

God's Commandments Commands of Remembrance

Byron Norrod—November 18, 2017

We will analyze some of the commands that God gives us. It's interesting to note that in the Ten Commandments, that eight of the commandments are phrased in a negative manner, and two of the commandments are phrased positively.

So, the negative ones say, 'Thou shalt not...'—don't do this behavior. But the positive ones are, 'Thou shalt...' So, we have negative commands and positive commands.

Positive Commands:

1. honor your father and mother
2. remember the Sabbath Day

Let me read a short snippet from *Wikipedia on Mitzvah*.

In it's primary meaning, the Hebrew word *mitzvah*; meaning "commandment"...plural *mitzvot*...refers to precepts and commandments commanded by God.

It is used in rabbinical Judaism to refer to the 613 commandments given in the Torah at biblical Mount Sinai...are divided into two categories: 365 negative commandments and 248 positive commandments. According to the Talmud, all moral laws are, or are derived from, divine commandments. The collection is part of the larger Jewish law or *halakha*.

Let's focus on the two positive commandments:

Exodus 20:8: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work..."

Nobody in your house is supposed to do work. God is telling us to *remember it*. It's a positive thing, which means that He's given it before. This is nothing new, and the children of Israel knew this. They had already been given the Sabbath Day, and He says to *remember* to do this. 'I told you before and I'm telling you again; remember it and don't forget it, and I want you to do it this way.'

Does this commandment disallow us from keeping the Sabbath on any other day? *Yes and no!* Interesting, because the Holy Days, which are annual Sabbaths, are also Sabbaths, but they are specific dates:

- the 14th day of the 1st month is Passover

- the 15th day is the first day of Unleavened Bread
- the 1st day of the 7th month is Trumpets
- the 10th day of the 7th month is Atonement

Those are on specific dates, meaning they could fall on a regular week day or on the Sabbath. It does not preclude us from doing that. However, it does say:

Verse 9: "Six days you shall labor... [v 10]: But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath..." So, in a sense it does say that we should only keep the Sabbath on the seventh day.

What we understand is, that even though it's positive command there are limitations on how it is that we're supposed to keep it.

Another way to state this is that it is a *command of remembrance*, because God has told us before what to do, and now He's telling us again, 'I want you to do it this way. Remember, don't forget, do it the way that I say to do it, and when I say to do it.'

These are the kinds of commands that rarely give specifics. These are more generalities, and when God give the commandments that are *commands of remembrance*, He's saying, 'Remember, I told you this and I want you to do that.'

But He seldom tells us the details that associated with that specific command. That has already been given before, those details. God is just saying to remember to do it. These types of commands are generic in nature. They're overviews, summations, generalities.

Verse 12—the second positive commandment: "Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be long upon the land, which the LORD your God gives you." Again it's a positive command *to remember* to do this. But it's a general command, again with no specifics.

Today I would like to explore some of these commands of remembrance in addition to some other types of commandments. To perhaps find a deeper understanding of what it is that God is trying to tell us. I'm going to read from an article from:

[The Classification of Bible Commands](#) by Wayne Jackson ChristianCourier.com

...every honest student must also admit that the Bible is a book of law...It contains

commands that are to be obeyed. A consideration of various classifications of biblical commands can be a helpful study.

So, the first differentiation or the classification is moral vs religious.

Moral and Religious Commands

Moral commands have to do with man's relationship to his fellows, whereas religious laws involve humanity's reconciliation to the Creator.

An example of a moral law would be: *you shall not steal, you shall not commit adultery*. That's dealing with your neighbor, how you interact with your neighbor.

...they are designed to create the kind of healthy, happy environment...

Religious obligations would be like the first four commandments.

Laws such as those which involve the offering of sacrifices (Old Testament) and baptism (New Testament) are religious obligations which are intended to test man's loyalty to God....

Positive and Negative Commands

Positive commands enjoin a responsibility, and negative commands prohibit wrongdoing.

When Jesus instituted the [Passover] Lord's supper, he said: "This do in remembrance of me" (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:24). This was a positive command.

When the inspired writer declared, "Lie not one to another" (Colossians 3:9), he gave a negative command.

