, calls us a “deceptive and dangerous cult”, speaks of our “screwball theology”, claims that we must hop “all over the pond” so as not to “sink in the mire” of our “false doctrines”, warns his readers not to “wind up being baptized in the Lake of Fire by accepting a water-works based plan of salvation and rejecting salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ.” You know, it has been my experience that when a person needs to resort to insults and name-calling *before he ever begins* his teaching in an effort to prejudice the minds of his readers, you can generally rest assured that he does not have much *truth* in his arsenal. We will find such to be the case in this situation as well.

Through these questions Mr. Martin refers to members of the Lord’s church as “Campbellites”. Many members of the Lord’s church have been called by this name before. I remember many years

ago when my father was doing a call-in radio program in Louisville, Kentucky, a man referred to him as a “Campbellite”. Dad asked him to name just one thing that he teaches or practices that originated with Alexander Campbell. The man responded, “*Acts 2:38!*” Let me assure you that if you are a member of the church Jesus died to establish, *nothing* that you teach or practice originated with man. Rather, it is of Divine origin. If this is not true of you, then you are not a part of our Lord’s church.

I can think of three reasons why a person would refer to us by that name. First, they honestly and truly believe that we receive our teaching and doctrine from the writings of Alexander Campbell. I have known folks who believed this, and when shown the truth of the matter, readily accepted it and stopped. Second, they have been taught that ones who hold to certain doctrines (such as baptism for remission of sins, the possibility of falling from grace, a working faith, etc.) are known as “Campbellites”. I have also met these folks. They too, if they are honest, will stop when shown the truth. Third, and by far the most sinister, are those who use this term for no other reason than to stir up prejudice in the minds of their hearers. The term is generally used in a condescending and sneering manner. Unfortunately, these people are not usually all that concerned with the truth of the matter and will continue to refer to us as “Campbellites” in this prejudicial way, even when they know that they have no right to do so. I will leave it up to you to decide how and why Mr. Martin uses this term throughout his writing.

In the interest of fairness, and so as not to misrepresent Mr. Martin in any way, I will be listing his questions precisely as he wrote them in his tract. The entirety of his questions will be italicized so as to distinguish them from my responses. Also, he has used **bold letters** for certain phrases in his questions. Please understand that I make these words bold only because he did and, as was previously mentioned, I am recording his questions exactly as he wrote them.

Response to Mr. Martin’s Questions

Question 1- *“According to the history of the ‘Church of Christ,’ God used certain men to ‘restore’ the New Testament Church in the early*

1800's. Where was the true New Testament Church before then? Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18). What happened to the church and where was the truth it was responsible for preaching before God restored it?

Let us understand something at the outset: the New Testament church has existed since the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 when Peter exercised his right to be the first to use the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:19) in the first gospel sermon preached in Jerusalem. The church has been in existence since then and was found wherever a group of Christians agreed to gather together to worship and serve the Lord in the way He instructed in the pages of Scripture.

One thing that I think people tend to forget is that the Lord never promised an unbroken string of success for the church. He never promised that it would continue to flourish as it did at the very beginning, and He never promised that there would not be dark and difficult days for His people. In fact, some things jump out at you as you read the words of the Holy Spirit to Christians. For instance, **“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood”** (Hebrews 12:4). Consider also Jesus’ words to the church in Pergamum, **“I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast My name, and you did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells”** (Revelation 2:13). Clearly it was not all going to be sunshine and smooth sailing for the church, and such has been the case throughout the years. But then Jesus never promised that it would be these things. He *did*, however, promise that His word would never pass away (Matthew 24:35). The church has and always will exist within the seed of the truth, which is the Word of God.

Mr. Martin writes from a very sectarian standpoint when he speaks of the “history of the Church of Christ.” When he refers to the 1800’s he is referring to what has come to be known as the Restoration Movement. A desire to accept the Bible alone as the sole authority for all things religious swept across the country. Many churches abandoned their creeds and rules of faith to return to that sacred ground found only within the Scriptures. This led many to *go back* to the church of the first century. However, this movement certainly did

not *create* the church of Christ. Yes, many churches were restored to New Testament Christianity in the 1800's, but the church was not established in the 1800's.

Question 2- *“If a “Church of Christ” elder refuses to baptize me, will I be lost until I can find one who will? **Do I need Jesus and a Campbellite ‘Preacher’ in order to be saved?** If I do, then Jesus is not the only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) and the Holy Spirit is not the only Administrator (1 Corinthians 12:13) of salvation—the ‘Church of Christ’ preacher is necessary to salvation for **he is performing a saving act on me when he baptizes me!** Is this not **blasphemy against Jesus and the Holy Ghost?**”*

It is generally a very good idea to get your facts and information straight before you take on writing a tract that you intend for many to read. Mr. Martin seems to have a little difficulty making up his mind whether a person needs to be baptized by a “Church of Christ” elder or a “Campbellite preacher.” We will not waste time discussing the term “Campbellite” again. Let me just say that I have “grown up” in the church and have yet to come across a preacher or elder who argues that unless baptism is administered by one of them it is not valid. Baptism *is not* about the one administering it.

I find it interesting that Mr. Martin claims, as many Baptists do, that to be baptized for the remission of one's sins makes the one administering baptism a Mediator for that person's salvation. Where in the entire Bible is such a thing even hinted at? Of course Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man because the Bible says that He is. However, the Bible does not say a thing about one taking the place of or joining Christ as Mediator when he administers baptism. Instead, we must rely on Mr. Martin and those like him to insert that little nugget of information. Scripture makes it quite clear that Deity is doing the operating in baptism (Colossians 2:11-13; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21).

