Ezekiel*

Ezekiel 1:1-4 (1) Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.
(2) In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,
(3) The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.
(4) And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.
Ezekiel was a fascinating man who wrote a fascinating book filled with strange visions. He was a powerful preacher, a creative communicator, and he was carried away in visions of God. Ezekiel, perhaps like no other prophet, saw deeply into God's character. When reading his book, we get a glimpse of the awesome majesty of the Lord. Five years after his deportation, God called Ezekiel to be a prophet. It was to be his task to speak to the exiles in Babylon, waiting for a miracle of deliverance.
When Ezekiel was by the river Chebar one day, he saw a great windstorm sweeping down from the north. What it actually turned out to be was an unfolding vision of the chariot throne of God, carried by mighty angels and surrounded by brilliant light. Ezekiel could hardly find words to describe what he saw, but it was emblematic of God's judgments as Jeremiah had also testified; Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked; (Jeremiah 23:19). *Further description of this chariot throne of God is revealed by Ezekiel, at this time we will descend to the latter portion of*

chapter 1 where we will see what the appearance of this mighty scene actually is, please continue to;
Verses 25-28 (25) And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.
(26) And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.
(27) And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.
(28) As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD**. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.
What a sight Ezekiel had witnessed, the "appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Ezekiel's response when confronted with the awesome majesty of God was to fall upon his face. Then he heard God's voice saying; Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee; (Ezekiel 2:1). *God's commission was sobering, It was not going to be a cushy job, turn with me to;*
Ezekiel 2:3-10 (3) And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.
(4) For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.
Ezekiel and Daniel, the last among the Major Prophets, were prophets during the exile in Babylon. Except for occasional

visions of the corruption in the temple before it's final destruction under Nebuchadnezzar's third and final invasion, Ezekiel's entire ministry was in Babylon. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was a priest that God also called to be a prophet. He had been taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar along with king Jehoiachin and ten thousand of the leaders and skilled craftsmen of Judah; (2Kings 24:8-15).
Ezekiel communicated God's message in several ways, but most of the time he simply spoke God's message. One day however, he stood in the marketplace and shaved his head and his beard. Imagine someone doing that during lunch break on Wall Street. Using a scale, Ezekiel divided the hair into thirds. One third he set on fire, one third he chopped up with a knife, and one third he threw into the wind. It may seem strange, but it was God's command, turn to;
Ezekiel 5:1-5 (1) And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair.
(2) Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them.
(3) Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.
(4) Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.
(5) Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.
What was the meaning of this? We shall see, continue to;
Verses 11-13 (11) Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy

detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.
(12) A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.
(13) Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.
Even Ezekiel's personal life became a vehicle for God's message. If you think being a prophet is a cushy job, full of perks like a TV evangelist, think again, let's turn to;
Ezekiel 24:15-18 (15) Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
(16) Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.
(17) Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.
(18) So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.
God allowed Ezekiel's wife to die. The next day Ezekiel went about God's business as usual. His friends and neighbors were shocked at his actions. Ezekiel, you should be mourning, you should be at the funeral home. But Ezekiel looked into their shocked faces and gave this answer in;
Verses 20-24 (20) Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
(21) Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul

pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.
(22) And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.
(23) And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.
(24) Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.
The book of Ezekiel has more "I am's" than any other. "I am the LORD" occurs 70 times in his prophecy alone. Also Ezekiel gave this testimony from the Lord: **I am their inheritance**: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: **I am their possession**; (Ezek 44:28). *Ezekiel's early prophecies warn of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Some of his central chapters deal with prophecies of judgment on other nations other than Judah. It is in connection with the prophecy against Tyre that one of the most important revelations concerning the fall of the prince of Tyrus is ironically described as the first of creation; but at the same time the parallel is to be maintained in his fall from glory. Like Adam in the enjoyment of paradise, he shall be like Adam in his fall. Please turn to and read with me from;*
Ezekiel 28:11-19 (11) Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
(12) Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
(13) Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

