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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: Heaven or Hell

James Nichols

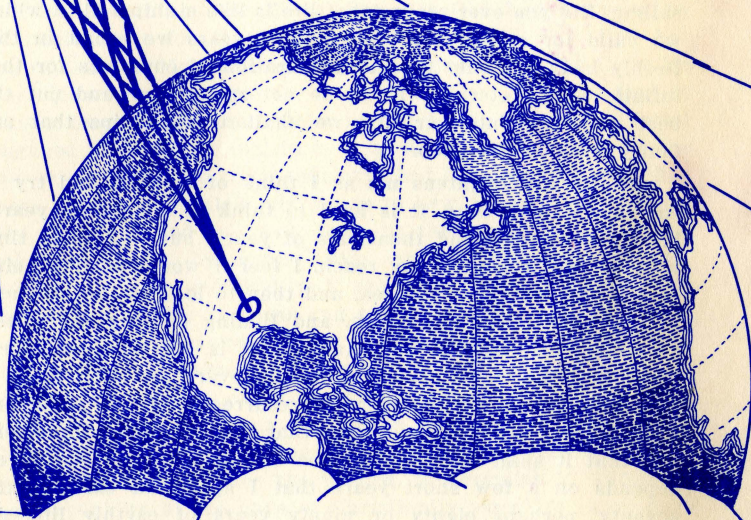
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*Churches of Christ
Salute You
with a*



Heaven or Hell?

James W. Nichols

December 28, 1952

Herald of Truth

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Did you ever stand and watch hundreds of men working to lay the keel to a ship? We could go to the shipyards of our nation and watch that keel, by the working combination of man and machine, grow into a mighty ship. And as we stand there, think how that the time spent in the building of the ship is just a small fraction of the years that it shall sail on the seas. Though there is much energy spent along with money in that shipyard, that is only a period of preparing for the years of sailing. Did you ever realize that life is like a shipyard in which we build for eternity? The few short years we spend in this fleshly body are only for the preparation of ourselves for that infinite sea of eternity. If we do not spend time and put the best materials into our life, we shall as the ships that are faulty, sink in the deep.

It literally frightens me as I think of eternity and try to compare it with time. It is hard to think of a hundred years; harder to comprehend thousands of years, but to fathom time without end is beyond my reach. I feel it would be like being cast in the middle of the sea, and then to look to the east and to the west, north and south, and finding nothing but water, seemingly lost without end. And yet, it is not the same, for I know that the water does end, and in every direction there is land unseen. But on the morn of resurrection I can stand and look in every direction and know that there is time without end and that it shall either be joyous or sorrowful for me. It all depends on a few short years that I spend on earth. Sixty, seventy, perhaps eighty or ninety years of earthly life, determines my eternal destiny. Does it not make you tremble too? And yet, day after day we either spend in complete rebellion to God's commands, or else put shoddy material into our lives.

It seems that some try to ease their conscience by scoffing at the idea that there will be punishment to those who do not follow the commandments of God. Yet preaching from now until the end of time that there will not be any hell, will not change one iota the reality of hell and the anguish that millions will suffer there.

I believe that the Bible is the word of God and therefore it must be truth. Either the Bible is the word of God or it is the biggest fraud ever written by a group of men. It claims to be the word of God, and must be either true or false.

Well, the Bible as the word of God has revealed unto man the fact that there will be punishment for the wicked. Paul said in Romans the sixth chapter and the twenty-third verse, "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." God has told us about the punishment that awaits the disobedient, that He might be just and fair. If we wake up on the resurrection morn and find ourselves faced with eternal punishment, we cannot blame God in any way, for He has warned us by precept and example time and time again, and even gave up His son to die that we might escape that destiny of punishment.

We find in the Old Testament that God laid down a law of punishment for the wicked. You remember how God has instructed that Moses go to the top of Mount Sinai and there He gave Moses the ten commandments. You also remember that as Moses descended the mountain, he beheld the children of Israel engaged in idolatry; and, in a fit of anger, he threw down the stones on which the commandments had been written, and they were broken. Then God told Moses to hew out two more stones like the first and to come back to the mountain top. "And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth; keeping loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation." Gen. 34:6-7. God has always been willing to forgive the repentant, but has reserved punishment for the wicked. In Jeremiah 31:29-30, the Lord speaking of the days of Christianity says, "in those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge." So in this age of Christianity, God will not punish us because of the sins of our fathers, but we shall be held accountable for our own sins. Yet the fact that God's merciful hand has extended His grace to us should not cause us to believe that we can escape condemnation for our transgressions.

