

# **“JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

God’s revelation in the Bible consists of (1) **Facts** to be believed, (2) **Prophecies** to be fulfilled, (3) **Commands** to be obeyed, and (4) **Promises** to be kept. This study will be of “Commands to be obeyed.” The word “commands” in some form is found hundreds of times in scripture. The term “as the Lord commanded” is found 27 times in the O.T., plus similar terms several times, showing how His servants were careful to obey His commands as He directed. Twice in the O.T. we find the term **“just as the Lord commanded,”** as in Num. 17:11 and Lev. 10:7. When an instructor, employer, or parent says, “Do **just** as I say”, it is understood that the thing being done must be precise, exact, without any addition, subtraction or substitution. When Moses was told to do “just as the Lord commanded” it meant “be sure” to obey exactly, as we shall see. Let’s look at a few major Bible accounts where this is set forth.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **I. 1<sup>st</sup>, regarding the TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL.**

- A. God **“commanded”** the man Adam, to not eat of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 2:16).
1. This command was under the penalty of death. v. 17
  2. Eve knew of and understood this command and the consequences as well. 3:1-3
  3. Both Adam and Eve died a double death for their sin.
    - a. They died spiritually, in that they were separated from God’s fellowship in Eden. v. 8
    - b. They began to die physically, being cut off from the tree of life. vs. 22-24
    - c. The end of Adam’s life is stated in Gen. 5:5
- B. As long as they obeyed God’s command, all was well with them
1. Eve was deceived and gave to her husband with her, and both went headlong into sin.
    - a. They paid the price for disobeying God’s command.
    - b. They opened the floodgate of sin into the world where sin is rampant, and now all die physically, as well as spiritually when yielding to sin, as separation from God takes place. Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 5:12; 7:9
  2. God commanded, but they both disobeyed.

### **II. 2<sup>nd</sup>, regarding the BUILDING OF THE ARK BY NOAH.**

- A. The state of man was one of wickedness at this point in time. Gen. 6:1-3
1. God’s long-suffering was to last 120 years. v. 3
  2. He revealed to Noah, a righteous man, what He was going to do. v. 7
    - a. Noah found favor with God. vs. 8-9
    - b. Noah would preach to the wicked while he was preparing for God’s destruction of wickedness. 2 Pet. 2:5
- B. God gave a specific **“command”** Noah for his deliverance in the building of the ark. Gen. 6:14-16
1. It was to be made specifically out of “gopher wood.”
  2. It was to be a specific size, which became a model for ship builders through the years.
  3. It was to be covered with pitch.
  4. It was to have one window, one door, and be three stories tall.

- C. Noah was obedient in **“all”** that God commanded him, **“so did he.”** v. 22
1. If Noah had used any other kind of wood, either in place of or in addition to, the building of the ark, it would have been sinful.
  2. If it did not have one window or door or 3 stories, it would have been destructive.
  3. If he had not pitched it with pitch it would not have endured the ravages of the flood.
  4. If he had changed the dimensions of the ark, it would have been destroyed.

### **III. 3<sup>Rd</sup>, in the matter of MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI.**

- A. This was in relation to the very first instruction to Moses to do something special, in giving the ten **“commandments”**. Exo. 20:6; Deut. 4:13
1. Without attempting to analyze the 10 commandments, we simply summarize them as to their nature.
    - a. Seven of the ten were negative, in that they were told what “not” to do, while only three were positive in nature.
    - b. The commands contained specific instructions for the spiritual, moral and family responsibilities of the people.
  2. God was specific in these commands, and Moses was careful to obey the Lord.
- B. Afterward, God talked with Moses again regarding the building of the tabernacle to be carried by Israel in the wilderness wanderings.
- a. God specifically reminded Moses that He had shown him a **“pattern”** for the tabernacle, when he was on the mount the first time. Exo. 25:9, 40
    - 1) 1<sup>st</sup>, God said; “I am going to show you....the pattern.”
    - 2) 2<sup>nd</sup>, God used the word “make” 17 times, and the words “you shall” 11 times, showing that it was definite that it should be done that way.
    - 3) 3<sup>rd</sup>, God said “see” (or “see to it,” NKJV) “that you make them (the articles of furniture, dt) after the “pattern” shown to him on Mt. Sinai.
      - a) God used a visual aid, a pattern Moses could see.
      - b) God also used clear, specific words, to enhanced what Moses saw.
  - b. Since the tabernacle and its furnishings were TYPICAL of matters pertaining to Christ and His church, those things need to be exact. Heb. 8:5
  - c. Moses obviously understood and built the tabernacle and its furnishings exactly as God commanded. Acts 7:44

### **IV. 4<sup>th</sup>, the function of PRIESTS OF GOD.**

- A. Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron and priests in the line of becoming high priests, knew how to offer proper sacrifices to God on the altar.
1. They knew how to specifically prepare the incense for the fire. Exo. 30:34-38
    - a. God was specific, in that the incense before the Testimony, was to be **exact**.
    - b. Since they were not allowed to alter this composition for their personal use, they should have known the danger involved in messing with the formula for the commanded sacrifice.

2. For some reason however, they **changed the formula** for the incense that God had clearly revealed, and offered it in a form (formula) God had **not commanded** or authorized. Lev. 10:1-2
  - a. The NKJV reads “offered fire...which he had **not commanded** them.”
  - b. The NASB reads “which he had **not commanded** them.”
  - c. The NIV reads “unauthorized fire...**contrary to his command.**”
  - d. The Septuagint reads “strange fire...which the Lord did **not command** them.”
  - e. The New Living Translation reads “wrong kind of fire, different than he had commanded.”
  - f. The ESV reads “unauthorized fire...which he had **not commanded** them.”