(14) Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.
(15) Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.
(16) By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.
(17) Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.
(18) Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.
(19) All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.
Ezekiel's later chapters speak of the future restoration of Israel and the future millennial temple. Further, it should be noted that, even though Ezekiel's direct ministry had been to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the southern kingdom, many of his prophecies had envisioned the reunion of Judah and Israel and their restoration to true worship of God when Messiah was to establish His kingdom on earth.
Prophecy; Ezekiel 34:23-25 (23) And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.
(24) And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.
(25) And I will make with them a **covenant of peace**, and will

cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.
***Fulfillment*; Luke 2:12-14** (12) And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.
(13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
(14) Glory to God in the highest, **and on earth peace, good will toward men**.
Prophecy; Ezekiel 37:26-28 (26) Moreover I will make a **covenant of peace** with them; it shall be an **everlasting covenant** with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.
(27) My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
(28) And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.
***Fulfillment*; Hebrews 8:10-13** (10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:
(11) And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.
(12) For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.
(13) In that he saith, A **new covenant, he hath made the first old**. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.
Mark 1:14-15 (14) Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,
(15) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the **kingdom of God** is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

If the Kingdom is yet future, as certain people teach, then the world has in it somewhere a number of people who are many centuries old. Observe the language, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1)*; that is, the Gospel dispensation visibly taking place, both among Jews and Gentiles, upon the resurrection of Christ, and the pouring forth of His Spirit; and that it should come in power both in the conversion of believers in great numbers, and in the translating them into the Kingdom, turn with me to;*
Colossians 1:12-18 (12) Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
(13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath **translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son**:
(14) In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:
(15) Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:
(16) For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
(17) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.
(18) And he is the head of **the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.
The gates of hell were not to prevail against her, but the Church would be persecuted and her history obscured by man's version in an attempt to eradicate her. But there are traces of the Kingdom throughout history. So let us begin the search.
1st clue [About the **year 52**. When St. Mark, the apostle of Christ, saw that Auxibius had a desire for Christ, and that he was believing and instructed, he descended with him into a

pool and baptized him. This is the first example of which we read in history, outside of Holy Scripture, of those who were incorporated into the church of Christ, through baptism upon faith. Martyers Mirror Edition of 1660]

2nd clue [Tertullian (204 A.D.) wrote: "The church of Christ composed of baptized believers, does meet each Lord's day to partake of the Lord's Supper."]

3rd clue [Ignatius to the Ephesians (Died 110 AD)

And if those that corrupt mere human families are condemned to death, how much more shall those suffer everlasting punishment who endeavour to corrupt the Church of Christ, for which the Lord Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, endured the cross, and submitted to death! Whosoever, "being waxen fat," and "become gross," sets at nought His doctrine, shall go into hell.]

4th clue [Anglican clergyman, Dr Daniel Featly, (who was one of the translators of the King James@Bible) wrote in 1645 of the Churches of Christ meeting in London and elsewhere in his work the 'Dippers Dipt', took those congregations back to 1525 when he quotes from them "That baptism ought to be received by none, but such as can give a good account of their faith; and in case any have been baptized in their infancy, that they ought to he re-baptized after they come to years of discretion, before they are to be admitted to the Church of Christ." These churches in the 1600s were in communication with other churches of Christ in America, nearly two hundred years before Campbell!

In 1529, Simon Fish a barrister by profession and one of the preachers at the Bow Lane Church of Christ (London) wrote his work, titled 'The Summe of the Holye Scripture.' Fish's book teaches baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. For a time Fish was friends with Henry 8th and his wife, the queen, Anne Boleyn, advising on the Reformation until Henry realised Fish was seeking Restoration, not Reformation! Fish was a close friend of another member of the church of Christ, William

Tyndale, the famous Bible translator. Traces of the Kingdom Keith Sisman]

5th clue [Tottlebank England--minutes of a Church of Christ established in August 1669. In attendance were George Larkham, member of a Church of Christ in Cumberland and Roger Sawney, member of a Church of Christ in London. Church of Christ, one cup website.]

