

IT IS SETTLED!

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

By Howell Lasseter

Jesus' Equation

How can any religious question be correctly answered? If an answer is given, or a statement made, by two or more people and the conclusions differ, at least one, and possibly both, conclusions are wrong. When considering matters of "faith," the only correct conclusion comes from God's Word.

For example: Was Jesus Christ God's Son? Many, perhaps most, of you readers will say He was. From reading your Bible, you have seen that John 3:16, Matthew 3:17, and Matthew 17:5, among others, tell you He was. But, what if the question were asked in the Jewish nation of Israel? Or, other of the mid-east countries? The majority in these nations either believe God's Son, the Messiah, has not yet come, or that another man was from God. Both conclusions are wrong, in light of the Bible.

Let's use another example closer to home. Look at the educational system in our city and county. Your writer's children attended, and graduated from, the local schools. It has been my experience that our local teachers are people of integrity. Every one of these teachers taught my children that $2+2=4$. There was not a single disagreement among all the teachers about that fact. Neither was there any question about $1+1$, or any other mathematical fact. Leaving the example of teachers, I have seen that many religious people in our city and county want to say that, in spiritual matters, $1+1=1$. It is their desire to take away "1" component of salvation. So, $1-1=0!$. Look at Mark 16:16: "*He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be saved.*" Putting this in a first-grade equation: Belief (1) + baptism (1)=salvation. Belief (1) - baptism (1)=damnation (0)! Jesus Himself stated this equation, whereby each person is saved. Again, how is man saved? By believing and obeying the proper equation.

Man's effort to avoid Jesus' equation has produced this statement: "Jesus did **not** say that 'he that believes and is **not** baptized shall be lost.'" It is correct that Jesus did not say such. The important thing is what **did** Jesus say. To go back to the educational system example: our teachers have the integrity to correctly teach mathematical facts. They do not try to twist such facts to fit their personal desires. Is it not essential for religious people to have the integrity to teach Jesus' commands exactly as Jesus stated them? In Luke 7:30, those who refused to be baptized with John's baptism (which was in force during the time of the law of Moses) were said, by God, to have rejected the counsel of God against themselves.

Today, many who claim to be "pastors" teach that the baptism of Jesus was "Holy Spirit baptism." They claim John baptized with water, and Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit. Here are their two "proof" statements, with which they attempt to prove man today does not need to be baptized with water: 1-"*For Christ sent me not to baptize...*" (Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17); and 2-"*...though Jesus himself baptized not...*" (John 4:2). Next week, this space will be used to discuss the baptism of Jesus. Keep reading!