

# ***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 3)

As we continue studying Jesus' question, "*From heaven, or of men?*", let us think about the upcoming campaign in which many area denominations are cooperating. Assurances are given that the campaign will "have something for every one," and that all the participating churches will benefit. Hear Jesus' prayer: "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*" (John 17:20,21). Does cooperation in a particular event fulfill Jesus' prayer for unity? No. The banding-together may be "union," but since each group will continue its specific teachings and practices after the event, there is no "unity."

The current divisions in the so-called "Christian" religion exist in direct contradiction to Jesus' prayer. Further, these divisions hinder the acceptance by the world of Jesus (v.21b). Considering the current state of the religious world, it is even more imperative that each teaching and practice be examined with the question: Is this teaching or practice from heaven, or of men?" A sentence in verse 20 above has the solution to religious division: "...*but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*" There were no "Christian" denominations in the first century, and even into the second century. Why? First, the apostles taught only God's Word. They did not mix man-made "think-so's" with what God commanded. And, believers respected God, believed only His Word, and obeyed only His Word. A return to this respect for God and His Word will unify believers.

This brief parable illustrates what is involved in true respect and obedience: A pioneer father sent his son ahead to clear and develop a piece of new ground. The father gave specific instructions as to where the barn was to be built, where the house was to be built, and where the well was to be dug. When the son arrived at the new land, he looked it over, then built the barn and the house in the places his father had instructed. But, he felt the well should be sited differently, and he dug it in accordance with his belief. Question: did the son obey the father at all? The correct answer is "No." The father's choice of locations for the barn and the house happened to agree with the son's assessment. The son did not build them there because of the father's instructions, but because of the son's desire. When the father's instructions and the son's desire differed, it is clear to see the son truly had no respect for the father's instructions!

Examine the teachings and practices of the denominations in the light of what God says. You can determine whether such are from heaven, or of men!