6th clue [A state historical marker in Revere, Massachusetts, (suburb of Boston). It reads: "Church of Christ — 1710 Meetinghouse of the church of Christ in Rumney Marsh, erected in 1710. Warnings about the Church of Christ]

All of these clues occurred before the birth of Alexander Campbell. I cannot help but wonder why people cannot accept the faith in Christ that is the effect of belief in the gospel.

So I ask you today, do you believe the word of God? Have you developed faith in it? Have you by faith repented of your sins?

If so, please come and by faith confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God and then be baptized into Him for remission of your sins. This is the gospel way of salvation. It's invitation is always open. Also prayer requests, but not the popular 'sinners prayer for salvation,' for it cannot take the place of; He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). *Please come while we gently persuade with song.*

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

Welcome to Lakeside church of Christ
Saturday, June 25 2016 @ 10:09 AM EDT
THE INSIDE PAGE(Encore v 2.1)

Often a religious group is identified with a person who is generally acknowledged as the founder of that group. Hence the Lutheran Church by its name is associated with Martin Luther. Falsely so, churches of Christ are said by denominational people to have had their beginning with Alexander Campbell (1813). Consequently, these people have loved to refer to members of the church as "Cambellites." This has been done in derision and in an attempt to discredit any effort to trace our origin to the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Commonly, even we in the church today, tend to think that somehow the church of the New Testament order ceased to exist on this earth and that not until what we like to call the Great American Restoration Movement was the church of the ancient order restored again. We also tend to think that it was in the days of Thomas and Alexander Campbell that the restoration was begun. The fact is there was in the first century and even in the pages of the New Testament pleas for a return (restoration) to God's order or pattern.

Jesus had promised to establish His church and the "gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." We need not argue here that the church was established as Jesus promised on the day of Pentecost following His Resurrection. Jesus kept His promise, and while the histories of men can not be used to verify it, Hell has never prevailed over His church. Even though she has under gone much persecution and hardship and has been reduced to small numbers over the centuries, the church has never ceased to be, and the Word has continued in the hearts of men up to our times. This is not to say that the church has not ceased in whole countries, even continents, at times, but if Jesus has kept His promise, it has not ceased to be.

But that the Campbells were the first to plead for a return to the New Testament pattern in America can be disproved by the histories of men. The church of Christ existed in America before the time of the Campbells. One instance is evidenced by a historical marker placed by the Historical Commission of the state of Massachusetts. **There is a marker which indicates the existence of a congregation of the church of Christ at Rumney Marsh in that state as early as 1710, with a meeting house been erected in 1790. Thomas Cheever was the first settled minister. He died October 17, 1749, at the age of 91. (West, Search of the Ancient Order).**

It is well established that congregations of worshippers were practicing after the New Testament order in England long before the Campbells came to America. A Dr. Robinson was principal of Overdale College, Birmingham, England, at the time he stated, "In the Furness District of Lancanshire in N.W. England, there existed in 1669, during the reign of Charles II, a group of eight churches of Christ, most of them now not in existence. An old minute book had been found dated in 1669 with evidence that they called themselves by the name "church of Christ," practiced baptism by immersion, celebrated the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day and had elders and deacons. In 1735, John Davis, a young preacher in Fife District of Scotland was preaching New Testament Christianity twenty-five years before Thomas Campbell, the father of Alexander, was born.

