

IT IS SETTLED!

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

By Howell Lasseter

Of Heaven or of Men (Part 2)

The question for this writer, and for each one who reads this article, is: Am I concerned with the answer to Jesus' question, "Whence was it, from heaven, or of man?"? It is a question on which our eternal salvation depends. Most religious people in the area appear not to be concerned with Jesus' question. This can be determined as one examines the teachings and practices of the many denominations. A study of God's Word alongside a study of the history of denominations makes clear that man's doctrines are the foundation of denominationalism. Listen to Jesus' reply to the scribes and Pharisees, as they questioned why Jesus' disciples transgressed the traditions of the elders: "*Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, Let him die the death. But ye say (emphasis added) whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandments of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matthew 15:3-9).

From the time Satan deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:16,17; 3:6), man has been tempted to disobey God's commandments. A brief look at two of Adam and Eve's children show the problem: Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices to God, but one was acceptable and one was not (Genesis 4:3-5). What made the difference? Hebrews 11:4 sets out clearly the difference: Abel offered "by faith" - he **believed** God, and his faith caused him to **obey**. The fatal flaw of denominationalism is this: these religious groups assume God will accept man's changes in God's law and man's omission of parts of God's law. Yet a study of God's Word will teach us that God never permitted man to choose how to worship and to serve Him. God has not changed. He still does not permit man to choose in these areas. "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him*" (Matt. 17:5). With this statement, God excludes every thought or decision of man in the matter of obeying God. The teachings of His Son are to be heard and obeyed. What about the teachings and practices of the religious group with which you have affiliated yourself? Are they "from heaven or of men?"