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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: The Sabbath Day

James Nichols

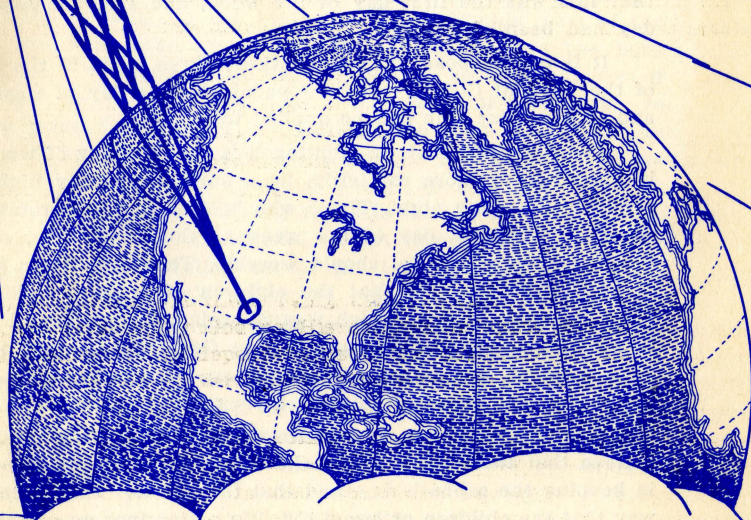
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Churches of Christ
Salute You
with a



The Sabbath Day

James W. Nichols

January 18, 1953

Herald of Truth

The Sabbath Day

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In the first chapter and tenth verse of the book of Revelation, John the apostle declares to us, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." There has been a great deal of speculation as to what the Lord's day was, but in general the conflicting ideas can be narrowed down to three concepts—first, that this day was Saturday, commonly known as the sabbath day; second, that it was Sunday, and that the Sabbath day had been changed from Saturday to Sunday to become the Lord's day; and third, that this was the first day of the week, and that the sabbath day had been abolished.

It is our purpose to examine these three ideas in the light of the word of God to see what should be our day of worship, and to see what title can be applied to it.

The first idea that we mentioned is that the day of worship is Saturday, or more explicitly, from sundown Friday night to sundown Saturday night. Those who hold to this idea refuse to recognize the first day of the week as the Lord's day, or as the day upon which we should worship. They gain their point of view from the fact that the children of Israel worshipped upon the sabbath day, which was Saturday. They contend that this law has never been changed, that God from the beginning gave a moral law commanding to keep the seventh day, and that any moral law is applicable throughout all time.

Now, with all due respect for those holding this idea, we believe that the people who make this contention are in error in keeping the sabbath day, and that they do not keep it in the way that the children of Israel did. We notice that no commandment was ever given to remember the sabbath day until the giving of the law of Moses. In Exodus 20:8 we read, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." This is the first time that anyone was ever told to remember the sabbath day.

But to whom was this law given? It was given only to the children of Israel. In fact, the entire law of Moses was given to the children of Israel only, and never to a Gentile. For us to say that we must remember the seventh day because Moses commanded it is very much like saying that we in the United States should adhere to a decree of the king of England. We do not do so because we are not under his jurisdiction. The law of Moses, which included the command, "Remember the

sabbath day to keep it holy" was given to the Hebrews and not to Christians.

In fact, as we turn to the New Testament we soon find that this law in its entirety has been done away. In Hebrews 10:1 we read, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things, they can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. In verse 9 we read: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

But perhaps you wonder if it were all or a part of the law of Moses that was removed. Those who contend that we should keep the seventh day say that only the ceremonial part of the law has been done away, but that the moral part has been retained. To answer this we turn to the seventh chapter of Romans. In verse 4, Paul says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye were made dead to the law through the body of Christ." In verse 6 he says, "But now we have been discharged from the law." What law is he speaking about? In the next verse he concludes, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law; for I had not known coveting except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." Now, let's notice his reasoning. He says we are discharged from the law. What law? The law that said, "Thou shalt not covet". And where do we find the expression "Thou shalt not covet"? In the ten commandments in the very same place where we find the command, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." So when Paul says we are discharged from the law, he is including the statement, Remember the sabbath day.

