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# Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: Be It of God or of Man?

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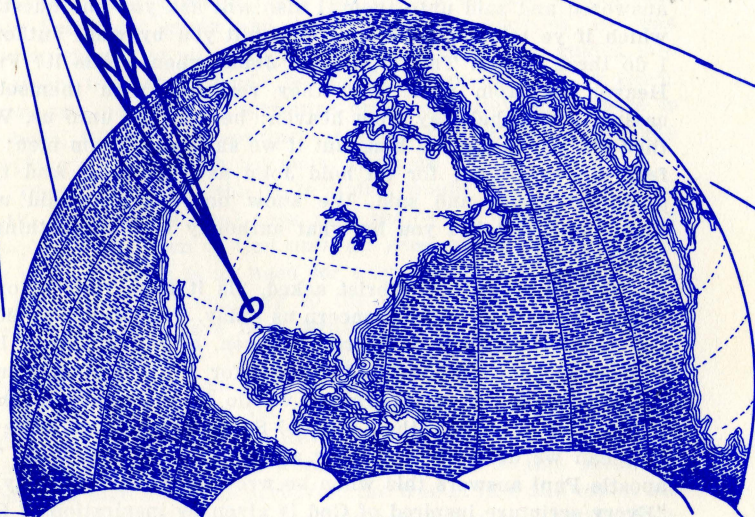
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Churches of Christ  
Salute You  
with a

Paul Cartrell

#47



*Be It Of God Or Of Man?*

James W. Nichols

January 4, 1953

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Herald of Truth



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# Be It Of God Or Of Man?

James W. Nichols

January 4, 1953

The chief priests and elders in the time of Christ were very wise and subtle men. They tried by nearly every means possible to trick Christ. On one occasion, in Matthew the twenty-first chapter, they sought to trap Christ by asking by what authority He performed miracles. They felt that if He said "of God", they could arouse the people against Him by accusing Him of impersonating God. They asked Him, "By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? From Heaven, or from men? And they reasoned with themselves saying, If we shall say from heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him. But if we shall say, From men: we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things". Matt. 21:23-27.

This question that Christ asked, "Is it from Heaven or of men?" is one that should concern us today. That which we do in the name of religion, is it from Heaven, or is it of men? If it is from Heaven, it is of God. Today, for a few moments, may we examine some of the things we do in the name of Christianity, and determine their source? Someone may ask, however, how can we determine whether a command is from God? The apostle Paul answers this when he wrote to Timothy by saying, "Every scripture inspired of God is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, or complete; thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:16, 17. I believe one of the basic needs of the world today, in seeking to come before the Lord, is to know and to feel that the word of God is complete and perfect; that there is no need for manuals; there is no need for disciplines; there is no need for man-made books, to guide us in the path of righteousness; that the word of God is perfect, complete, thoroughly furnishing the man of God unto all good works.

My friends, if we believe that the word of God does furnish us completely unto every good work, then is there any room for us to step out from its borders? Is there any reason for us to

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step out from the line of truth that has been given unto us by the Holy Spirit inspired writers? We also hear our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, speaking to His apostles, and saying: "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." John 16:13. Our Lord was talking here of how the Holy Spirit would come upon the apostles, and that he would speak through them, guiding them into all truth.

The apostle Peter tells us in the second chapter of Acts that the Spirit came upon them at that time on the day of Pentecost; and through those early days of the Church, the Holy Spirit did speak and act through the apostles. He was guiding them into all truth. Well, then, if they were guided into all truth, then there could be nothing more of truth to learn. These two passages of scripture prove definitely that there is no need, it would be contrary to the Word of God, if we add anything to that which has been given us.

Christ said that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth. The apostle Paul says that the Word of God furnishes completely the man of God unto all good works. It's complete; it's perfect; there is no need for anything else. If these things be true, then it is contrary to the Word of God, to add unto these things that have been written.

John, in II John 9 said, "Whosoever goeth onward, and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." And Christ said in Revelation 22:19, "and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." Yet how many times, as we study the Word of God, and as we strive to worship God, we do not take into consideration the fact of the way we worship? Is it of God, or is it of man? The scripture teaches that it furnishes us completely unto all good works, and so it is necessary, we believe, to stop and consider every phase of our worship, and every act we offer in obedience to God's commandments, whether they be of God, or whether they be of man. Are our actions upon faith, which Paul in Romans 10 says comes by hearing the Word of God, or are they based upon custom and tradition, or personal ideas?