Unquestionably, many of the so called "dissenters" of that time period and earlier were either seeking or practicing after the ancient order; and they learned of it by reading the New Testament, which was first translated into English during the reign of Henry VIII. If the histories of men of that period had not been written largely by members of the Roman Church, we could undoubtedly document such groups throughout Europe during the Medieval Era and before. There were many groups in the Medieval Era which opposed the Roman Church and were persecuted by it. One such group were the Waldensians, in the 12th century, so called by Roman historians because Peter Waldo was a well known preacher of the group. Their crime was that they "proclaimed the Bible as the sole rule of faith and life. The group was declared heretical in 1184 and 1215 [by the Roman Catholic church], and persecution persisted until the 18th cent. . . . A group of Waldensians settled in the U.S. at Valdese, N.C." (The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia, 1991). These were Bible believing people who opposed the additions of

the Apostate Church, and thousands paid with their lives for their faith.
New Testament Christianity flourished in Egypt into the late 5th and 6th centuries until the Arab conquest between 640 and 642. These so-called [by the Roman Church historians] Coptic Christians opposed Rome and maintained the Scriptures in original and Coptic translations from the 1st and 2nd centuries. They retained their ties to first century Christianity until the Arab conquest of Egypt. Clement of Alexandria (died c. 215) was a Greek scholar who was converted and was one of the first to attempt a synthesis of Platonic and Christian thought. He attacked Gnosticism and other departures from the New Testament. Origen, 185?- 254?, was his pupil. Origen was the father of many departures from the New Testament pattern in spite of what histories influenced by what Rome may say.
The origin of Churches of Christ is not traced to Alexander Campbell or any other man. The church is identified with its name sake and founder, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" Matthew 16:18. The church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost after our Lord's resurrection, and the gates of Hell have never prevailed over her; and even now as Hell may batter at the door of the church, the Bride of Christ will continue to the coming of the Lord.

WARNINGS ABOUT THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST

The churches of Christ Greet You (Romans 16:16)

Our dearly beloved reading audience, in this article we will concentrate our efforts on opening your spiritual eyes (minds) to “the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:3-4). As we proceed “to declare unto you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), we will make plain God’s Plan of Salvation and expose many of the false doctrines you are being taught in your particular denomination.

Loved ones, as we give you the TRUTH of what God says, we will give you the Bible book chapter and verse for everything we teach. Our prayer for you is that you will open your Bible and study the Word of God with us. Please don’t believe OR disbelieve anything we say just because we say it, but SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES to be sure what we say is true (Acts 17:11).

Has anyone ever WARNED you about the churches of Christ? Maybe you've heard this WARNING: “Those are the ‘Christians’ who think only ‘church of Christ folk’ are going to Heaven!” Occasionally in a home Bible study, some honest and sincere soul will admit his need of teaching, but because he has been WARNED about us, he's a little wary to listen to what we say. This is no new thing, for certain unbelieving Jews "WARNED" those in Thessalonica against Paul and his co-workers (Acts 17:6), and some who met Paul when he went to Rome confessed that they had been "WARNED" about "this sect," and it being "every where spoken against" (Acts 28:22).

The purpose of this lesson is to mention some of the "WARNINGS" made about the churches of Christ, and to deal with them from the Word of God. Remember: Satan and his laborers deal in craftiness, dishonesty, and deception (2 Cor. 4:2) but truth has nothing to fear!

WARNING NUMBER ONE:

"THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DOESN'T BELIEVE THE OLD TESTAMENT"

It is amazing that some would make this accusation, since there's really no foundation for accepting the New Testament unless the Old can be believed. May we clearly and strongly declare that we believe ALL the Bible, both Old Testament and New. Indeed, Paul tells us that "ALL scripture is inspired by God and profitable..." (2 Tim. 3:16). Since Genesis 1:1 is inspired just as is Revelation 22:21, and all in between, then the child of God must believe it all!

What men confuse are these terms: BELIEVING the Old Testament and BEING SUBJECT TO the Old Testament. Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15 tell us that the Old Testament Law of Moses ended with the death of Christ on the cross. Galatians 3:23-25 bears this out, with Paul more plainly showing in Galatians 5:4 that if one tried to be justified by the law he was FALLEN FROM GRACE and Christ is become OF NO EFFECT!

Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 tell us the proper use of the Old Testament: it is a volume for study, that we might learn by examples from olden times, and be encouraged by the long history of God's rewarding obedience just as we are warned by the records of His punishing sin. But friends, we are NOT UNDER that law, and cannot be, for we are now subject to Christ, and we must hear Him! (Matt. 17:5 Heb. 1:1-2).

Please consider this illustration: we today know we are subject (in this land) to our current laws, yet there has also been English law and Colonial law, but we're not under either one of those now. Many points would remain the same, but we are under the system of American jurisprudence though students desiring a background of law knowledge will study all types. Just so, Christians are under the New Testament of Jesus Christ, not under Moses and his law (cf. John 1:17), but that does not mean that the Old Testament isn't inspired, is not to be believed, or serves no useful purpose to one who follows Christ.

WARNING NUMBER TWO:

"THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS AGAINST MUSIC"

Many of our readers have heard this. It is perhaps the single most discussed fact when the worship of God's people is being given consideration. There are those who really believe that the churches of Christ do not believe in music! Yet, it is true that we have music at every service, and we know of no faithful Christian who would think that he had faithfully worshiped God if the Lord's day ended and he had not used music!

Let us state the fact correctly: The churches of Christ are opposed to mechanical instruments of music IN WORSHIP! The Lord has regulated WORSHIP! He has NOT legislated concerning music and the playing of it purely for entertainment and pleasure, and in circumstances where worship is not the intent. But he has regulated HOW He is to be worshiped, stating that man's worship must be IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH (John 4:24). That word "truth" demands, by John 17:17, that worship must be in keeping with the Word of God. Indeed, it can't be OF FAITH unless it is by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).

Covering the Lord's ministry, here is the range of New Testament teaching on music; and notice the words from these verses that we emphasize: Matt. 26:30 and Mark 14:26 (SUNG); Acts 16:25 (SANG); Rom. 15:9 (SING); 1 Cor. 14:15 (SING); Eph. 5:19 (SINGING); Col. 3:16 (SINGING); Heb. 13:15 (FRUIT OF LIPS); and James 5:13 (SING). Surely no one can miss the action the Lord has repeatedly specified, and it is highly significant that the Lord repeated this over and over in the New Testament, whereas the mechanical instrument and PLAYING took place under the Old Testament!

The principle of divine worship is that everything that we do be set forth in the New Testament, by precept, approved example, or necessary inference. Mechanical instruments in worship is set forth by neither. Therefore, those who practice such are guilty of going beyond the teaching of Christ, and the Holy Spirit says: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God, but he that abideth in the teaching, hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9).

We have in the Bible both generic and specific commands. In Ephesians 5:19 we are told specifically how to carry out the musical part of the service to God. To be more plain if possible, you remember that God told Noah specifically how to build the ark (Gen. 6). He specified the wood. Now, if God had told Noah just to build it out of wood, Noah could have used hickory, oak, pine, or any other kind of wood, for wood is generic.

But God didn't tell Noah to just build the ark out of "wood." He gave Noah a specific command. He specified the wood. He told Noah to build it out of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14). God did not authorize Noah to use any other wood; therefore, as you well see, all other wood was excluded. The same is true regarding the singing of praise to God in worship. If God had told us to make music, we could resort to any kind of music, for music is generic. But He specified the music. READ carefully Ephesians 5:19 and you will notice the specific music God desires in worship.

The Scripture says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart." No where does the New Testament authorize plucking, playing or making melody on a piano or any other mechanical instrument. No where does the New Testament authorize the blues, jazz, rock, or rhythmical songs. Therefore, these things are excluded from the worship of God.

The church of the Lord is expected to abide by His Word. The early church was commended for following the doctrine of the apostles (Acts 2:42) - which is also the doctrine of Christ (2 John 1:9). That doctrine provides for music in the church, but specifies that the music is to be VOCAL: each saint singing praises to God, offering unto Him the praise from his lips. Music that one enjoys and engages in under pleasure and entertainment circumstances is one thing; music in the body of Christ is to be vocal music!