But in order that we may make it a little more conclusive that we are not to keep the seventh day, I would have you notice the 2nd chapter of Colossians. In verse 14 Paul is speaking of the death of Christ on the cross, and he says, "Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." What did Christ do? He nailed the law of Moses to the cross. Then he concludes in verse 16, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's." These things which were a part of the law of Moses, including the sabbath day, are no longer to be observed, because the old law of Moses had been nailed to the cross. And to clinch the argument, Paul

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	1850	1:00 p.m.
Greenville	WGYV		4:00 p.m.
Huntsville	WHBS	1490	1:00 p.m.
Marion	WJAM	1316	9:30 a.m.
Mobile	WABP	1480	6:30 a.m.
Montgomery	WAPK	1600	1:00 p.m.
Seima	WGWC	1240	1:30 p.m.
Tuscaloosa	WJRD	1150	9:00 p.m.
Arizona, Phoenix	KOY	550	7:00 a.m.
Tucson	KCNA	580	8:00 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	KBRS	1240	6:00 p.m.
Calif., Bakersfield	KPMC	1550	10:00 a.m.
Blythe	KYOR	1450	3:30 p.m.
Brawley	KROP	1300	2:30 p.m.
Eureka	KIEM	1480	3:00 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	1256	5:30 p.m.
Denver	KVOD	630	3:00 p.m.
Conn., Bridgeport	WNAB	1450	2:00 p.m.
Hartford	WHTT	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.
Leesburg	WLBE	790	check sta.
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.
Dawson	WDWD	990	2:00 p.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.
Twin Falls	KTFI	1270	7:30 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	10:15 p.m.
Ft. Wayne	WGL	1250	1:00 p.m.
Iowa, Cedar Rapids	WMT	600	7:30 a.m.
Davenport	WOC	1420	check sta.
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	KWBK	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	WKMT	1050	4:15 p.m.
Newport	WNOP	740	2:00 p.m.
Paducah	WKVB	570	check sta.
Louisiana, Baton Rouge	WLCS	910	1:00 p.m.
Monroe	KMLB	1440	2:00 p.m.

New Orleans	WDSU	1350	1:00 p.m.
Shreveport	KRMD	1340	1:00 p.m.
Maine, Bangor	WABI	510	1:00 p.m.
Portland	WPOR	1450	9:00 a.m.
Maryland, Baltimore	WFBZ	1500	2:00 p.m.
Cumberland	WDYK	1230	3:00 a.m.
Mass., Gardner	WHOB	1390	1:30 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	1460	1:00 p.m.
Bay City	WECM	1450	1:00 p.m.
Detroit	WXYZ	1270	1:00 p.m.
Flint	WFDF	910	10:00 p.m.
Lansing	WILS	1320	1:00 p.m.
Ludington	WELA	1450	1:00 p.m.
Mt. Pleasant	WJEN	1150	2:00 p.m.
Muskegon	WMBZ	550	2:00 p.m.
Minn., Minn.-St. Paul	WCCN	1260	7:30 a.m.
Mankato	WJME	1420	2:00 p.m.
Miss., Centerville	WJLD	1580	8:00 a.m.
Aberdeen	WAPA	1240	1:00 p.m.
Columbus	WCHI	1346	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	WSKE	1250	9:30 a.m.
Missouri, Kansas City	KCMO	810	12:30 p.m.
Rolla	KPTR	1490	8:45 a.m.
St. Louis	KKOK	620	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.
N. Platt	KNBR	970	9:00 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	8:00 p.m.
Carlsbad	KPEM	740	check sta.
Clovis	KCLV	1240	1:00 p.m.
Los Alamos	KLEN	1490	3:00 p.m.
Santa Fe	KTRC	1400	3:00 p.m.
New York, Albany	WKKW	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	WISN	610	1:00 p.m.
Durham	WDBF	910	2:00 p.m.
Fayetteville(Sat.)	WFTL	1490	1:00 p.m.
Salisbury	WAT	1280	1:00 p.m.
Wilmington	WANI	1340	8:30 a.m.
Winston-Salem	WAIR	1340	1:00 p.m.
N. Dakota, Fargo	KFGO	790	1:00 p.m.
Ohio, Cleveland	WJW	850	1:00 p.m.
Columbus	WKRC	810	1:00 p.m.
Lima	WDMA	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	KTKK	1000	9:30 a.m.
Tulsa	KRMG	740	2:00 p.m.
Oregon, Eugene	KASH	1600	1:00 p.m.
Medford	KMED	1440	7:30 a.m.
Portland	KEX	1190	3:30 p.m.
Redmond	KSEA	1240	3:30 p.m.
The Dalles	KODL	1230	1:00 p.m.
Penn., Johnstown	WCRO	1230	1:00 p.m.