Let us ask ourselves several questions that are pertinent in our worship in these days of denominationalism. First of all, "Is the practice of baptism of God, or is it of man?" We hear the Lord speaking to Nicodemus, saying: "Except a man be

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**YOU MAY HEAR THE HERALD OF TRUTH OVER THESE STATIONS**

Alabama, Anniston	WHMA	1450	1:00 p.m.	Maine, Bangor	WABI	910	1:00 p.m.	Penn., Johnstown	WCRO	1230	7:00 p.m.
Auburn	WAUD	1230	1:00 p.m.	Portland	WPOR	1450	9:00 a.m.	Philadelphia	WFIL	560	2:00 p.m.
Birmingham	WGSN	610	3:00 a.m.	Maryland, Baltimore	WFBR	1300	3:00 p.m.	Pittsburg	WCAE	1250	3:00 p.m.
Florence	WJOI	1340	9:30 a.m.	Cumberland	WDYK	1230	3:00 a.m.	Wilkes-Barre	WILK	980	5:00 p.m.
Gadsden	WGAD	1350	1:00 p.m.	Mass., Gardner	WHOB	1490	1:00 p.m.	R. Island, Providence	WPJB	1420	1:00 p.m.
Huntsville	WHBS	1490	1:00 p.m.	Lawrence	WLAW	680	1:00 p.m.	S. Carolina, Florence	WJMK	970	10:30 a.m.
Marion	WJAM	1310	9:30 a.m.	Springfield	WSPR	1270	2:00 p.m.	S. Dakota, Aberdeen	KSDN	930	10:30 a.m.
Mobile	WABE	1430	6:30 a.m.	Worcester	WAAB	1440	2:00 p.m.	Tenn., Chattanooga	WDEF	1370	1:00 p.m.
Montgomery	WAPX	1800	1:00 p.m.	Michigan, Battle Creek	WELL	1400	1:00 p.m.	Jackson	WTJS	1390	1:00 p.m.
Selma	WGWC	1340	1:30 p.m.	Bay City	WOL	1440	1:00 p.m.	Johnson City	WJHL	910	10:30 p.m.
Tuscaloosa	WJRD	1150	9:00 p.m.	Detroit	WOL	1270	1:00 p.m.	Knoxville	WBIR	1240	1:30 p.m.
Arizona, Clifton	KCLF	1400	1:00 p.m.	Flint	WOLF	910	10:00 p.m.	Memphis	WMPS	680	9:30 p.m.
Phoenix	KOY	550	7:00 a.m.	Lansing	WILS	1320	1:00 p.m.	Morristown	WCRK	1450	check sta.
Tucson	KCNA	530	3:00 p.m.	Ludington	WKLA	1450	1:00 p.m.	Nashville	WSIX	980	4:00 p.m.
Arkansas, Eldorado	KDMS	1290	1:00 p.m.	Muskegon	WKBZ	850	2:00 p.m.	Texas, Abilene	KRBC	1470	1:00 p.m.
Ft. Smith	KPSA	950	1:00 p.m.	Minn., Minn.-St. Paul	WTCN	1280	7:30 a.m.	Amarillo	KFDA	1440	1:00 p.m.
Hot Springs	KTHS	1090	1:00 p.m.	Mankato	KTOE	1420	2:00 p.m.	Austin	KNOW	1490	2:00 p.m.
Little Rock	KQHI	1250	1:00 p.m.	Miss., Centerville	WGLC	1530	8:00 a.m.	Beaumont	KFDM	560	1:00 p.m.
Springdale	KBRB	1840	6:00 p.m.	Aberdeen	WMPA	1240	1:00 p.m.	Big Spring	KBST	1490	1:00 p.m.
Calif., Bakersfield	KPMC	1560	10:00 a.m.	Columbus	WCBI	1340	6:00 p.m.	Brownfield	KTFY	1300	4:30 p.m.
Blythe	KYOR	1450	3:30 p.m.	Greenwood	WABG	960	1:00 p.m.	Brownsville	KVAL	1490	1:00 p.m.
Brawley	KROP	1300	3:30 p.m.	Jackson	WSLI	930	2:00 p.m.	Brownwood	KBWD	1380	6:30 p.m.