WARNING NUMBER THREE:

"THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WAS BEGUN BY ALEXANDER CAMPBELL"

This has been frequently stated, and sometimes by an honest soul who really doesn't want to be affiliated with a man-made, human institution - and we agree! We also would not want to enter into any union with a human religious system, built by man, and on man, and to further man's own opinions. But let's look at the above objection, in scriptural light.

The statement itself is an impossibility: Alexander Campbell COULD NOT originate Christ's church! Neither could any other man! Jesus promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18), and we find later that it HAD come into being (Acts 2:47) and Paul tells us HOW: it was purchased by His shed blood (Acts 20:28). Acts Chapter 2 throughout the end of the Bible is a record of that

church, and NEITHER did a man named Campbell or any other bring it into being.
Someone might well object at this point: "Forget the church of the New Testament! I'm talking about Campbell founding the religious group known today as 'the Church of Christ.' That's the one Campbell started!" You know, that point would remain to be seen. The seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). At any time, in any land, and among any people, if a man plants only that seed, and no doctrine of men, the fruits will be just what God intended, and not after man. Indeed, that's just what every faithful missionary does. If his name is Smith, and he plants only God's seed, the fruits aren't Smithites. When Paul preached the Word only, he didn't create Paulites nor begin the "church of Paul." Rather, he spoke against that very idea in 1 Corinthians 1:10-12. The Word only produces Christians, and they in assembled form are congregations of the churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16).
That Alexander Campbell existed, and labored in the Lord's kingdom is not to be denied. The test will be: what does the churches of Christ teach that is anti-Bible and proves to be purely the invention of Campbell? In examining the doctrine we hold and teach, the plan of salvation made known to men, the pattern of worship, the organization - and all else - is it by God's Word, or after the opinions of men? That examination is all we ask of men who want and love truth. And they will see that we teach not Campbell, but Christ!
Interestingly, those who claim that Campbell began the Church of Christ deal with an impossibility, even from the standpoint of time. **The State of Massachusetts, in its Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission's work, has erected this historical marker in Revere, Massachusetts: "Church of Christ - 1710. Meeting house of the Church of Christ in Rumney Marsh. Erected in 1710, Thomas Cheever, the first settled minister, died December 27, 1749. Aged ninety-one years."** This is very important, considering that Alexander Campbell first reached these shores in 1809. Campbell was born in 1768, and there had been a congregation of the church of Christ in Massachusetts for at least 76 years before his birth!
WARNING NUMBER FOUR:
"THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS JUST ANOTHER DENOMINATION"
The church of Christ is an undenominational institution. When we say undenominational, we do not mean all-denominational. Some man-made churches (such as some Community Churches) claim to be undenominational, but in reality they are all-denominational. They are all-denominational in that they look with favor upon all denominations. The churches of Christ are undenominational in that we are not a denomination and we stand opposed to denominationalism.
It is evident that denominationalism is antipodal to the Bible. For instance, examine the following:
1. Denominationalism (D) is made up of many bodies or churches. Undenominational Christianity (UDC) consist of only one body or church (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:20).
2. D is founded by man. UDC is founded by Christ (Matt. 16:18).
3. D has human heads. UDC has Christ alone as its head (Eph. 1:22-23).
4. D has human creeds. UDC uses the Bible as its only creed (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
5. D wears human names. UDC glorifies God in the name Christian (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16).
6. D follows men. UDC understands that following men is condemned (1 Cor. 1:10-13).
7. D has a multiplicity of churches unknown to the Bible. UDC is mentioned in the Bible (Rom. 16:16; Acts 20:28).
8. D membership is not essential to salvation. UDC understands that membership in Christ's body is essential to salvation (Eph. 5:23).
9. D preaches many different gospels. UDC understands that if a man preaches any other Gospel, he is condemned (Gal.1:8-9).
10. D rewrite their creeds every few years. UDC uses only the Bible which remains the same (Matt. 24:35).
11. D has many faiths. UDC has one faith (Eph. 4:5).
12. D has many baptisms. UDC has one baptism (Eph. 4:5).
13. D invites one to "join" their church. UDC understands that only the Lord can "add" one to

