

IT IS SETTLED!

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

By Howell Lasseter

Whom do I Fear?

Political discussion is not the goal of this column. This week, however, let us consider two aspects of the war in which our nation is currently engaged. Wide coverage has been given to some words of a Columbia University professor. His desire is that thousands of American soldiers be killed and dragged through the streets of Baghdad. The sons, daughters, husbands, wives, siblings, and grandchildren of some Gallia Countians are among the brave troops putting their lives on the line for us. These are the very ones this professor would like to see desecrated. Another facet of the conflict is the belief by Iraqi leaders that the war is a "holy war." They stress that Allah is honored when an individual straps dynamite to himself, blowing up himself and as many Americans as possible. It is interesting to note that these religious leaders are not the ones following this path. Rather, impressionable, zealous youth are encouraged to sacrifice life. Reasonable persons will experience a certain amount of fear when confronted with both the Columbia U. professor and the suicide bombers.

Hear Jesus' words, as He sent out the twelve: "*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*" (Matthew 10:28). These twelve apostles, and later, the apostle Paul, did not fear either the Jewish or the Roman authorities, although suffering at the hands of both groups. Example: after Herod had murdered James, his next target was Peter. He imprisoned Peter, intending to execute him after the Passover. The night before Peter was to be handed over to the executioner, and chained between two soldiers, he was asleep! (See Acts 12:1-6.) No fear there! Paul tells us why he, himself, was not fearful: "*For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain*" (Philippians 1:21).

Christ's church is today engaged in warfare. Our enemy is Satan, and he has soldiers in the world and in man-made "churches." Even in Gallia County, Satan has so hardened the minds of many religious people so that there is no true fear of God. Rather, the doctrines of men are taught, resulting in vain worship (Matthew 15:9). Many Gallia County religious groups are joining together for a campaign in May. The Lord's church in Gallia County will not join with these man-made groups. Rather, in the battle against Satan, the Lord's church in Gallia County is challenging each Gallia Countian (and everyone throughout the world) to return to respect for God's Word, studying it diligently, accepting only what it teaches, and voicing rejection of man's teachings and practices. To accept man's doctrine is to be on the side of the enemy. Are you on the Lord's side?