

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Baptism IS Necessary for Salvation

*Why did my Savior come to earth,
And to the humble go?
Why on the cross be lifted up?
Because He loved me so!*

The question above, found in a song often sung, is a most compelling one. It is a question for each of us to apply personally, not to my neighbor or to some other person. In another of the songs we sing is found the comforting thought, *Yes, for me, for me He careth*. Had every person except me, in the history of man, lived a perfect life, yet God's plan - giving His only Son to die on Calvary, the perfect sacrifice - would have been provided for me, the sinner. Had every other person except you, reader, lived a perfect life, Jesus would have died on the cross for you. Continuing thoughts in song, *What a Friend we have in Jesus!* He is the Friend of each of us. Jesus tells us how we may be His friends. John 15:14 says we are His friends, if we obey Him.

Are His commandments so grievous that we cannot obey them? If so, He would not be a loving Friend. Hebrews 11:6 tells us *"But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* Yes, God loved each of us so much that He *"gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). The beginning point is belief in Him. Following this, repentance is necessary: *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3,5). It is sad to see some religious teachers preaching repentance before belief. Such is not the Bible way. One cannot repent (a change of mind, leading to a change of action) until one knows he is going the wrong way.

One must then confess his faith in Jesus: *"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 10:32). *"For with the heart (man's mind) man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Romans 10:10). Notice that the word used is not *"for"* salvation, but *"unto,"* or *"toward."* What, then, must one do to be saved, if I am still going *"toward"* salvation?

In the past few articles, we have noticed examples of conversion recorded in the Bible book of Acts. Each example showed that those who believed the things taught by the apostles were baptized. Were they then saved? When we compare Jesus' command in Mark 16:16 and Matthew 28:18,19 with what the converts in Acts did, we can know they were saved. *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."*

In Luke 7:28, an interesting statement of Jesus is recorded. *"For I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist:..."*

Continuing in verses 29 & 30: *"And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the council of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."* Read also Luke 20:3-5: *"And he (**Jesus**) answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, then why believed ye him not?..."* As we close this article, we ask this question: "The baptism of Christ: Is it from heaven, or of men?"