His church (Acts 2:47).
14. D claims to abide in branches of the church. UDC abides only in Jesus, the true vine (John 15:1-6).
15. D walks by different rules. UDC walks by the same rule (Phil. 3:16).
16. D thanks God in their prayers for so many churches. UDC believes in Jesus' prayer for oneness (John 17:20-21).
17. D claims that doctrine is inconsequential. UDC understands we are to take heed unto doctrine to save self and others (1 Tim. 4:16).
The above is only a brief contrast. It could be increased many fold. But this should be enough to convince the convincible that denominationalism contradicts the Bible. Therefore, the church of Christ is not a denomination and has nothing to do with denominationalism (except to reprove it - Eph. 5:11).
WARNING NUMBER FIVE:
"THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEVES IN WATER SALVATION"
Because of the widespread belief of Luther's doctrine of "salvation by faith ALONE," this is perhaps the most frequent point discussed by men as they "warn" against the churches of Christ. Of course, baptism is the item at which objection is made.
We often like to point out that while "water salvation" is not a scriptural term, and we have never heard members of the churches of Christ claim to believe in "water salvation," one could just as easily object to the record in Genesis 3 as teaching "FRUIT DAMNATION." Most clearly, Moses there shows us that Adam and Eve fell due to their eating a bite of fruit! Do we believe in "fruit damnation?"
Let us state it clearly: We, and all children of God, must believe in OBEDIENCE salvation and DISOBEDIENCE damnation. The Lord authored eternal salvation for those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9), and we're told He'll take vengeance on those who refuse to obey Him (2 Thess. 1:8-9). Disobedience has always damned, and obedience has always blessed. The point that must be made is that the obedience AND the disobedience will have some action that is incidental and part of the obeying or disobeying. Adam and Eve's disobedience took the form of eating of that fruit. Noah's obedience took the form of obeying God's will relative to the ark and its preparation (Gen. 6).
It cannot be denied, by the Scriptures, that man's obedience to the Gospel has his being baptized as a part of it. It is a part of his obeying the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16); it is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); it is to wash away sins (Acts 22:16); it is to put on Christ (Gal. 3:27) and it is to be saved (1 Pet. 3:21).
Romans 6:3 lets us know that baptism places us where the benefits of Christ's death can be applied to us. That benefit, of course, is the blood of Christ. Romans 6:4 continues to show that in being baptized, with Christ and into his death, the same power that raised up Christ from the grave will cause us to then be in NEWNESS OF LIFE!
Paul goes on to show that in that very obedience, in baptism, the old man of sin is ended (v. 6) and that we then are freed from sin (v. 7). If that opens the door for a FALSE charge that we believe in "water salvation," then so be it! To cover the range of requirements, it must be said that we believe and teach FAITH salvation (Heb 11:6), REPENTANCE salvation (Acts 17:30), CONFESSION salvation (Rom. 10:10) as well as BAPTISM salvation (1 Pet. 3:21). The point is that Christ must be obeyed, and that baptism is required, and neither one of these facts can be denied by the Word!
FRIENDS, we have dealt with five warnings sometimes given by honest and sincere people who are MISTAKEN as they warn others about the churches of Christ. The salvation of your soul is too important for you to rely on the words of others, whose instructions may or may not be true. That's why we urgently encourage you to visit and investigate the church of Christ, comparing all things by your own study of God's Word. Then, AND ONLY THEN, can you really know! Why not begin your serious investigation today, and plan now to visit the church of Christ in your community at the next scheduled service?-Samuel A. Matthews

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