As far as the Holy Spirit being the only Administrator of salvation, I must admit that I am not wholly sure that I know what Mr. Martin is getting at. Since he did not explain and I do not intend to put words in his mouth, let me simply explain the verse that he used. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, **“For in one Spirit we were all baptized**

into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” “In one Spirit” means under the influence of one Spirit. That influence is found within the pages of Scripture.

Here is something else to chew on -- why is it that the person who is baptizing becomes a Mediator, but the one who delivers the Word, which *must* be believed if man is to be saved, is not? Mr. Martin claims that the “Church of Christ preacher” is performing a saving act on someone when he baptizes him or her. In John 6:29 Jesus said, **“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”** So if belief is a work that God requires, and Mr. Martin’s preaching causes someone to believe, hasn’t Mr. Martin performed a “saving act” as well? If one is a “saving act”, why isn’t the other? The truth is that the preacher of God’s Word (Romans 10:14-15) no more replaces or joins Christ as Mediator than the one who administers baptism for the remission of sins. The simple fact is that such an argument requires man to insert into Scripture what God never put there. That is certainly not a business in which man needs to involve himself (Revelation 22:18).

Question 3- *“If the water pipes broke and the baptistery was bone dry, would my salvation have to wait until the plumber showed up? **If I were to die before then, would I go to hell? If obedience to water baptism is the means of forgiveness of sins, then I would.”***

In Acts 8, beginning in verse 25, we have recorded for us the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. Verses 35-39 say: **“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ And Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he replied, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.”** Surely Mr. Martin is aware of this account and must know that baptism in the first century was done in whatever body of water hap-

pened to be available for their use. Should an individual be prepared to obey the gospel, yet a glance into the baptistery showed that it was “bone dry”, we would simply head directly to the first available body of water. I can think of several that are more than sufficient for the task within *walking* distance from where I sit right now. Let us be eternally grateful that our obedience to God does not rely on the schedule of our *plumber!*

Perhaps you have heard the question phrased something like this, “What if there just isn’t any water around them?” It is amazing that some can become so subjective and prejudiced in their thinking that common sense seems to flee them at times. How, it may be asked, are those people living if there is no water? Water is an essential element of life. There is no doubt that this is the reason God has given us so much of it. Certainly some places have it more abundantly than others, but there is not a people anywhere in this world living without water nearby. Remember, Philip and the eunuch were traveling through the *desert* and they found water.

As far as Mr. Martin’s last statement is concerned, in which he states that if baptism were necessary for the forgiveness of sins then not to receive it would consign one to hell, let me simply say that I have absolutely no intention of ever finding that out! That very fear is one of the reasons I was baptized in the first place. In 1 Peter 3:21 Peter said, “**Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**” If this statement of Peter is true (and it most certainly is for he spoke through inspiration), then would not the opposite be true as well? If baptism “now saves you”, wouldn’t that mean that *not* being baptized does the opposite? If not, why not? Instead of trying to find a way out or around clear teaching of Scripture, why won’t people just stick with what it says? We *know* that is a safe course.

I would like to mention one other thing before moving on to the next question. Obviously the question that we have just discussed is founded on emotion and not Scripture. Doubtless Mr. Martin finds it horrifying and unthinkable that a person who claims to believe in the Lord could be lost eternally because he died in some horrible accident before he could reach the waters of baptism. I will not presume

to speak for God in that instance and I will never dare claim that such a soul is safe. I hope and pray that it is, but I cannot make that call. First of all, I am not God to say whose soul is safe and whose is not. Mr. Martin appears to have very little problem taking on that role and will, as we examine in a later question, almost *demand* that we speak for God (Question 8). Second, the only soul that I can really speak for is my own. Third, the Scriptures just do not deal in hypothetical situations. I do not find *myself* in that situation. Mr. Martin does not find *himself* in that situation. Thus, let us not worry about what God will do in whatever wild and unusual circumstances we can create. I read what God wants me to do and I do it. That person who dies in an accident, though tragic, is not my responsibility—he is God’s. *I am my responsibility.*

Question 4- *“If my past sins are forgiven when I am baptized in water, and it is possible for me to “lose my salvation” and go to hell after I have been baptized, then wouldn’t my best chance of going to heaven be to **drown in the baptistery?!—before I had a chance to sin so as to be lost again? If I wanted to be absolutely sure of heaven, isn’t that my best opportunity?”***

Since the majority of these questions deal with baptism and will be answered fully as we continue, I will simply deal with the aspect of losing one’s salvation. Is it possible for one to fall away from Christ after his initial salvation? Yes, it is. Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:12; 6:4-6; and 10:26-32 serve as just a few examples.

Mr. Martin and those like him have it in their minds that if it *is* possible for one to fall from grace (the exact phrase found in Galatians 5:4, by the way), then a Christian can never know at any given time whether or not he is saved, and what a terrifying life that must be. Once again we must rely on them to insert that into the Scriptures because God certainly never did. In fact, in 1 John 2:3-6 John said, **“And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says, ‘I know Him’ but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.”** Mr. Martin implies that we can

never be absolutely sure of heaven unless we *drown in the baptistery!* If that were the case, I suppose that the Holy Spirit forgot to mention it to John! On the contrary, he asserts that we *can* know we are saved by keeping His commandments and walking as Christ walked.

