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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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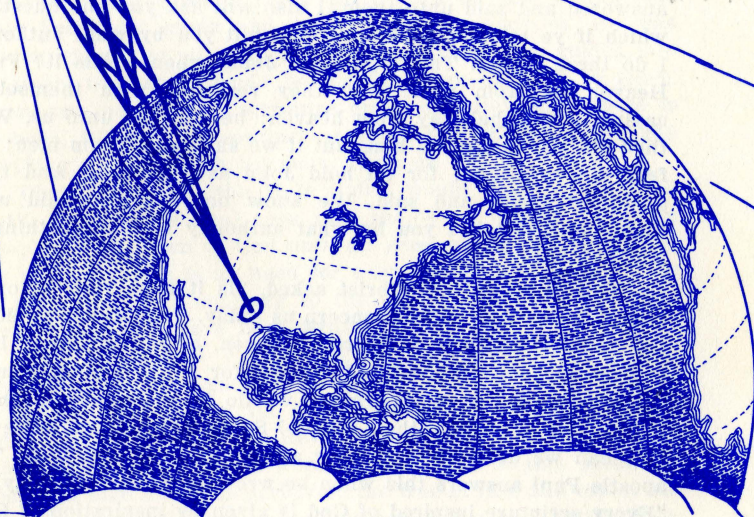
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*Churches of Christ—
Salute You
with a*

Paul Cartrell

#47



Be It Of God Or Of Man?

James W. Nichols

January 4, 1953

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Herald of Truth

Be It Of God Or Of Man?

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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

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	3:00 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	1300	1:00 p.m.
Selma	WGWC	1340	1:30 p.m.
Tuscaloosa	WJRD	1155	9:00 p.m.
Arizona, Clifton	KCLF	1400	1:00 p.m.
Phoenix	KOY	550	7:00 a.m.
Tucson	KCNA	530	3:00 p.m.
Arkansas, Eldorado	KDMS	1290	1:00 p.m.
Ft. Smith	KPSA	950	1:00 p.m.
Hot Springs	KTHS	1090	1:00 p.m.
Little Rock	KQHI	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	WPCT	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	530	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	WGAF	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	2:00 a.m.
Indiana, Anderson	WKHB	1240	1:30 p.m.
Bloomington	WTTT	1370	1:00 p.m.
Evansville	WIPS	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	KKEL	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	WKTU	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	1230	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	3:00 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	WOL	1440	1:00 p.m.
Detroit	WDFW	1270	1:00 p.m.
Flint	WDFW	910	10:00 p.m.
Lansing	WILS	1230	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	WGLC	1580	8:00 a.m.
Aberdeen	WMPA	1240	1:00 p.m.
Columbus	WCBI	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	KTTR	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	WTSV	1400	1:00 p.m.
Manchester	WMUR	610	3:00 p.m.
N. Mexico, Albuquerque	KOAT	1450	3:00 p.m.
Carlsbad	KPBH	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	WKXW	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	1360	1:00 p.m.
Charlotte	WAYS	610	1:00 p.m.
Durham	WTHK	1310	2:00 p.m.
Elizabeth City	WGAI	560	12:00 n.
Fayetteville (Sat.)	WFLE	1490	1:00 p.m.
Salisbury	WSAT	1230	1:00 p.m.
Wilmington	WONI	1340	8:30 a.m.
Winston-Salem	WAIR	1240	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	WHP	610	1:00 p.m.
Lima	W	1150	9:00 a.m.
Youngstown	WBW	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	KBIK	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	WILK	980	5:00 p.m.
R. Island, Providence	WPJB	1420	1:00 p.m.
S. Carolina, Florence	WJMK	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	5:30 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	KFCB	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.
Worland	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.

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.