Too many times, as we review the loving-kindness of God, we lull ourselves into a false idea that God is so gracious He would not punish anyone. We fail to realize that God is merciful in His plan, and if we obey Him, He will bestow on us all His blessings; but if we disobey Him we stand in full danger of

YOU MAY HEAR THE HERALD OF TRUTH OVER THESE STATIONS

Alabama, Anniston	WHMA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Auburn	WAUD	1230	1:00 p.m.
Birmingham	WSGN	610	8:00 a.m.
Florence	WJOI	1340	9:30 a.m.
Gadsden	WGAD	1350	1:00 p.m.
Huntsville	WHBS	1490	1:00 p.m.
Marion	WJAM	1310	9:30 a.m.
Mobile	WABB	1480	6:30 a.m.
Montgomery	WAPX	1600	1:00 p.m.
Selma	WGWC	1340	1:30 p.m.
Tuscaloosa	WJRD	1150	9:00 p.m.
Arizona, Clifton	KCLF	1400	1:00 p.m.
Phoenix	KOY	550	7:00 a.m.
Tucson	KCMS	580	3:00 p.m.
Arkansas, Eldorado	KDMS	1290	1:00 p.m.
Ft. Smith	KFSA	950	1:00 p.m.
Hot Springs	KTHS	1090	1:00 p.m.
Little Rock	KGHI	1250	1:00 p.m.
Springdale	KBRB	1340	6:00 p.m.
Calif., Bakersfield	KPMC	1560	10:00 a.m.
Blythe	KYOR	1450	3:30 p.m.
Brawley	KROP	1300	3:30 p.m.
Eureka	KIEM	1480	8:00 a.m.
Fresno	KARM	1430	3:30 p.m.
Indio	KREO	1400	3:30 p.m.
Los Angeles	KECA	790	3:30 p.m.
Modesto	KTRB	860	3:00 p.m.
San Francisco	KGO	810	3:30 p.m.
San Luis Obispo	KATY	1340	3:30 p.m.
Colorado, Craig	KRAI	1230	5:30 p.m.
Denver	KVOD	630	3:00 p.m.
Conn., Bridgeport	WNAB	1450	2:00 p.m.
Hartford	WTHT	1230	2:30 p.m.
Delaware, Wilmington	WILM	1450	2:00 p.m.
Florida, Gainesville	WGGG	1230	1:00 p.m.
Jacksonville	WPDQ	600	8:30 a.m.
Miami	WQAM	560	1:00 p.m.
Panama City	WPCF	1400	1:00 p.m.
Pensacola	WEAR	1230	11:00 p.m.
Tallahassee	WTNT	1450	5:00 p.m.
Tampa, St. Pete	WSUN	620	1:00 p.m.
Georgia, Atlanta	WGST	920	1:00 p.m.
Augusta	WGAC	580	2:00 p.m.
Brunswick	WGIG	1440	1:00 p.m.
Cairo	WGRA	1300	3:00 p.m.
Columbus	WGBA	1460	7:30 a.m.
Macon	WNEX	1400	1:00 p.m.
Rome	WLAQ	670	1:00 p.m.
Savannah	WDAR	1400	1:00 p.m.
Valdosta	WDAF	910	1:00 p.m.
Idaho, Boise	KGEM	1140	3:00 p.m.
Pocatello	KEIO	1440	9:30 a.m.
Illinois, Chicago	WENR-WLS	890	2:30 p.m.
Quincy	WGEM	1440	8:00 a.m.
Indiana, Anderson	WHBU	1240	1:30 p.m.
Bloomington	WTTS	1370	1:00 p.m.
Evansville	WJPS	1330	1:30 p.m.
Ft. Wayne	WGL	1250	1:00 p.m.
Iowa, Cedar Rapids	WMT	600	7:30 a.m.
Des Moines	KSO	1460	1:00 p.m.
Sioux City	KSCJ	1360	10:30 p.m.
Waterloo	KXEL	1540	5:30 p.m.
Kansas, Coffeyville	KGGF	690	2:00 p.m.
Topeka	WREN	1250	1:00 p.m.
Wichita	KWBB	1410	3:30 p.m.
Ken., Bowling Green	WKCT	930	1:00 p.m.
Harlan	WHLN	1230	3:00 p.m.
Louisville	WKLO	1080	1:00 p.m.
Mayfield	WKTM	1050	4:15 p.m.
Newport	WNOP	740	2:00 p.m.
Louisiana, Baton Rouge	WLCS	910	1:00 p.m.
Monroe	KMLB	1440	2:00 p.m.
New Orleans	WDSU	1280	1:00 p.m.
Shreveport	KRMD	1340	1:00 p.m.