Mr. Martin may say, as some Baptists have said in the past, “That means that we have to walk *sinlessly* as Christ did and we cannot do that! Thus we are right back where we started. It *would* be best to drown in the baptistery!” Fortunately for the Christian, provision is made for those occasions when he sins and falls short of the glory of God. The Christian can receive forgiveness of his sins by repenting and confessing them to God. Is this something that we simply made up? On the contrary, it is precisely what the Scriptures teach for the Christian who has sinned. Acts 8:22 and 1 John 1:9 make this quite clear. Keep in mind that Simon was already a Christian (Acts 8:13) when Peter commanded him to repent of his sin. What a truly wonderful thing that we can know whether or not we are saved and we can receive the forgiveness of our sins after baptism by repenting of them and confessing them to God!

Question 5- *“If as a Christian I can so sin as to ‘lose my salvation,’ just what sin or sins will place me in such danger? Is it possible to know at what point one has committed such a sin, and become lost again? Please be specific and give clear Bible references.”*

To answer this question we shall read 1 John 1:5-10: **“This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”**

John really sets forth for us in plain language a simple way for us to know whether or not we truly are in fellowship with God. First, John reminds us that God is light and there is no darkness in Him at all. In other words, God is truth, pure and undefiled. Those who

would proclaim doctrine contrary to this truth or those who live their lives contrary to this truth are in error, plain and simple. However, not even the most miniscule amount of error resides in God. In order for us to have fellowship with God, and also with our fellow Christians, we must first understand this essential nature of God.

In verse 6 John said, **“If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”** I have heard this verse explained before by those whose reasoning is similar to Mr. Martin’s claiming that John, by beginning this verse with the word “if”, is simply setting forth a hypothetical situation that could never really happen in the case of the Christian. If that were true, I cannot help but wonder why the Holy Spirit wasted space inserting it? In fact, what John is doing is showing the impossibility of maintaining an intimate relationship with God while at the same time living a life characterized by sin, for “walk” here speaks of the one’s habitual practice in life.

As we move on to verse 7 we read, **“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”** I do not question the idea that Christ’s blood continually cleanses the Christian. I believe that is what the Scriptures teach, as seen in this verse. However, the Scriptural teaching about the continual cleansing of the Christian by the blood of Christ and the teaching of much of the religious world concerning it are two very different things. Judging from the tone and content of Mr. Martin’s questions it is apparent that he would take the position that when one becomes a Christian not only are his past sins forgiven, but his *future* sins are forgiven as well before he ever commits them. Thus, in a very real sense, it is no longer really even possible for the Christian to commit sin. That is certainly not the position that John takes, not even in this very verse. John makes it clear that walking (lit. “keep on walking”) in the light means living a life of purity and holiness (1 John 2:15-17). It means living our lives within the parameters of the truth and God’s will for us (1 John 2:5-6). We do not have the time or space to discuss it, but *all* of 1 John is about this very thing!

In verse 8 we read, **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”** It is beyond argument

that John is writing to Christians. Since this is the case, those to whom John wrote had already had their past, alien sins forgiven when they became Christians; thus he *cannot* be referring to their past state of guilt prior to their conversions. He *must* be referring to present sin, sin at the time that he wrote. Because of the weakness of our flesh, sin will always be a present concern and something we will always have to fight against. Sin will continually force us to look to the cleansing power of Jesus' blood. Aware of this, John writes in 1 John 2:1, **“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”**

1 John 1:9 says, **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** Mr. Martin wonders what sin(s) will cause someone to lose his salvation. The answer is that *any* sin, of which a person is unrepentant and who lives his life characterized by that sin, causes him to lose his salvation. We know this because we have seen that God is pure, unadulterated truth and there exists no darkness in Him at all. We know this because John told us that in order for Christ's blood to cleanse us from all sin we must first walk in the light as He Himself is in the light. Christ did not walk in the light *sometimes*; He walked in the light *all the time*.

As we conclude the answer to this question, let me say that this very cavalier approach to sin can only be maintained by those who stubbornly shut their eyes to the plain teaching of Scripture and experience, both their own and others'. In fact, this erroneous position causes them to misunderstand and ignore the very nature of the One with whom they *claim* fellowship and communion. In Isaiah 59:11-12 we come across a people who were pleading for salvation. The problem was that these people were sinful, and sinful people do not receive salvation: **“We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before You, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities.”**

Sin must never be treated as unimportant or, even worse, a non-issue. It separates a Christian from his God. Its seriousness and

importance is seen in God's instructions to the Christian to separate from those who choose to walk in sin (2 Thessalonians 3:6-7, 14-15; 1 Corinthians 5:4-11), and to treat them like the rebellious sinners they have become.

Question 6- *“If as a Christian I can fall and ‘lose my salvation,’ is it possible to regain it? If so, how? If God ‘takes away’ my salvation, doesn’t that make Him an ‘Indian giver’? How could I ever know for sure that I was saved or lost?”*

Let's begin answering this question by read Deuteronomy 30:15-18. The children of Israel were rapidly approaching the time when they would enter the Promised Land. Notice God's words to them: **“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.”**

God had promised to give Israel the land of Canaan. This He did, and they eventually possessed everything that He had promised to them (1 Kings 4:21). Later, however, because of their unbelief and disobedience, God would take back from the children of Israel what He had given them (2 Kings 17:23; 25:21). I suppose that in Mr. Martin's reasoning this would make God an “Indian giver”. I must admit that I am embarrassed for Mr. Martin that he would use such a phrase. His irreverent use of the term indicates pretty plainly that Mr. Martin considers the thought of giving only to take back entirely unfair. However, what Mr. Martin and those like him fail to realize is that God's promises have always been conditioned upon the continued belief and obedience of His people. While Mr. Martin may very well admit this as far as the Old Testament is concerned, his words in this question show plainly that he does *not* believe such to be the case as far as the New Testament and salvation are concerned.

