

# Commandments, Laws, Judgments, Ordinances and Statutes

Topics		
Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines		

**Preface:** This is a group of words which I have thought about and put aside for the past 10+ years. It would be nice that, when we come across these words, that we might have some idea as to what each one means and to which portions of the Old Testament do they apply. This is quite difficult because the ancient Hebrew did not necessarily apply each of these words to a specific set of laws or to a specific category of law every time these words were used. Furthermore, there are some long-standing misconceptions: in the Bible, e.g., there is no such phrase as *the Ten Commandments*. When we use that phrase today, even most unbelievers have some idea as to what it is we are speaking about, but this phrase is not really found in the Bible (*the Ten Words* is actually a more accurate translation when referencing the Decalogue).

Therefore, as we go through this doctrine, bear in mind that, there may be a specific, technical use for each of these words; however, there is going to be some bastardization of the use of these words simply because that occurs in any spoken language. It must also be kept in mind that one author may use a word in one sense and another author may use that same word in a difference sense. The end result is, we may have a reasonable understanding of these words as they show up, but this understanding is not going to severely pen these words up.

It may be moderately important to realize that, when I begin a project like this, I may have a few general ideas and notions; however, my conclusions are driven by the material which I gather and sort through.

1. The Greek: Because the New Testament is shorter and written over a much more condensed period of time, I am going to make the assumption that the use of these various words is more standardized. However, it must also be kept in mind that, over the millenniums of speaking Hebrew, the Hebrew language could have gotten somewhat sloppy, with the result that the Greek translation of that language may be somewhat sloppy. We will just have to see how this pans out.
  - a. There are three nouns generally translated *commandment* (s) in the New Testament, the first of which is entolê (ἐντολή) [pronounced *en-tohl-Ā*]. Strong's #1785.
    - i. KJV translations of this word: *commandment* (42 times—Matt. 15:3, Matt. 15:6, Matt. 22:36, Matt. 22:38, Mark 7:8–9 (2), Mark 12:28, Mark 12:30–31 (2), Luke 15:29, Luke 23:56, John 10:18, John 11:57, John 12:49–50 (2), John 13:34, John 15:12, Acts 17:15, Rom. 7:8–13 (6), Rom. 13:9, Eph. 6:2, 1Ti. 6:14, Heb. 7:5, Heb. 7:16, Heb. 7:18, 2Peter 2:21, 2Peter 3:2, 1John 2:7–8 (4), 1John 3:23 (2), 1John 4:21, 2John 1:4–6), *commandments* (27 times—Matt. 5:19, Matt. 19:17, Matt. 22:40, Mark 10:19, Mark 12:29, Luke 1:6, Luke 18:20, John 14:15, John 14:21, John 15:10 (2), 1Cor. 7:19, 1Cor. 14:37, Eph. 2:15, Col. 4:10, Tit. 1:14, 1John 2:3–4 (2), 1John 3:22, 1John 3:24, 1John 5:2–3 (3), 2John 1:6, Rev. 12:17, Rev. 14:12, Rev. 22:14) and *precept* (twice—Mark 10:5, Heb. 9:19).
    - ii. Thayer definitions: 1) *an order, command, charge, precept, injunction; 1a) that which is prescribed to one by reason of his office; 2) a commandment; 2a) a prescribed rule in accordance with which a thing is done; 2a1) a precept relating to lineage, of the Mosaic precept*

concerning the priesthood; 2a2) ethically used of the commandments in the Mosaic law or Jewish tradition.<sup>1</sup>

- iii. Zodhiates composed one of the best Old and New Testament lexicons (in two volumes) gives the following definition: (I) *Charge, commission, direction*; (II) In the sense of a precept, commandment, law as spoken of: (A) the *tradition* of the rabbis; (B) the *precepts* and *teachings* of Jesus; (C) the *precepts* and *commandments* of God in general; (D) the *precepts* of the Mosaic Law, in whole or in part; (E) generally and collectively referring to *the commandment (s) of God or the precepts given to Christians, doctrines, duties*.<sup>2</sup>
- iv. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider: *command, order* occurring 42 times in the singular and 25 times in the plural in the New Testament (note how this differs slightly from King James Concordance above). (A) *Command, order, charge* [generally from God or Christ, but there are instances of this coming from man]; (B) *command, instruction* from the Torah (the Law) but also used to translate a *human decree*; (C) *commandments* [from God, from man]; (D) *commands* [of the Torah, chiefly; but also of the Lord and also referring to human instruction]; (E) John never uses this word to refer to the *commandments of the Torah*, but rather for God the Father's *commission, charge, command* to God the Son; and to God's *commands* to us (to have faith in Jesus Christ and to love one another); (F) *commands* related to the moral Christian life; *instruction* of the faith; and *human instruction*.<sup>3</sup>
- v. General observations in the use of *entolê* (this time with the Scriptural references):
  - (1) Used for specific as well as general *commands, commandments* from God and from the Torah, often in contrast to the rabbinic traditions (Matt. 5:19 15:3, 6, 19:17 22:36, 38, 40 Mark 7:8–9 10:5 12:28 30–31 Luke 15:29 23:56 Rom. 7:7–13 Heb. 7:5). These are both plural and singular references and these references refer to more than simply the Ten Commandments. Passages like Heb. 9:19 refer to the a portion or nearly the entire Mosaic Law.
  - (2) Used specifically to refer to one or more of the *Ten Commandments* (Mark 10:19 Luke 18:20 Rom. 7:7–13 13:9 Eph. 6:2).
  - (3) Used for God's *charge, commands* to Jesus Christ, His Son (John 10:18 12:49–50 1John 4:21 2John 4–6). John uses this word in the singular in this way.
  - (4) Used of a *commandment, mandate* given by Jesus Christ (John 13:34 15:12 1John 5:2–3 2John 6).
  - (5) Used for the *orders, commands* of men (John 11:57 Acts 17:15 Heb. 7:16).
  - (6) One *command* of God being set aside for a greater *command* (Heb. 7:18). The idea is, *some* of the laws, commands and ordinances of the Old Testament are set aside in the Church Age.
  - (7) A commandment of an Apostle, carrying the same force as a divine command (1Tim. 6:14 1John 2:7–8).
  - (8) A reference to the general *divine precepts* and *doctrines* (Rev. 12:17 14:12). *Keeping the commandments of God* in these passages refers to *the understanding of, a belief in, and adherence to* the precepts and doctrines of God.
  - (9) You will notice that Matthew and Mark use this word more often to apply to the Torah. This would suggest that Matthew and Peter (who was probably the oral basis for the Mark's gospel) had some understanding of the Law when called (Matthew much more so), so that when they heard Jesus use *entolê*, this conjured up in their minds the *commandments* found in the Old Testament. John, although he no doubt developed some understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures, used *entolê* in a more general way. Jesus obviously used *entolê* in both ways, but the manner in which He used it stuck in the minds of the disciples in different ways. This is absolutely key in understanding a primary