Maine, Bangor	WABI	910	1:00 p.m.
Portland	WPOR	1450	9:00 a.m.
Maryland, Baltimore	WFBR	1300	3:00 p.m.
Cumberland	WDYK	1230	8:00 a.m.
Mass., Gardner	WHOB	1490	1:00 p.m.
Lawrence	WLAW	680	1:00 p.m.
Springfield	WSPR	1270	2:00 p.m.
Worcester	WAAB	1440	2:00 p.m.
Michigan, Battle Creek	WELL	1400	1:00 p.m.
Bay City	WBCM	1440	1:00 p.m.
Detroit	WXYZ	1270	1:00 p.m.
Flint	WFDF	910	10:00 p.m.
Lansing	WLS	1320	1:00 p.m.
Ludington	WKLA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Muskegon	WKBZ	850	2:00 p.m.
Minn., Minn.-St. Paul	WTCN	1280	7:30 a.m.
Mankato	KTOE	1420	2:00 p.m.
Miss., Centerville	WGLO	1580	8:00 a.m.
Aberdeen	WMPA	1240	1:00 p.m.
Columbus	WGBI	1340	6:00 p.m.
Greenwood	WABG	960	1:00 p.m.
Jackson	WSLI	930	2:00 p.m.
Kosciusko	WKOZ	1340	1:00 p.m.
Laurel	WLAU	1490	1:00 p.m.
McComb	WSKB	1250	1:00 p.m.
Missouri, Kansas City	KCMO	810	12:30 p.m.
Rolla	KTRR	1490	8:45 a.m.
St. Louis	KXOK	630	2:00 p.m.
Springfield	KWTO	560	1:00 p.m.
Montana, Butte	KOPR	580	9:15 a.m.
Great Falls	KMON	560	7:30 a.m.
Nebraska, Lincoln	KFOR	1240	10:30 a.m.
Omaha	KOIL	1290	5:30 p.m.
Sidney	KSID	1540	9:30 a.m.
N. Hamp., Claremont	WTSV	1230	1:00 p.m.
Lebanon	WTSL	1400	1:00 p.m.
Manchester	WMUR	610	3:00 p.m.
N. Mexico, Albuquerque	KOAT	1450	3:00 p.m.
Carlsbad	KPEM	740	check sta.
Clovis	KCLV	1240	1:00 p.m.
Los Alamos	KRSN	1490	3:00 p.m.
Santa Fe	KTRC	1400	3:00 p.m.
New York, Albany	WXKW	850	2:00 p.m.
New York	WJZ	770	12:30 p.m.
Olean	WHDL	1450	1:00 p.m.
Rochester	WARC	950	3:00 p.m.
Saranac Lake	WEAV	960	2:00 p.m.
Syracuse	WAGE	620	12:00 n.
N. Carolina, Asheville	WLOS	1380	1:00 p.m.
Charlotte	WAYS	610	1:00 p.m.
Durham	WTIK	1310	2:00 p.m.
Elizabeth City	WGAI	560	12:00 n.
Fayetteville(Sat.)	WFLB	1490	1:00 p.m.
Salisbury	WSAT	1280	1:00 p.m.
Wilmington	WONI	1340	8:30 a.m.
Winston-Salem	WAIK	1340	1:00 p.m.
N. Dakota, Fargo	KFGO	790	1:00 p.m.
S. Dakota, Huron	KIJV	630	9:00 a.m.
Ohio, Cleveland	WJW	850	1:00 p.m.
Columbus	WHKC	610	1:00 p.m.
Lima	WIMA	1150	9:00 a.m.
Youngstown	WBBW	1240	8:30 a.m.
Oklahoma, Ada	KADA	1230	1:00 p.m.
Enid	KCRC	1390	1:00 p.m.
McAlester	KTMC	1400	1:00 p.m.
Muskogee	KBIX	1490	2:00 p.m.
Oklahoma City	KTOK	1000	9:30 a.m.
Tulsa	KRMG	740	2:00 p.m.
Oregon, Eugene	KASH	1600	1:00 p.m.
Klamath Falls	KFLW	1450	4:30 p.m.
Medford	KMED	1440	7:30 a.m.
Portland	KEX	1190	3:30 p.m.
The Dalles	KODL	1230	1:00 p.m.