Is it possible to fall away from God after one's initial salvation? The Hebrew writer certainly thought so and actually used those very words in Hebrews 3:12, "**Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.**" It would be very interesting to hear Mr. Martin explain why this verse does not actually mean what it very clearly says. One cannot fall back on the old "hypothetical situation" argument, for the writer begins by urging them to "take care." There is absolutely no reason to "take care" that something doesn't happen to you if it cannot happen in the first place. Also, the Holy Spirit uses Hebrews 3, beginning with verse 5 and going through the remainder of the chapter, to illustrate the punishment for unbelieving and disobedient Israel as a warning that the very same thing could happen to the Hebrew Christians if they did not straighten up. If it was not possible for them to fall away in the first place then it certainly appears that the Holy Spirit once again wasted a good deal of space for no apparent reason. It could also very well be that Mr. Martin may argue that the folks under consideration here were "never really converted in the first place." In other words, they were never *really* Christians. That explanation will not hold up either for the verse warns against falling *away* from the living God. Let us use some common sense here: how would one go about falling away from the living God if they were never *with* the living God to begin with? As a parallel, how do you fall off a chair you were never standing on in the first place? No, the verse means precisely what it says, and an individual with a true and honest heart unfettered by prejudice can see that.

The remainder of this question was discussed in some detail in answering the last question. If a Christian wishes to be forgiven of a sin, then that Christian need only repent and ask God for forgiveness of that sin (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). God not only can forgive, but He wants to do so. Some have referred to this as the "second law of pardon." Once more Mr. Martin falls back on the "If one can lose their salvation then they can never truly know that they are saved" nonsense. I call it nonsense because the Bible simply does not teach it. In fact, as we noted a few questions ago, the exact opposite is true. Would you know that you are saved? The Holy Spirit, working through John, gives us a very simple way to determine that in 1 John 2:3-5. **Keep God's commandments!** Regardless of what Mr. Martin

and those like him claim, it truly is that simple.

Question 7- *“After becoming a Christian, are there any sins that will put me beyond the ‘point of no return’ so that I cannot regain salvation? **What sin or sins will put me in such jeopardy, so that, after becoming a Christian, I would be doomed to hell** without any recourse? Please be specific and give me clear Bible references.”*

As we have noticed several times already, any sin of which a Christian refuses to repent (1 John 1:5-10) would cause him to stand condemned before God, and were he to rebelliously refuse to repent of that sin all of his life, certainly seem to doom him to hell (Hebrews 10:26-31). Such irreverence and rebellion toward God would make him, just as Samuel said that it did of Saul, God’s enemy (1 Samuel 28:16).

Question 8- *“If I committed some sin—whether in thought, word, or deed, one minute before a fatal car crash—**would I go to hell if I did not have time to repent of it?** And, please, do not just say that it is up to God without giving me a specific Bible reference.”*

This question could very easily be turned right around on Mr. Martin. If a person were to die in some horrible accident one minute before he could “accept Jesus into his heart as his personal Savior”, would he go to hell? I have very little patience for such silly hypothetical questions like this. And Mr. Martin’s arrogance is stunning in his statement, “And, please, don’t just say that it’s up to God without giving me a specific Bible reference.”

I’d like to say something at this point: How often have Baptist preachers been asked to show just *one* passage that says anything at all about “accepting Christ into your heart as your personal Savior and you will be saved”? These responses have been sent to Mr. Martin some time ago with a request to show me that passage. Not surprisingly, no response has been forthcoming. Thus far, not a single Baptist has *ever* been able to find such a verse. Now there is absolutely nothing wrong with asking for verses to prove one’s position; in fact, one should *demand* such verses (Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1). However, one ought to be willing to provide what he demands of others. If he cannot provide them, then he ought to stop teaching what he

cannot prove.

Now let's get back to yet *another* hypothetical situation presented by Mr. Martin. I have absolutely no problem at all in leaving this question entirely in God's hands, despite Mr. Martin's request, for a couple of reasons. First of all, I simply do not have the power or authority to send a person to their ultimate reward, be it heaven or hell. Let me also say that I do not have the courage to presume to do so. Second, there *is* a specific passage that shows that such a question is, in fact, entirely up to God. Psalm 3:7-8 says, "**Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the Lord; Your blessings be on Your people.**"

The simple fact is that it is time for Mr. Martin and those like him to put away all of these hypothetical situations. Not only can they be thrown right back at them as we demonstrated at the beginning of this answer, but God has simply does not deal in hypothetical situations. Also, Mr. Martin and those like him need to stop "playing judge" in the place of God. Do what He says to do in the way that He says to do it and stop trying to find ways around His Word.

Question 9- *"Why does the 'Church of Christ' insist that **their name is scriptural when it cannot be found anywhere in the Bible?** The church is referred to as the 'Church of God' eight (8) times in the Bible, but **never** is it called the 'church of Christ.' The verse they use is Romans 16:16, but it doesn't say 'church of Christ.' Where does **the Bible** call the church the 'church of Christ?'"*

The verse to which Mr. Martin refers, Romans 16:16, says, "**Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.**" I am not sure whether or not Mr. Martin is serious about this question. Yet there are those who have wondered the same thing so we will take a few moments to answer it. "Churches of Christ" is the plural form of "church of Christ", just as "Christians" is the plural form of "Christian". Thus "church of Christ" is quite obviously a scriptural designation and a person would have to be just plain dishonest to deny that.

Is this the *only* scriptural designation for the church? Certainly

not. Mr. Martin pointed out the designation “church of God”. He also could have mentioned the “church of the firstborn” (Hebrews 12:23) and a few others. Perhaps Mr. Martin has come in contact with one of those members of the Lord’s church who claims that “church of Christ” is the *only* scriptural designation of the church. These folks, and you do run across them occasionally, are just plain wrong and cannot in any way uphold such a claim from Scripture.