Eureka	KIEM	1480	8:00 a.m.	Kosciusko	WKZO	1340	1:00 p.m.	Corpus Christi	KEYS	1440	9:00 a.m.
Fresno	KARM	1430	3:30 p.m.	Laurel	WLAU	1490	1:00 p.m.	El Paso	KEPO	690	3:00 p.m.
Indio	KREO	1400	3:30 p.m.	McComb	WSKB	1250	1:00 p.m.	Ft. Worth	WBAP	570	1:00 p.m.
Los Angeles	KECA	790	3:30 p.m.	Missouri, Kansas City	KCMO	810	12:30 p.m.	Graham	KSWA	1330	4:30 p.m.
Modesto	KTRB	860	3:00 p.m.	Rolla	KTTR	1490	8:45 a.m.	Houston	KXYZ	1320	8:00 a.m.
San Francisco	KGO	810	3:30 p.m.	St. Louis	KXOK	630	2:00 p.m.	Longview	KFRO	1370	1:00 p.m.
San Luis Obispo	KATY	1340	3:30 p.m.	Springfield	KWTO	560	1:00 p.m.	Lubbock	KFYO	1340	4:00 p.m.
Colorado, Craig	KRAI	1230	5:30 p.m.	Montana, Butte	KOPR	580	9:15 a.m.	Midland	KCRS	550	1:30 p.m.
Denver	KVOD	630	3:00 p.m.	Great Falls	KMON	560	7:30 a.m.	New Braunfels	KGNB	1420	8:00 a.m.
Conn., Bridgeport	WNAB	1450	2:00 p.m.	Nebraska, Lincoln	KFOR	1240	10:30 a.m.	Paris	KPLT	1490	9:00 p.m.
Hartford	WHTT	1230	2:30 p.m.	Omaha	KOIL	1290	5:30 p.m.	San Angelo	KGKL	960	1:00 p.m.
Delaware, Wilmington	WILM	1450	2:00 p.m.	Sidney	KSID	1540	9:30 a.m.	San Antonio	KMAC	630	9:00 p.m.
Florida, Gainesville	WGGG	1230	1:00 p.m.	N. Hamp., Claremont	WTSV	1230	1:00 p.m.	Texarkana	KCMC	1230	1:00 p.m.
Jacksonville	WPDQ	600	8:30 a.m.	Lebanon	WTSI	1400	1:00 p.m.	Wichita Falls	KFDX	990	2:00 p.m.
Miami	WQAM	560	1:00 p.m.	Manchester	WMUR	610	3:00 p.m.	Utah, Provo	KCSU	1490	3:00 p.m.
Panama City	WPCF	1400	1:00 p.m.	N. Mexico, Albuquerque	KOAT	1450	3:00 p.m.	Salt Lake City	KUTA	570	7:30 a.m.
Pensacola	WEAR	1230	11:00 p.m.	Carlsbad	KPBM	740	check sta.	Vermont, Brattleboro	WTSA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Tallahassee	WTNT	1450	5:00 p.m.	Clovis	KCLV	1240	1:00 p.m.	Burlington	WJOY	1230	1:00 p.m.
Tampa, St. Pete	WSUN	620	1:00 p.m.	Los Alamos	KRSN	1490	3:00 p.m.	Montpelier-Barre	WSKI	1240	1:00 p.m.
Georgia, Atlanta	WGST	920	1:00 p.m.	Santa Fe	KTRC	1400	3:00 p.m.	Virginia, Charlottesville	WVNA	1280	9:15 a.m.
Augusta	WGAC	530	2:00 p.m.	New York, Albany	WKKW	850	2:00 p.m.	Fredericksburg	WFVA	1230	check sta.
Brunswick	WGIC	1440	1:00 p.m.	New York	WJZ	770	12:30 p.m.	Marion	WMEV	1010	2:00 p.m.
Cairo	WGRA	1300	3:00 p.m.	Olean	WHDL	1450	1:00 p.m.	Norfolk	WGH	1310	6:30 p.m.
Columbus	WGHA	1460	7:30 a.m.	Rochester	WARC	950	3:00 p.m.	Richmond	WRNL	910	1:30 p.m.
Macon	WNEK	1400	1:00 p.m.	Saranac Lake	WEAV	960	2:00 p.m.	Washington, Aberdeen	KBKW	1450	9:00 p.m.
Rome	WLAQ	670	1:00 p.m.	Syracuse	WAGE	620	12:00 p.	Omak	KOMW	680	9:15 a.m.