Penn., Johnstown	WCRO	1230	7:00 p.m.
Philadelphia	WFIL	560	2:00 p.m.
Pittsburg	WCAE	1250	3:00 p.m.
Wilkes-Barre	WLK	980	5:00 p.m.
R. Island, Providence	WPJB	1420	1:00 p.m.
S. Carolina, Florence	WJMX	970	10:30 a.m.
S. Dakota, Aberdeen	KSDN	930	10:30 a.m.
Tenn., Chattanooga	WDEF	1370	1:00 p.m.
Jackson	WTJS	1390	1:00 p.m.
Johnson City	WJHL	910	10:30 p.m.
Knoxville	WBIR	1240	1:30 p.m.
Memphis	WMPS	680	9:30 p.m.
Morristown	WCRK	1450	check sta.
Nashville	WSIX	980	4:00 p.m.
Texas, Abilene	KRBC	1470	1:00 p.m.
Amarillo	KFDA	1440	1:00 p.m.
Austin	KNOW	1490	2:00 p.m.
Beaumont	KFDM	560	1:00 p.m.
Big Spring	KBST	1490	1:00 p.m.
Brownfield	KTFY	1300	4:30 p.m.
Brownsville	KVAL	1490	1:00 p.m.
Brownwood	KBWD	1380	6:30 p.m.
Corpus Christi	KEYS	1440	9:00 a.m.
El Paso	KEPO	690	3:00 p.m.
Ft. Worth	WBAP	570	1:00 p.m.
Graham	KSWA	1330	4:30 p.m.
Houston	KXYZ	1320	8:00 a.m.
Longview	KFRO	1370	1:00 p.m.
Lubbock	KFYO	1340	4:00 p.m.
Midland	KCRS	550	1:30 p.m.
New Braunfels	KGNB	1420	8:00 a.m.
Paris	KPLT	1490	9:00 p.m.
San Angelo	KGKL	960	1:00 p.m.
San Antonio	KMAC	630	9:00 p.m.
Texarkana	KCMC	1230	1:00 p.m.
Wichita Falls	KFDX	990	2:00 p.m.
Utah, Provo	KCSU	1490	3:00 p.m.
Salt Lake City	KUTA	570	7:30 a.m.
Vermont, Brattleboro	WTSA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Burlington	WJOY	1230	1:00 p.m.
Montpelier-Barre	WSKI	1240	1:00 p.m.
Virginia, Charlottesville	WINA	1280	9:15 a.m.
Fredericksburg	WFVA	1230	check sta.
Marion	WMEV	1010	2:00 p.m.
Norfolk	WGH	1310	6:30 p.m.
Richmond	WRNL	910	1:30 p.m.
Washington, Aberdeen	KBKW	1450	9:00 p.m.
Omak	KOMW	680	9:15 a.m.
Pasco	KPKW	1340	3:30 p.m.
Seattle	KJR	950	3:30 p.m.
Spokane	KGA	1510	3:30 p.m.
Washington, D. C.	WMAL	630	1:00 p.m.
W. Virginia, Beckley	WVNR	620	1:30 p.m.
Huntington	WHTN	800	8:00 a.m.
Parkersburg, Sat.	WCOM	1230	5:30 p.m.
Wheeling	WKWK	1400	1:00 p.m.
Wisconsin, Green Bay	WDUZ	1400	5:30 p.m.
LaCrosse	WKTY	580	4:00 p.m.
Madison	WIBA	1320	8:00 a.m.
Milwaukee	WCAN	1250	2:00 p.m.
Neenah	WNAM	1280	8:00 a.m.
Wyoming, Casper	KSPR	1470	9:15 p.m.
Cheyenne	KFBC	710	12:00 p.m.
Cody	KODI	1400	12:00 p.m.
Laramie	KOWB	1340	12:00 p.m.
Rawlins	KRAL	1240	12:00 p.m.
Riverton	KWRL	1450	12:00 p.m.
Torrington	KGOS	1490	12:00 p.m.
Worldand	KWOR	1490	12:00 p.m.
Alaska, Juneau (Sat.)	KJNO	630	1:00 p.m.
Canada, Trail, B.C.	CJAT	610	9:30 a.m.
Toronto, Ont.	CKEY	580	9:15 a.m.

All times are Sunday unless otherwise indicated.

His wrath. Nahum says, "Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." Nahum 1:2.