Now, having seen that “church of Christ” *is* a scriptural designation for the church, why would the church bear that name in the first place? The Bible sets forth many reasons but we will simply mention two. First of all, the church *belongs* to Christ. It is *His* church as is so clearly seen by His referring to it as “**My church**” in Matthew 16:18. Second, it is designated as the “church of Christ” because He is the Head over all things having to do with it. In Ephesians 1:22-23 we read, “**And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**” The church that the Lord purchased with His blood is *not* a denomination. Because of this, it does not have any earthly headquarters as many denominations do, including many sects of the Baptist denomination. In a very real sense, one could say that the Lord’s church has its headquarters in heaven with the Lord Himself.

Why do you suppose the Baptists would style themselves after that moniker? Various Baptists have reasoned that John the Baptist baptized many of Jesus’ disciples, and even Jesus Himself; thus they were made Baptists. If that were the case then they were made Baptists *before* there was ever a Baptist church! The fact is, every single time the term “Baptist” is used it *always* refers to John and no one else. It was clearly not used the way that Baptists use it today in referring to their denomination and its members. The truth of the matter is that followers of Christ were *never* called Baptists, and the followers of John were *never* called Baptists. In fact, the Bible actually condemns human names for Christ’s church and its members (1 Corinthians 1:12; Acts 4:12). The term “Baptist” does not in any way exalt Christ. If John did not establish the church and if it does not belong to John, then why would anyone want to call the church by his name?

Though it has never been argued to me specifically, I have

been told that some Baptists claim that name because they practice baptism. If such is the case, it doesn't make any more sense to name a church after one of its practices than to name it after John the Baptist.

Having said all of that, if a group's teachings and practices are different from those found within the pages of Scripture, I suppose it does not really matter what they call themselves. After all, if you refuse to practice and teach what the Bible instructs, calling yourself after the name of Christ makes you no more a part of His church than it would if the atheist made the same claim.

Question 10- *“If the ‘Church of Christ’ claims to worship God only as ‘authorized’ by scripture because they sing only (and do not use instrumental music), then where do they get the ‘authority’ to use **hymnals, pitch pipes, pews, and indoor baptisteries** in their worship service? If the answer is that they are ‘aids to worship,’ where does the Bible allow for that? **Where is your required authorization?** If a pitch pipe can be an ‘aid to worship’ for the song service in the ‘Church of Christ,’ then why can’t a piano be an ‘aid to worship’ for Baptists who may need more help in singing?”*

This is a good and important question and I am glad that Mr. Martin asked it, for it is one members of the church receive fairly often. Why doesn't the Lord's church use a piano or any other mechanical instrument of music in worship? Simply because the New Testament tells us to worship with the fruit of our lips and we are content to leave things where God left them (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15).

Yet that is not really the question Mr. Martin is asking, is it? He speaks of “aids to worship” which is a term that we use quite often. It is not a biblical term yet it is very much a biblical concept, as we will show. Mr. Martin's question delves into the realm of authority. Unfortunately, I do not have the space to present a detailed treatise on such a deep topic, but a few words will be more than sufficient to answer Mr. Martin's question.

He asks for authority for such things as hymnals, pitch pipes, pews, and indoor baptisteries. The answer is that the authority for these things is inherent in the command to worship (Hebrews 10:25);

the command to do all things decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40); and in the fact that God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Mr. Martin will doubtlessly deny all of this, yet let's take a moment and put a little thought into it. Where did the early church find authority to worship in people's houses (Romans 16:5), in a school (Acts 19:9), in the Temple, etc.? They found it *within* the command to assemble and worship! The fact is that it does not matter where we worship, provided that it is not in an ungodly location, as long as we are doing it. Let's look at a familiar Old Testament example that really demonstrates how authority works. When Noah was instructed to build the ark he was told the type of wood to use, the breadth, height, and width it should be, and a few other details (Genesis 6:14-16). Yet the types of tools that he could use were left entirely up to him. Asking us where we find our authority for pews and indoor baptisteries is the same as asking Noah where he found his authority to use his tools. The answer will be the same in both cases—they are but aids.

Let's look at an example from the New Testament. Usually when a question of this nature is asked people also mention lights. Let's notice an event that took place in Acts 20. Paul arrived at Troas and upon the first day of the week gathered with the Christians there to worship and partake of the Lord's Supper. He prolonged his speech until midnight and it became quite dark. How were the people to see Paul? How were they to follow along with him, perhaps even take notes? Verse 8 tells us how, "**There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered.**" They could see Paul and follow along with him because they were using lamps. These lamps in no way changed the nature of their worship. *That*, Mr. Martin, is an aid to worship.

What about pitch pipes and hymnals? Once more I would suggest that we find the authority for them within the command to sing in praise and to do so decently and in order. How are hymnals aids to worship? Suppose that the song leader started singing a song of which no one in the congregation knew the words or tune. The whole thing would be a mess and serve no purpose but to confuse everyone in the assembly. What about the pitch pipe? The pitch pipe serves but one purpose and that is to make sure that the song leader knows the starting note of the song. These things merely aid in worshipping de-

cently and in order.

Mr. Martin claims that the piano does the same thing as the pitch pipe. Is there a difference? Well, the song leader uses the pitch pipe once before the singing begins to get the correct note, while the piano plays a melody throughout the entire course of the singing. One aids in worship while the other completely changes the nature of God's command from sing to sing *and* play.