Savannah	WDAR	1400	1:00 p.m.	N. Carolina, Asheville	WLOS	1350	1:00 p.m.	Pasco	KPKW	1340	3:30 p.m.
Valdosta	WGAF	910	1:00 p.m.	Charlotte	WAYS	610	1:00 p.m.	Seattle	KJR	950	3:30 p.m.
Idaho, Boise	KGEM	1140	3:00 p.m.	Durham	WTHK	1310	2:00 p.m.	Spokane	KGA	1510	3:30 p.m.
Pocatello	KEIO	1440	9:30 a.m.	Elizabeth City	WGAI	560	12:00 p.	Washington, D. C.	WMAL	630	1:00 p.m.
Illinois, Chicago	WENR-WLS	890	2:30 p.m.	Fayetteville(Sat.)	WFLE	1490	1:00 p.m.	W. Virginia, Beckley	WVNR	620	1:30 p.m.
Quincy	WGEM	1440	3:00 a.m.	Salisbury	WSAT	1230	1:00 p.m.	Huntington	WHTN	800	8:00 a.m.
Indiana, Anderson	WKBU	1240	1:30 p.m.	Wilmington	WONI	1340	8:30 a.m.	Parkersburg, Sat.	WCOM	1230	5:30 p.m.
Bloomington	WFTS	1370	1:00 p.m.	Winston-Salem	WAIR	1340	1:00 p.m.	Wheeling	WKWK	1400	1:00 p.m.
Evansville	WIPS	1330	1:30 p.m.	N. Dakota, Fargo	KFGO	790	1:00 p.m.	Wisconsin, Green Bay	WDUZ	1400	5:30 p.m.
Ft. Wayne	WGL	1250	1:00 p.m.	S. Dakota, Huron	KIUV	630	9:00 a.m.	LaCrosse	WKTY	580	4:00 p.m.
Iowa, Cedar Rapids	WMT	600	7:30 a.m.	Ohio, Cleveland	WJTV	850	1:00 p.m.	Madison	WIBA	1320	8:00 a.m.
Des Moines	KSO	1460	1:00 p.m.	Columbus	WJTV	610	1:00 p.m.	Milwaukee	WCAN	1250	2:00 p.m.
St. Louis City	KSCJ	1360	10:30 p.m.	Lima	WJTV	1150	9:00 a.m.	Neenah	WNAW	1280	8:00 a.m.
Waterloo	KKEL	1540	5:30 p.m.	Youngstown	WBBW	1240	8:30 a.m.	Wyoming, Casper	KSPR	1470	9:15 p.m.
Kansas, Coffeyville	KGGF	690	2:00 p.m.	Oklahoma, Ada	KADA	1230	1:00 p.m.	Cheyenne	KFCB	710	12:00 p.m.
Topeka	WREN	1250	1:00 p.m.	Enid	KCRC	1390	1:00 p.m.	Cody	KODI	1400	12:00 p.m.
Wichita	KWBB	1410	3:30 p.m.	McAlester	KTMC	1400	1:00 p.m.	Laramie	KOWB	1340	12:00 p.m.
Ken., Bowling Green	WKCT	930	1:00 p.m.	Muskogee	KBIX	1490	2:00 p.m.	Rawlins	KRAL	1240	12:00 p.m.
Harlan	WHLN	1230	3:00 p.m.	Oklahoma City	KTOK	1000	9:30 a.m.	Riverton	KWRL	1450	12:00 p.m.
Louisville	WKLO	1080	1:00 p.m.	Tulsa	KRMG	740	2:00 p.m.	Torrington	KGOS	1490	12:00 p.m.
Mayfield	WKTM	1050	4:15 p.m.	Oregon, Eugene	KASH	1600	1:00 p.m.	Worldand	KWOR	1490	12:00 p.m.
Newport	WNOP	740	2:00 p.m.	Klamath Falls	KFLW	1450	4:30 p.m.	Alaska, Juneau (Sat.)	KJNO	630	1:00 p.m.
Louisiana, Baton Rouge	WLCS	910	1:00 p.m.	Medford	KMED	1440	7:30 a.m.	Canada, Trail, B.C.	CJAT	610	9:30 a.m.
Monroe	KMLB	1440	2:00 p.m.	Portland	KEX	1190	3:30 p.m.	Toronto, Ont.	CKEY	580	9:15 a.m.
New Orleans	WDSU	1230	1:00 p.m.	The Dalles	KODL	1230	1:00 p.m.				
Shreveport	KRMD	1340	1:00 p.m.								

