

IT IS SETTLED!

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

By Howell Lasseter

From Heaven, or of Men (Part 6)

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope” (Romans 15:4). God has given us the book by which we can know His will. We can know what He expected of man in the past, and what He expects of us today. Genesis 6:5 records for us the moral condition to which man had fallen in the short span of approximately 1550 years after God created him: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:11 further tells us that the earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence. Genesis 6:3 tells us God had determined that He would give man 120 years before He destroyed him.

But, in the midst of all this evil, one individual was found without blame. “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8). Would we want to say that God told Noah how to live and please Him, but had not told the rest of the world? No, we would not accuse God of that! Since Noah knew how to be pleasing to God, and since God is just, and is no respecter of persons, we can be sure all mankind knew how to please God.

Why is this record left for us? It is written for our learning, that we may heed the warning and not make the same mistake those of Noah’s day made. The record lets us know that to ignore God’s commands is to face His wrath, and to heed and obey His commands brings His approval. Readers, the real question for each of us is: am I following Noah’s example, or am I following the example of those who perished in the flood? We can see from the Genesis account how quickly man can completely abandon God and His will. The sad state of the religious world today points to increasing disregard of God’s will. Let’s consider two examples.

1st Timothy 4:1-3 teaches that “forbidding to marry” is but one sign of departure from the faith. The misuse of children by those proclaiming to be spokesmen for God is the bitter fruit of this man-made doctrine. Having made man, God designed marriage for man’s benefit. The home provides for the protection of helpless children. Enforced celibacy has put children at risk and encouraged pedophilia. Is it because religious leaders do not know God’s law for marriage and the home? Or, is it because these leaders disregard God’s law?

Some religious leaders long for the power to cast out evil spirits, and the prestige that today would accompany such power. From a reading of the New Testament, we know Jesus gave this power to the twelve apostles (Matthew 10:5,8; Mark 6:7) and the 70 (Luke 10:1,17). In Acts 8:7, Philip was casting out unclean spirits. In that same chapter, verse 18, we learn it was through the laying-on of the hands of one of the 12 that the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit was given. We are first introduced to the “Philip” of Acts 8 in Acts 6:5. Since Philip could not pass on this measure of the Spirit, we know he was not the “Philip” who was one of the 12 (see Luke 6:13-16). And, we can be sure he received the

power displayed in Samaria by the laying-on of the hands of an apostle. The 12 having been long dead, we know the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit is not among us today. Recently, an autistic child died because the religious persons among whom he was were not knowledgeable about autism, and however sincere and well-intentioned they might be, did not know, or did not believe Acts 8.

Readers, each of us can know and obey God's will for us through a study of the New Testament. May we each determine to be like Noah!