I would like to make one more point in regards to this question. It doesn't matter how well a congregation sings. God is not looking for professional singers who never miss a note and always stay on perfect pitch. He *is* looking for those who worship Him in song to do so with grace in their hearts. Fortunately for us the things that so impress man, such as the beauty of someone's voice, do not impress God. Just as it was so many years ago in the case of David, God is concerned with the heart of man. If the heart is right, God is pleased.

Question 11- *“The ‘Church of Christ’ teaches that a sinner is forgiven of sin when he is baptized in water by a Campbellite elder. Where does the Bible teach that water baptism is required in order to have one’s sins forgiven? Every time the phrase ‘for the remission of sins’ occurs it is speaking of **the fact that sins have been forgiven previously!** The Bible plainly teaches that the forgiveness of sins is conditioned upon **repentance of sin and faith in Christ**—never upon water baptism (Matthew 3:11; Luke 24:47; Acts 3:19; Acts 5:31; Acts 10:43; Acts 20:21; Romans 1:16; Romans 4:5; etc.). Where does the Bible teach that forgiveness of sin is linked with water baptism? When Christ made the statement in Matthew 26:28, ‘for the remission of sins,’ it had to be **because sins had been forgiven** all throughout the Old Testament! Christ shed His blood because God forgave repentant and believing sinners for thousands of years before the Son of God came to ‘take away’ sins and to redeem us and **pay the sin-debt** with His own precious blood. How can one say that ‘for the remission of sins’ means ‘in order to obtain’ in light of the fact that God never uses the phrase in that sense? In the Old Testament God forgave sin on the basis of blood sacrifice (Hebrews 9:22)—the Old Testament saints had their sins **remitted** (i.e. forgiven) but they were not **redeemed** until Christ came and shed His blood at Calvary. Their*

*sins were **covered** (Romans 4:7; Psalm 32:1), but the sinner was not **cleared** of his guilt (Exodus 34:7) until the Cross (Hebrews 10:4). Before Calvary, the sins of believers were **pardoned**, but they were not **paid for** (i.e. redeemed) until the crucifixion (see Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:12-15). When Jesus said, 'It is finished,' (John 19:30), all sin—past, present, and future—was paid for, and the plan of salvation was completed, so that 'whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins' (Acts 10:43). In Acts 2:38, the people were baptized **because their sins were forgiven** (at Calvary when Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, and they **received the blessing of forgiveness** when they **repented** of their sin of rejecting Christ and **accepted Him as their Savior and Lord. Friend, heaven and hell depend on what you believe about this.**'"*

Talk about a mouthful! Once again, in his very first sentence, Mr. Martin attributes a belief to the church that we simply do not hold and he throws in another "Campbellite" reference for good measure. This has already been discussed and shown not to be the case, so we will say no more about it.

The remainder of this particular question is so convoluted that it is difficult to determine where to begin. I fear that Mr. Martin has mixed some truth with quite a bit of error here, and that is a very deadly combination. He asks two questions early on that we will answer first. He asks in one place, "*Where does the Bible teach that water baptism is required in order to have one's sins forgiven?*" A bit later, he asks the same question in this form, "*Where does the Bible teach that forgiveness of sins is linked with water baptism?*" I'm sure Mr. Martin will be happy to know that there is a verse that says it in almost the same words he used in his second phrasing of the question. When Ananias came to Saul in Acts 22:16 he said, "**And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.**" We could also mention Acts 2:38 here but we will be discussing that verse a bit later in this answer.

Mr. Martin uses the typical Baptist tactic of getting out his concordance and listing numerous passages that have in them the words "belief" and "repentance", connecting them to salvation. I imagine he would be surprised to hear me say that I agree with every single passage he mentioned. Yes, repentance is certainly a condition

for salvation. Yes, belief is certainly a condition for salvation. I believe and accept this. However, I can also play the concordance game with Mr. Martin and list every passage that deals with baptism, but I will not do that. Instead I will simply mention two of them. Most Baptists like to talk about Galatians 3:26 because they like what it says but very rarely are they willing to examine the next verse. The two verses say, **“For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”** The word “for” at the beginning verse 27 shows that verse 26 is true *because* of what verse 27 says. I would imagine that Mr. Martin would admit that a person must “put on” Christ in order to be saved. Well, verse 27 shows us how to do it.

The second passage I want to mention is 1 Peter 3:21. It says, **“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the flesh but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”** How can anyone who claims to teach the gospel of Christ say that baptism *does not* now save when the apostle Peter, speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus Himself sent, says that it *does* save in words that could not be any clearer? This is a simple thing, my friends: if someone tells you that baptism for (“in order to receive”) the remission of sins is *not* a necessary step in one’s salvation, then that person is a **liar** and will answer to God for it.

So what does all of this mean thus far? It means that if one has Bible faith (and all that goes along with it), is willing to repent of his sins, and is willing to submit to baptism for the remission of his sins, he will be saved. All of these go together; they do not contradict one another! Mr. Martin makes the plan of salvation so *subjective*. He is willing to accept belief as a condition for salvation. He is willing to accept repentance as a condition for salvation. Yet he *is not* willing to accept baptism as a condition for salvation when Peter says that it now saves! What!? Why he and those like him try to play one verse of the Bible against another, instead of taking it all together, is simply beyond me.

