

IT IS SETTLED!

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

By Howell Lasseter

Do God's Rules need Interpretation? (Part 1)

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3,4).

For the next 2 weeks, we will be reviewing statements in a February 7, 2003, Tribune article, entitled "You Would Not Believe the Possibilities." The majority of the article dealt with sports' rules, noting that these change often. Yes, all sports have interpreters' meetings. The rules change from year to year to cover new situations that arise and interpretations are needed to clarify these. In all human endeavors - commerce, health, school curriculum, law - interpretations are essential from time to time. Why? Because human rules are imperfect, made by imperfect beings.

Question: Do God's rules need interpretation? Are His rules imperfect? Bible-believers can easily answer these questions. Is there a place in Christ's religion for "situation ethics"? Why do denominations see a need to have conferences and conventions? These closely mirror the interpreters' meetings for sports! Out of these human meetings, held by denominations, have come many interpretations of God's plain Word. Look carefully at this brief, incomplete list of interpretations that have come out of human conferences and conventions: elevating one man over the whole church; sprinkling to replace immersion as baptism; baptism of infants; the use of instrumental music in worship; special garments and titles for the clergy; elaborate rituals, such as Lent, Christmas, Easter; replacing the weekly observance of the Lord's supper with quarterly or annual observance; placing women in positions of leadership; recognizing homosexual unions; silence on abortion; setting up a pastor to lead a congregation.

Space constraints bring this lesson to a close. Next week, we'll continue reviewing the February 7, 2003, article. This week, search your Bible closely. See whether our perfect God allows "wiggle room" in the keeping of His perfect commands!