Philadelphia	WFIL	560	2:00 p.m.
Pittsburg	WCAN	1260	3:00 p.m.
Wilkes-Barre	WILK	980	5:00 p.m.
R. Island, Providence	WPJB	1480	1:00 p.m.
S. Carolina, Columbia	WCOS	1400	1:00 p.m.
Florence	WJMX	970	10:30 a.m.
Orangeburg	WRNO	1450	7:00 a.m.
S. Dakota, Aberdeen	KSDN	930	10:30 a.m.
Huron	KIJV	1330	9:00 a.m.
Tenn., Chattanooga	WDEF	1270	1:00 p.m.
Jackson	WTJS	1390	1:00 p.m.
Johnson City	WJHL	910	10:30 p.m.
Knoxville	WBR	1240	1:30 p.m.
Memphis	WMPS	550	9:30 p.m.
Morristown	WCRK	1450	check sta.
Nashville	WSIX	530	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	550	1:00 p.m.
Big Spring	KBST	1490	1:00 p.m.
Brownfield	KTFY	1300	4:30 p.m.
Brownwood	KBWD	1380	6:30 p.m.
Corpus Christi	KRTS	1440	9:00 a.m.
El Paso	KEPO	890	8:00 p.m.
Ft. Worth	WBAP	570	1:00 p.m.
Graham	KSWA	1390	4:30 p.m.
Houston	KXYZ	1380	5:00 a.m.
Longview	KFRD	1370	1:00 p.m.
Lubbock	KFYO	1340	4:00 p.m.
Midland	KCRS	550	1:30 p.m.
Nacogdoches	KOSF	1230	1:00 p.m.
Paris	KPLT	1490	4:00 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	10:30 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.
Wasau	WSAU	1400	9:30 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.
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.
Winnipeg, Man.	CKY	580	6:45 a.m.

All times are Sunday unless otherwise indicated.

says that these things, including the sabbath day, were only a shadow of the things to come.

But we would also have you notice that those who remember the sabbath day today, do not do it in the way the Israelites did. Under the law of Moses no work was to be done, and when a man went out to pick up sticks on the sabbath day, we are told in Numbers 15 that he was stoned. We don't hear of people being stoned today when they fail to keep this portion of the law. Yet this was the law of Moses. In Exodus 35:3 we are told that they were to kindle no fires. They were to abide in their places, going no farther than a sabbath day's journey, which was less than a mile, and yet the very people who contend so strongly that they must remember the sabbath day, break the sabbath day by going more than a mile, sometimes many miles, on the seventh day.

We think all these reasons combined should be sufficient to show us that Christians are not commanded to remember the seventh day of the week today. But there are some who say that the sabbath has been changed from Saturday to Sunday. As we search the scriptures we find not one single statement that it has ever been changed. If the sabbath has been changed, it has been changed by man, and not by God. To refer to the first day of the week as the sabbath day, is therefore, incorrect. If we did keep the first day of the week in this respect, we would be under bondage to observe it as the Israelites did. This would forbid all cooking, all traveling, even the kindling of fires, and it is quite obvious that those who observed the first day of the week as the Sabbath do not often comply with all these requirements.

