

IT IS SETTLED!

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

By Howell Lasseter

Entering Jesus' Kingdom

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Last week, this column focused on the fact that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of man, is King of kings (1 Timothy 6:15). To be a king, one must have a kingdom. Today, we'll learn how to enter that kingdom.

Most, if not all, religious denominations use the phrase, "You must be born again." Speakers on radio, on TV, and writers of newspaper articles and tracts say, "You must be born again." Using God's Word, this week's article will affirm that what Jesus said in John 3:3 is true.

Nicodemus, to whom Jesus is speaking in John 3, asked a question: *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"* (John 3:4). Jesus then, in John 3:5, explains what the new birth is: *"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* Some try to explain away "of water" by saying that is the water accompanying the natural birth. However, it is plain to see that the question under consideration in John 3 is not the natural birth, but the "second" birth. Truly, the second birth, the new birth, is vitally important, for without it, no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven!

An intriguing question, recorded in John 1:25, was asked of John the Baptist by the Pharisees: *"Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"* The only conclusion that can be reached is that the Pharisees knew baptism would be included in the work and teaching of the Christ. John 4:1,2 teaches Jesus included baptism in the making of His disciples. Did he, at the close of His earthly ministry, command baptism? To His eleven apostles, just before He ascended back to the Father, He said, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* (Matthew 28:19). Just a few days later (about 10 days), Peter and the eleven apostles preached, *"Him (Jesus)...ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain"* (Acts 2:23). The twelve further said, *"...God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36). Being *"pricked in their heart,"* and now being believers, they asked *"...what shall we do?"* Peter's reply: *"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 Ghost"* (Acts 2:37,38). When one's understanding of the new birth comes from God's Word, that one will correctly teach that the "water" of the new birth is the water of baptism!