He goes on to mention that whenever the phrase “remission of sins” is used in the Bible it refers to *“the fact that sins have been forgiven previously.”* He then must engage in a long, disjointed ramble

in an effort to force his position into the Scriptures. The passage that haunts the Baptists is Acts 2:38 which says, “**And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’**” Does the word “for” in this verse mean “in order to receive” or does it mean “because of”? Mr. Martin claims the latter and that Peter told them to be baptized *because* their sins were already forgiven. This interpretation must be rejected for several reasons. First of all, the foremost authorities in the Greek language (one of which I certainly am not, but I do have their work at my disposal) affirm that the word translated “for” (eis) does not mean “because of”. Instead, it looks ahead to a result. Mr. Martin will even have to contend with some of his own on this point. The noted Baptist scholar Edgar J. Goodspeed translates the verse, “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to have your sins forgiven...*”

Second, the very same phrase appears in Matthew 26:28 where Jesus says, “**For this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**” I will give Mr. Martin credit for remaining consistent on this point, for he happily takes an utterly ridiculous position from which most Baptists shy away due to its claims that Jesus shed His blood *because men’s sins were already forgiven!* Now he starts tossing around words like “redeemed”, “covered”, “cleared”, “pardoned”, etc. without giving any definitions for them. I will not venture to guess at his definitions for I do not want to put words in his mouth. Yet after all of his talk the question still remains -- why would Christ come and die for man’s sins if man had already been forgiven of those sins?

Third, if Peter meant that they needed to be baptized because their sins were already forgiven, then repentance would also have to be done for the same reason. Here is where Mr. Martin’s consistency flies right out the window for he says, “*They received the blessing of forgiveness when they repented of their sin of rejecting Christ*”. If what Mr. Martin says about baptism in Acts 2:38 is true, then what he says in this quote about repentance *cannot* be true. Baptism and repentance are in the same context and must refer to the same thing. They stand and fall together, so to speak. Since Jesus said, “**No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all likewise perish**” (Luke

13:3), it is clear that repentance *precedes* remission of sin. Thus, baptism does the same.

Fourth, think of the people's question in verse 37. They asked, "**What shall we do?**" These people were pricked to their hearts, not because they were rejoicing that their sins had already been forgiven, but because they were feeling for the first time the weight and guilt of their sins and had no idea what to do about it. They wanted to know what they needed to do in order to *receive* forgiveness of their sins, and Peter gave them the answer.

Finally, where is the passage that teaches that baptism is something that is to be done *after* a person is forgiven? Actually, the exact opposite is true. We learn that it is done in order to be saved (Mark 16:16 and 1 Peter 3:21). We also learn from passages like Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 that a person is outside of Christ before they are baptized. Thus, it is abundantly clear that "for the remission of sins" does *not* mean "because your sins have been forgiven."

At the end of this question Mr. Martin once again mentions the idea of "accepting" Christ as Savior and Lord. After playing the concordance game to come up with verses using the words "belief" and "repent" he has yet to produce a passage that says anything at all about "accepting" Christ as one's Savior and Lord. Since the Bible does not talk about anything like that, I am not sure what he means by it. If he is referring to a prayer of some sort then I would like to know where the Bible speaks of saying a prayer in order to be saved. He may very well search through his concordance once more to find all the times the phrase "calling on the name of the Lord" is used and claiming that they teach prayer for salvation. Do they really? Asserting a thing is far from proving it. And what exactly are the words to such a prayer? Would one simply say, "Lord, I call on Thee"? For some reason, Mr. Martin would never tell me what prayer he tells people to say or the verses that demand or allow for it. A bit disappointing coming from a man who is so demanding of verses from others, isn't it? Perhaps he is referring to simple mental consent of the reality of Christ and His redemptive work. If that is the case, I would simply like to know where the Bible says anything about simple mental consent of the reality of Christ and His work in order to be saved. After all, do not the demons themselves offer mental consent (James

2:19)? Perhaps, if Mr. Martin is ever willing to *defend* his teaching, he can explain the process of “accepting” Christ as one’s Lord and Savior since the Bible does not.

Question 12- *“If salvation is **not by works of righteousness which we have done, and baptism is a work of righteousness, then how can water baptism be a part of salvation** (Titus 3:5; Matthew 3:16)? In the Bible, we are **SAVED BY GRACE, and grace does not involve human effort or merit—grace is grace and work is work!** (Just read Ephesians 2:8, 9 and Romans 11:6).*

Let’s talk about Titus 3:5 upon which the Mr. Martin is really basing his argument. The verse reads, **“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”** The apostle Paul was concerned that some would minimize the love and mercy by which we are saved so he hastened to point out that our salvation is not by meritorious works. Unfortunately some have misunderstood Paul to say that our salvation is without any conditions or works at all. This concept misses the very point that Paul is making, and at the same time identifies one of the absolute worst problems in religion concerning how a person is saved.

Paul’s point is not that salvation is without any works or conditions at all, but rather that it is without works of merit. If that were not the case then grace would be invalid. One cannot be saved by meritorious works and grace at the same time. In Romans 4:4 Paul said, **“Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.”** Paul’s use of the word “due” here identifies the works that are under consideration—those by which one earns what he gets (works of merit). In this case what is received is nothing more than what is owed, his due or debt. Yet none of us earns our salvation. It is a gift of grace as Ephesians 2:8-9 says, two verses which Mr. Martin referenced.

Yet interestingly enough, Titus 3:5 itself makes it clear that our salvation is conditional. The verse concludes with **“by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”** The washing of regeneration refers to none other than water baptism on our part (John 3:3-5; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:22)! Mr. Martin would

claim that our baptism is a work of merit, when in fact it is a work of *faith*. And right here we distinguish one of the greatest problems in the field of religion today -- the failure to distinguish between works of merit and works of faith.