Then, you ask, "Why do we observe the first day of the week?" Surely there must be a reason, but what is it? We noticed in the beginning that it is called the Lord's day. Now it is the Lord's day because it was on this day, the first day of the week, that Christ arose from the grave. We turn to the accounts of the four gospels and we find that early on the first day of the week certain women came to the grave of Christ, intending to anoint His body with spices. But when they arrived, they found that He had arisen. Several times on that day, the first day of the week, He appeared to His disciples. And on what day did He arise? The first day of the week. Therefore, it is His day, or the Lord's day.

But again, it was on this day that the church was established. We have the account of the establishment of the church recorded in the 2nd chapter of Acts. It was the occasion of the

assembling of the children of Israel to observe the day of Pentecost. The word pentecost means fiftieth day. It was exactly fifty days after the passover on which Christ was crucified, and this placed it on the first day of the week. On Pentecost, Christ's church was established. It was the first day of the week. Therefore, His church was established on His day.

In the 20th chapter of Acts, verse 7, we have a record of the Christians assembling to worship. "And upon the first day of the week when they were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow." This refers to the Lord's supper. They observed the Lord's supper, which was a memorial of the death of Christ, on His day, the first day of the week. No amount of figuring can place this observance on any other day. Some contend that Paul preached on the sabbath day. And that is correct; he preached on the sabbath day to non-Christians, because that was the day when they were accustomed to assemble. If you were to go to a Mohammedan country today it would perhaps be best to preach on Friday because that is their day of worship. It is right to preach the gospel on any day, and if you can reach more people on Saturday than on Wednesday, then Saturday is the day to do the preaching. But we do not have one single example where Christians themselves ever met together to remember the Lord's supper on the seventh day. We have another statement that would be good to notice. In I Corinthians 16:2, Paul says, "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." Why do you suppose that Paul wanted them to do their giving upon this day if it were not for the fact that this was the day upon which they were accustomed to assemble? The truth is, that every indication that we have in the New Testament points to the fact that the first day of the week is the Lord's day—He arose on this day, His church was established on this day, His disciples remembered His death on this day, they were commanded to give on this day. So it must be the Lord's day. History confirms this teaching. Barnabas in his epistle wrote, "The eighth day is the beginning of another week, and therefore with joy we celebrate the eighth day on which Jesus arose." John Martyr, writing about 150 A.D., says, "On the Lord's day all Christians in the city or country meet together, because that is the day of the Lord's resurrection; and then we read the Apostles and Prophets. This being done, the president makes an oration to the assembly to exhort them to imitate and practice the things which they have heard, and

then we all join in prayer, and what is collected is laid up in the hands of the president, who distributes it to orphans, and widows and other needy Christians as their wants require." Eusebius, a great historian, tells us, "From the beginning the Christians assembled on the first day of the week, called by them the Lord's day, to read the scriptures, to preach, and to celebrate the Lord's supper." End of quotation. Surely all of these statements, added to the testimony of the scriptures, should convince us that the first day of the week, and not the seventh, is the Lord's day. And may God help us to observe the Lord's day.

In Hebrews 5:9 the writer tells us, "and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." And then again the apostle Paul warns in II Thessalonians 1:7-8, "and to you that are afflicted rest with us, as the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus." I would to God that all of us could realize that there is no place for disobedience in our lives if we seek that everlasting home, it matters not whether it is disobedience in observing the Lord's day, believing the gospel, repenting of our sins, confessing our faith, being buried with our Lord in baptism, or worshipping God as His children in spirit and in truth. Our salvation is dependent upon our obedience to his command. James said in James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." I beseech you, my friends, today, come to the Lord in obedience. Delay no longer, but "seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."