B. The point is, they disobeyed God’s command, and we are to learn from this, that in our worship to God, we must not change the actions of worship by doing something different or that He has “not commanded.” Rom. 15:4; Rev. 22:14; Matt. 15:9

## **V. 5<sup>th</sup>, the matter of AARON’S ROD THAT BUDDED.**

- A. The account begins with the LORD speaking to Moses. Num. 17:1-11
  1. God gave 3 commands: (1) SPEAK to the sons of Israel; (2) WRITE each tribe’s name on the rods (sticks) given them (with Aaron’s name on the rod of Levi); and (3) DEPOSIT them in the tabernacle.
  2. Moses was obedient. vs. 6-7
  3. As a result, Aaron’s rod, an obvious dead stick, budded out, signifying that Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, would be the first high priest, and all future high priests would come from the tribe of Levi.
  4. God then gave another command to Moses, to put the rod before the Testimony (the ark of the covenant) to silence the grumblings of the rebels. v. 10
- B. Then, it is stated that Moses did **“just as the Lord had commanded him, so did he.”**
  1. The word “just” signifies that Moses did everything exactly as commanded.
  2. Then, it is said “so did he” AS it had been said of Noah after he was obedient in the building of the ark. Gen. 6:22
- C. “Aaron’s rod that budded” was to be placed in the ark of the covenant from that time on, along with the two tables of stone containing the ten commandments and the golden pot of manna. Heb. 9:4
  1. This was a reminder to the Jews (and should be to us also) of God’s requirement of exact obedience.
  2. We also learn from Heb. 7:12-14, that God did not have to say, “Other tribes shall **not** be priests”, but in giving specific instructions, His “silence” is sufficient to limit it to the tribe of Judah.
    - a. Just so, today, God doesn’t **have** to say “thou shalt not use ice cream and cookies in the Lord’s Supper” because His specific instructions exclude such. 1 Cor. 11:18-26

- 1) There has been a trend in recent years for some to mix in a fellowship meal with the communion to “make it more meaningful”.
- 2) A study of this text specifies only 2 elements of the Supper, and rebukes those who even tried to have a common meal with the Supper.
  - b. just so, today, God doesn’t **have** to say, “thou shalt not use instrumental music in worship” because His specific instructions to sing, making music from the heart, excludes such.

## V. 5<sup>th</sup>, in the matter of PROVIDING WATER FOR ISRAEL.

- A. Moses had been careful to obey **all** of God’s commandments, in the building of the tabernacle, but weakened at another time.
1. Once, at Rephidim, the people thirsted, and God told Moses to “strike” the rock with his staff or rod, and water would come forth. Exo. 17:1-6
    - a. Moses was told what to do—strike the rock.
    - b. Moses was very obedient to God, not knowing what to do till God told him. v. 6
    - c. The result was good, as God provided water for the people.
  2. Another time the Israelites thirsted at a place called Kadesh. Num. 20:1-5
    - a. This time the Lord appeared to Moses and Aaron and told them to take his rod and speak to the rock, and God would bring forth water for them. v. 6-8
    - b. Moses did the first part, in that he took his rod, **“just as he had commanded him.”** v. 9
    - c. However, when he gathered the people together, in his anger, he **struck the rock twice** and water came forth.
      - 1) Why not strike it, because they obtained water one time in this manner?
      - 2) However, God gave a **different command** this time—to **speak to the rock.** v. 8
        - a) Whoever heard of “speaking” to a rock to get water?
        - b) But it was God’s wisdom and plan to do that, but Moses disobeyed, for partial obedience was disobedience.
- B. Immediately, God rebuked Moses and Aaron and set forth their punishment, that they could not enter the promised land because they failed to “believe” God. v. 12
1. This illustrates that the KIND of “belief” or faith that pleases God is an “obedient faith”, and not just believing “only” as the religious world advocates today. Cf Jas. 2:24
  2. God did not specifically state, “Thou shalt **not** strike the rock”, but Moses sinned in striking it.
  3. He did not do **“all”** that God commanded him: he “took his rod” as God commanded him (v. 9), but **did not speak** to it **as commanded**, but substituted something according to his human wisdom.

## VI. 6<sup>th</sup>, there is the case of KING SAUL AND THE AMALEKITES.

- A. Saul received instructions through Samuel to “go”, “strike Amalek” and “utterly destroy” all their possessions. 1 Sam. 15:1-3
1. God said Saul had **not** carried out His “**commands**”. v. 10
  2. Saul did not utterly destroy ALL the Amalekites and all they had, but boasted that he **had** “carried out the command of the Lord”. v. 13
  3. He was rebuked by Samuel, and first maintained that he **had** obeyed, but twice admitted “I have sinned”, having “**transgressed the command of the Lord**”, v. 24, 30
- B. As a result, Saul lost the throne and was eventually to be replaced by David. v. 28

### CONCLUSION

- I. From all these (and other) examples, we learn that God is serious when He gives commands.
- A. The exhortation of the wise man Solomon comes to mind. Eccl. 12:13-14
  - B. The final beatitude of the Bible also emphasizes this. Rev. 22:14
- II. Have you obeyed the commands of the Lord?
- A. He gives commands for salvation from past sins. Acts 2:36-38; 10:48; Rom. 6:17-18
  - B. He also gives commands to get forgiveness after being saved. Acts 8:22
- III. Should you need forgiveness for God, won't you obey His commands, right now?

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