The apostle Paul says in Romans 2:4, 9. "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy harshness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil." Again Paul said, "To you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might." II Thess. 1:7-10. Suppose you sent your son to help a group of people in a far-off land. Would you not be justified in punishing them if they rejected him and killed him, because he tried to help? So it is with God. When we reject Christ and His teaching, we can expect nothing but the wrath of God. Do you believe that God could be a just God and save the man that refuses to obey God's Son? Could He be a just Christ and save the sinner that refuses the grace of Christ? Could He be just to the Christian who obeys and sacrifices and save the sinner who disobeys and revels in the pleasures of sin? The only honest answer is no. And He has told us o'er and o'er that those that disobey Him shall be punished.

Well, of what will the punishment consist? Are the pleasures of sin worth the punishment that we shall receive for these pleasures? Christ in Matt. 13:42 says, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth." So the punishment shall be a furnace of fire or a lake of fire, as found in Revelations 20:15. But not only is it a fire, it is an everlasting fire. Christ, as He told of the judgment, tells how God will separate the good from the evil and place the righteous on the right hand and the wicked on the left. "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into eternal fire which is prepared for the

devil and his angels. Matt. 25:41. He also speaks of it as a fire which cannot be quenched in Mark 9:44. The apostle John in Revelation 20:10 says that the wicked shall be "tormented day and night forever."

The pleasures of sin could never be worth such eternal anguish. This is the punishment that is reserved for them that refuse to obey God. "Their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." Rev. 21:8.

But let us turn our attention to the reward which is eternal life for those that obey the commandments of God and Christ. Christ said in John 14, "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." So, the home which Christ is preparing for us is a place for the troubled soul; a place of rest. In these days of trouble, we can look to that place of rest. Many a time sailors have toiled at sea against the tempest. And in the blackness of night would have fain given up had they not sighted the lights on the shore. Those lights meant rest and loved ones. So, as we struggle in the tempest of life, we can gain new courage if we will only turn our minds to Heaven, that place of rest. "Let not your hearts be troubled."

Yet, again it is a place where there is no more pain or sorrowing or dying. Revelation 21:4, "and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away." It is hard to conceive what it would be without the things of this life. Oh, the words can never express the glory of heaven! Heaven is also the place of Christ and God. Christ, speaking of returning to heaven, said, "I go to the Father". In John 14 Christ said, "In my Father's house are many mansions", and to that house he is going. A missionary, upon returning from Africa, told of going to visit a dying native. As he approached the hut, the native's dog begged to go in to be with his master. The missionary allowed the dog to enter. He said that the dog knew little of the surroundings of the interior of the hut, except that his master was there. Then the missionary explained, "We know little of heaven, except that there is where our master and creator is."

Then, to me heaven holds a greatness in that all the redeemed will be there. I have, ever since I heard the stories of Moses and Abraham at my Grandmother's knee, wanted to

see those great men, along with Paul, Peter, James, Jude, John and all the others. Heaven holds this for the righteous. The poet has said,

"That bliss abode
Where the rivers of pleasure over bright plains
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns,
Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet,
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

Men get all mixed up in their seeking for reason. They say that they cannot believe in heaven because they have not seen it. Oh, my eyes have never with rapt vision, spurning this material universe to which they are adjusted, beheld a gleam from the glad city of God, but by the great telescope of faith I've dipped into the great beyond and beheld the New Jerusalem! "We walk by faith, and not by sight." My ears have never heard the 144,000 redeemed sing, but I believe that some sweet day in the sweet bye and bye on the beautiful isle of somewhere, when all of God's singers get home, that I shall sing the sweetest song of all, the song of Moses and the Lamb. Who cannot now say that the most beautiful things are neither seen nor heard by our physical senses. They all lie ahead to those that obey the Lord. Have you obeyed the Lord? We are commanded in Hebrews 11:6 to believe; in Acts 17:30 to repent; in Romans 10:10 to confess; in Acts 2:38 to be baptized. These we must do if we are to prepare our lives for heaven, but it is your choice.

Yes, my friends, there is the choice, heaven or hell. I can't make you accept Christ and heaven, but you must choose. As I think of the simple things that God has commanded us to do, I can't see how one could choose to do anything other than obey His commandments. The Lord and His angels are anxiously watching you as you decide and cast your vote, while at the same time the devil with his angels also watch. The Lord has voted for you; the devil against you; and you must cast the deciding ballot. Heaven or Hell? Why don't you arise and say, "I'm going to serve the Lord and inherit the home of the soul." Get down the old family Bible and read God's commandments and resolve to obey them today. Won't you vote for yourself and choose Heaven?