

IT IS SETTLED!

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

By Howell Lasseter

Departures from God's Word

This week's article is a "pause" in the search for the historical roots of departures from God's Word. The reader is referred back to last week's article, in which was considered Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders of departures arising out of the eldership. Read again also Paul's description of the coming departure in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5.

In an earlier issue of [It Is Settled](#), we reported comments from a preacher on TBN who said that, for 40 years, his group had been permitting women to preach and God hadn't expressed His displeasure about it. In recent weeks, we've looked at departures in the work and qualifications of bishops and in the purpose and mode of baptism. Using the TBN preacher's reasoning, it could be said that God hasn't come down and expressed His displeasure about these departures either. One principle man needs to understand is this: when God speaks on a subject, "it is settled"! There is no need for Him to repeat Himself! God has already spoken about bishops, about baptism, and about women preachers. We can read His instructions in the New Testament. Men and women who truly desire to please God respect Him enough to learn what He has said on various topics, then obey Him! Hear what God says about preaching "another gospel": *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"* (Galatians 1:6-9).

When a denominational preacher or teacher is questioned about a departure from God's Word, sometimes he turns to ridicule. In personal correspondence with Hugh Pyle, a well-known Baptist evangelist, he correctly identified immersion as the proper mode of baptism. Yet, in his booklet, "The Truth About the Church of Christ," members of the Lord's church are called "water dogs" for teaching baptism is a burial, an immersion, for the remission of sins! When this column pointed out the New Testament truth that women may not be preachers, a letter filled with ridicule and sarcasm was received. (Check out the June 28, 2002, issue of [It Is Settled](#).) Regardless of man's opinion, God's Word is unchanging and unchangeable!

To set the stage for further historical searches into departures from the New Testament, let's look at two opposing ways of looking at God's Word. Martin Luther desired to retain all that was not expressly contrary to the Scriptures. He took Biblical silence on a subject to mean God's approval of man's innovations concerning that subject. Another Reformer, Hulerreich Zwingli, of German Switzerland, is not as well known as Luther. He was born in 1484, and he resolved to accept and practice only what God's Word teaches, and to abolish everything else. When the Restoration came to America in the early 1800's, this principle was expressed this way: "We speak where the Bible speaks; we are silent where the Bible is silent." Keep in mind these two opposing views of God's Word, as we look further into departures.