Works of faith do not keep a gift from being a gift or grace from being grace. Would Mr. Martin deny that the falling of the walls of Jericho was clearly a gift of grace from God to Israel? Surely not. Yet the children of Israel were not permitted to just stand there and wait for it to happen. Instead they were commanded to march around the city (Joshua 6:2-5). No works of merit were involved, only works of faith (Hebrews 11:30). It must be remembered that the verses which teach salvation by works (James 2:21-24; Acts 10:35) have reference to works of faith, while those verses that teach salvation without works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:28; Titus 3:5; Romans 4:4) have reference to works of merit.

Thus, Mr. Martin's statement that "*grace does not involve human effort or merit*" is only partially correct. No, our salvation does not involve meritorious works, but the Bible clearly shows that it requires effort on our part (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Philippians 2:12). After all, belief itself is said to be a work (John 6:29). I wonder how Mr. Martin would try and explain that away.

Question 13- *"The 'Church of Christ' teaches that 'obeying the Gospel' includes being baptized in water in order to be saved. If this is true, then how is it that the converts of Acts 10 were saved by faith before and without water baptism? The Bible says in Acts 5:32 that only those who obey God may receive the Holy Ghost—so what did those in Acts 10 do to obey and receive the Holy Ghost and be saved? In the light of Acts 10:34-38; Acts 11:14-18, and Acts 15:7-11, how can anyone honestly believe that water baptism is necessary to salvation? Simon Peter said that their hearts were "purified by faith" (Acts 15:9) and that we are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ like they were (Acts 15:11): that is, **before and without water baptism!** We know that unsaved people do not receive or have the Holy Spirit (John 14:17; Romans 8:9). We know that the Holy Spirit is given only to those who have **believed on Christ** (John 7:39). We know that the Holy Spirit seals the believing sinner the moment he puts his faith and trust in Christ as Savior, before he is ever bap-*

tized in water (Ephesians 1:12-13). How does the warped theology of Campbellism explain away these clear passages of Scripture without 'muddying the waters' of truth and drowning its members in eternal damnation?"

I may be way off base here, and Mr. Martin can let me know if I am, but experience indicates that when a person places something in quotation marks, as he has done with "obeying the gospel", it generally shows that he doesn't think a whole lot of what others say about it or the concept in general. Yet Paul shows us just how important this is at the beginning and end of Romans. In Romans 1:5 he says, "**Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations.**" At the end of the letter, in Romans 16:26 he says, "**But now has been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith.**" Paul tells us in Romans 10:17, "**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**" One develops saving faith by reading and studying the word of God. The gospel, which has the power to save man (Romans 1:16), is within the Word of God. "Obedience to the faith" is the obedience to which faith leads; indeed, it perfects faith. This is certainly not something to scoff at or write off.

As far as Cornelius and his household in Acts 10, what makes Mr. Martin think that they were saved before and without water baptism? Is it the fact that the Spirit fell upon them? From that reasoning I suppose Mr. Martin would also have to say that murderous and ungodly Saul was saved, for the Spirit of God fell upon him as well in 1 Samuel 19:23-24 as he was seeking to kill David. Are we to conclude that Saul was in a right condition before the Lord because the Spirit fell on him and he prophesied?

I would suggest to you that what happened with Cornelius and his household happened for *Peter's* sake and was done so that he would know that the Gentiles has also been granted "repentance unto life". What took place here was a miracle. What would lead us to this conclusion? The grounds for amazement from Peter and the Jewish brethren could not have been the mere fact that the Gentiles had

received the Holy Spirit. If Peter had finished his sermon to them and promised that they would receive the Holy Spirit on the same terms that had been laid down in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost, then these Jewish brethren would have taken it as a matter of course that they received the Holy Spirit. And if after this Peter laid his hands upon them and imparted the miraculous gift of the Spirit, as had been the case in Samaria earlier (Acts 8:9-17), they would not have been so surprised for they had seen it before and *knew* that it would happen.

No, my friends. Two things cause their amazement here: first, the Holy Spirit was “poured out” upon them directly from God as it had never been done before, except in the case of the apostles themselves (Acts 2:2-4; 11:15). The second shock was that this unusual gift was given to Gentiles. The only instance in which we can compare this is with what happened to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. If one was a miracle, then so was the other.

So let us consider what we know from this entire event in Acts 10. Cornelius had been instructed to send for Peter to hear words whereby he and all his household should be saved (Acts 11:14). Peter came to him and spoke these words. He told him to be baptized and it was done. Thus, what prayerful and alms-giving Cornelius had lacked of being a Christian was supplied. Peter “commanded” them to be baptized in order to become Christians. That is how one “puts on” Christ (Galatians 3:27). This same command holds true for men today.

Conclusion

I have corresponded with Mr. Martin several times and have sent him my answers, along with a challenge to defend his teaching publicly or in writing. In his own words, he considers such “a waste of time” at this point while referring to me as a “damned heretic”. All the while he has refused to answer even a single argument.

As we conclude, let me once again state my purpose for this writing. To my brethren, I hope that this little booklet will be a good source of reference material for you when you find yourself in a discussion with someone of the Baptist persuasion. It is always helpful to familiarize yourself with the thinking and reasoning of those with

whom you wish to speak whose religious affiliation is different from your own.

To my Baptist friends, I hope that what you have read has encouraged you to study the Scriptures a little more closely and carefully. I also hope that it has encouraged you to speak to those in positions of authority within your congregation. *Make* them explain the verses that I have used (particularly dealing with baptism) in these answers. Carefully examine their answers from Scripture and, if you find that they are wanting, I pray that you have the courage and conviction to seek out a group of people doing all they can to worship exactly as the first century Christians did. I realize that some of my answers may have forced you to think about some things you have never considered before, perhaps even made you angry. I beseech you to consider the words of Paul found in Galatians 4:16, **“Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?”**

God bless you and give you wisdom in your continued study of His Word.