Generic and Specific Commands

Generic commands enjoin a general obligation, the implementation of which is left to the judgment of the individual. When Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15), the imperative, "go," ...is generic,

He didn't tell them how to go.

One may go personally (by means of plane, automobile, etc.), or he might go indirectly (literature, recordings, support of others, etc.).

Specific commands declare the precise manner of implementing the divine

ordinance. On the day of Pentecost, Peter did not command the believing Jews to "make some application of water"...

He didn't say to 'go hang around some water.

rather, he commanded "be immersed." The specificity of that injunction contains no authority for either the sprinkling or pouring of "baptismal" water.

That was the difference between generic and specific.

Universal and Limited Commands

Not all commands recorded in the Bible were for the whole human race....

Christ once issued this directive: "Tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). That obligation was certainly not universal, but only to the apostles.

However, the command to 'repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' is a universal responsibility.

A sub-category that the author didn't cover was that there are specific laws that apply to specific groups of people. There were laws for the priesthood that did not apply to the common man. And there were laws concerning, for example, female menstruation that, again, didn't apply to males. That was universal vs limited.

Temporal and Permanent Commands

The sacrificial laws, though they were good examples of what we should do in sacrificing our lives as living sacrifices, they expired with the destruction of the temple. Those laws—the sacrificial laws—are no longer necessarily applicable to us today. Those were temporal commands.

The permanent commands are like marriage, where God says, 'What God has joined together, let not man separate or put asunder.'

Another aspect that the author omitted was that often times laws fall into multiple categories at the same time. So, the command to repent and be baptized is positive, religious, specific, generic, universal and it's permanent. So, there's a whole number of things that laws can fit into.

Let's get into some of the commandments of remembrance, and we'll see that this is an overview.

Exodus 34:11: "Observe that which I

command you this day....” Do what I tell you to do. The He gives an overview, a generic commands. He talks about not mixing with idolaters, to get rid of idols (vs 13-16).

He talks about keeping Pentecost, Passover, and this is where Moses' face shined. But the **commands of remembrance** are He's summarizing. This whole chapter (Exo. 34) is a summary. So, when He talks about:

Verse 23: Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.” He's not leaving out all of the Holy Days. He's talking about the Feast of Unleavened Bread (v 18).

Then He talks about you should observe the Feast of Weeks and then the Feast of Ingathering (v 22).

- What? Did He leave off the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread?
- Are we not supposed to keep Trumpets?
- What about the Day of Atonement?
- What about the Last Great Day?

He didn't mention them.

Lev. 23—we see that the males were commanded to appear before God in a Holy convocation or a solemn assembly. So, when we look at Lev. 23 and we pair that with **the commands of remembrance**, we see that God's Law, His commandments, are additive; they're not subtractive. It's 'here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept.'

We can't just divide God's Law and throw away parts of it and say it doesn't matter and this one cancels out that one. It doesn't! It's additive!

The commands of remembrance are logical instruction that adds to our memory base. We have been instructed to something that God already says. Remember to do it, and He gives us a summarization and overview when He gives **a command of remembrance**. It says: “Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 16:16 “Three times in a year shall all your males appear before the LORD your God in the place which He shall choose... [again He is summarizing] ...in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before the LORD empty.”

Do we say that if we don't have to meet on Trumpets that we don't have to appear before God and not have an offering? *No!* He gives us the

obligation in summary of all of the Feast days when He's including all of the fall festivals—Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day—when He says the Feast of Tabernacles.

God gives us these commandments of remembrance in Exo. 34 and Deut. 16 as a overview, a synopsis, a summary and recap so we wouldn't forget to remember.

I doubt that He did those things just so He could trip up those who were seeking the crown of glory. That's not God's motivation. God has a desired plan, and He has a desired end for you and me.

May He bless us with His loving encouragement so that we can remember to obey His voice!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 20:8-10, 12
- 2) Exodus 34:11, 23
- 3) Deuteronomy 16:16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 34:13-16, 18, 22
- Leviticus 23

Also referenced: Article:

[The Classification of Bible Commands](#) by Wayne Jackson ChristianCourier.com

BN: bo
Transcribed: 11/26/17

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