All times are Sunday unless otherwise indicated.



born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." John 3:5.

Again, we hear the Lord saying: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Again we ask, "Is baptism of God, or of man?" We hear the apostle Peter saying on the day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Can any man deny that baptism is from God? It is not man's idea, but it's God's command, and must be obeyed.

But then, we can break down the subject perhaps a little bit more. Let us ask: "Is sprinkling of God, or of man?" We hear the Holy Spirit speaking in Acts the 8th chapter, telling how the Ethiopian eunuch heard the story of Christ from Philip, and as they were going along their way, the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stand still, and they both went down into the water; both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him, and they came up out of the water; and the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more; and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. What did they do? They both went down into the water. We now ask, "if baptism is not immersion, why was it necessary that both men go down into the water, and both men to come up out of the water?"

But again we hear the apostle Paul, being inspired of God, writing in Romans the 6th chapter saying: "For we are buried with Christ in baptism." Since we believe that immersion is the only Scriptural baptism. In the light of this scriptural truth, why can't all people accept the Bible way of being baptized, and occupy safe ground?

Another question that we should ask is, "The name that we wear religiously, is it from Heaven or is it of man? Acts 11:26 tells us the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. If the name we wear is that of Christian, then it is from God. Is the name that you wear found in the word of God? If not, it is of man. Is the name of the organization of which you are a member from Heaven, or is it of man? Paul said in Romans 16:16, "Churches of Christ salute you." The church was also referred to as the Church of the First Born, Church of God. These names are from God. Is the name of the organization to which you belong found in the word of God? If not, it is of men.

But let us take a phase of our worship, that is, the phase of using man-made musical instruments in the worship of God. Throughout all the searching that men may do, there is no way that we can find in precept or in example, that mechanical instruments of music were to be used, or were used, in the worship as the church was established in the apostolic era. In fact, we find that historians tell us that it was over 700 years after the establishment of the church before any instrument of music was introduced into the worship. It was introduced in 755 A.D. by a council of men.

Why did they not use mechanical instruments of music in some phase of their worship? Find the answer. The only answer that could possibly be given is that the word of God did not allow it, and God speaking to the apostles, would not allow it. My friends, the word of God is silent on this. So if we ask the question here: whether mechanical instruments of music in worship be of God, or of man, the only answer we can give is that it is of man, because it cannot come from God, since it is not found in precept or example in the New Testament.

These questions are fundamental. These are the questions which we must ask if we seek to be pleasing unto the Lord, our God. We believe that it is necessary in these days of denominationalism, for us to analyze, and to question, and to re-question ourselves, whether we be acceptable unto God. Oh, it's so easy to slip and to take missteps. It's so easy to put into our studying, and into our preaching, and into our teaching, personal theories, personal desires, brought about by pride—pride of the world. That's the only basis upon which it must be discussed: whether it be of God, or whether it be of man. And we say with all the strength that's within us, that if it be of man, it is our responsibility to reject it and put it aside; and it's our fervent prayer that every individual may reject those things which are of man, and not of God.

And so we ask each one of you to diligently study; study to show yourselves approved unto God, for the word of God is complete. You need not study the works of man: you need not know what that brother, or this, is thinking, but the question is: "What does God say upon this subject? What does God require of me, that I may be acceptable in His sight?" And when we've asked these questions according to the word of God, there won't be any trouble; there won't be any misunderstanding; there won't be any division. For if we unite upon what the word of God has said, we can unite upon the truth. Everything that's contrary and different to truth, must be an untruth, and



at that last day, as we stand before the judgment seat of God, we can say: "Lord, I've completed thy commands with everything that is in me; I was always striving to follow the truth, because I read thy word, I studied it, I obeyed it.

Have you believed upon the only begotten Son of God? Have you turned aside from sin in repentance? Confessed His name, and been buried with Him in baptism, raised to walk in newness of life? If not, why not? These are from Heaven, and we shall be judged by these commands. It is my prayer that we all may seek to know the will of God, and obey that will in humility. Then when we meet Him face to face, we can have assurance that we can be with Him forever, and walk within His sunshine, within the light of His love, not because we followed the works of man, or our personal theories; not because we perpetuated the things that our fathers taught, but because we sought to follow the Lord Jesus Christ through all truth, in all truth, and by all truth, even unto heaven itself. And so we plead with you, friends, to study the word of God; to obey it, for it's a thing to be obeyed, a thing to be cherished, and a thing to be followed. Won't you do that? If we follow it in truth, it will lead us face to face with Christ forever.