<sup>1</sup> Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the Old Testament (©1889), edited version for e-sword, Strong's. #1785.

<sup>2</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*; AMG Publishers; ©1992, p. 594 (edited; I leave out the Scriptural documentation).

<sup>3</sup> Balz and Schneider's *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*; ©1978–1980; Eerdmans Publishing Company; Vol. I; pp. 459–460 (edited severely, leaving out a great deal of commentary and Scriptural documentation).

difference between Matthew, Peter and John. John understood more than the other disciples Who Jesus was, and therefore, it was not difficult for his mind to process the idea that Jesus would give them commandments which had the same authority as the Old Testament. This is why John stayed for the crucifixion, but the other disciples ran for their lives. This is why John recalled the upper room discourse, because, at the time that he heard it, he was more willing than the other disciples to accept Jesus as being absolutely authoritative.

(10) Peter and John both use this word to refer to the *command* of the gospel; i.e., the command to believe in Jesus Christ (2Peter 2:21—this passage requires some careful exegesis 3:2 1John 3:23).

(11) In the KJV, almost every singular use of *commandment* refers back to this Greek word.

- b. The second word is the neuter entalma (ἐντάλμα) [pronounced *EHN-TAHL-MAH*], often translated *precept, commandment*. This is the neuter noun cognate of the above. Strong's #1778.
  - i. It is only found thrice in the KJV, each time translated *commandments* (Matt. 15:9 Mark 7:7 Col. 2:22).
  - ii. Thayer gives the meaning *precept*.
  - iii. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider translate this *commandment*.
  - iv. Zodhiates renders this *charge, command, mandate, precept*; but with an emphasis upon that which is commanded. I don't know that I can quite wrap my mind around that distinction.
  - v. In all 3 New Testament occurrences, entalma is used in the phrase *the doctrines and commandments of men*. Therefore, I think we can reasonably dispense with this meaning.
  - vi. Entalma is found only twice in the LXX: Job 23:11 Isa. 29:13.
- c. The third noun is the feminine epitagê (ἐπιταγή, ἥς, ἡ) [pronounced *ehp-ee-tahg-Ā*], which is generally translated *commandment* in the KJV. Strong's #2003.
  - i. King James translations: *commandment* (Rom. 16:26, 1Cor. 7:6, 25 2Cor. 8:8 1Titus 1:1, 3) and *authority* (Titus 2:15).
  - ii. Thayer translations: *an injunction, mandate, command*.
  - iii. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider: *authority, command* [imposed upon someone]. The authority of the command is stressed.
  - iv. Zodhiates: *the concrete commandment of God, a concrete injunction of Jesus, the engagement of Apostolic authority*.
- d. There are two more nouns which are translated *commandment*, but are used much less often. The feminine noun paraggelia (παραγγελία) [pronounced *pahr-ang-gehl-EE-ah*], which means *announcement, a proclaiming or giving a message to; a charge, a command [whose execution is taken for granted]; a proclamation; instruction*. With the negative mê (μή) [pronounced *may*], it means *to forbid*. Strictly used of that which a superior (king, general, Apostle) delivers to those below him. It is found 4 times in the NT: Acts 16:24 1Tim. 1:5, 18 1Thess. 4:2. Strong's #3852.
- e. The other is the neuter noun diatagma (διάταγμα) [pronounced *dee-AHT-ahg-mah*], which means *injunction, mandate, order, commandment, edict [of a king]*. Used later to refer to the *instructions* of the Apostles. It is found only in Heb. 11:23 and Ezra 7:11 in the LXX. Strong's #1297.
- f. We may reasonably look at the verb entellomai (ἐντέλλομαι) [pronounced *en-TEHL-lohm-ī*], which is a deponent verb (it has a middle/neuter ending, but an active meaning), and is generally translated *command*. Quite obviously, this is the verbal cognate of #1785 above. Strong's #1781.
  - i. In the KJV, it is found translated as follows: *commanded* (Matt. 15:4 Matt. 28:20 Mark 11:6 Mark 13:34 John 8:5 Acts 13:47); *command* (Matt. 19:7 Mark 10:3 John 15:14 John 15:17); *charge* (Matt. 4:6 Luke 4:10); *commandment* (John 14:31 Heb. 11:22—not a separate use of the verb); *charged* (Matt. 17:9); *commandments* (Acts 1:2); *enjoined* (Heb. 9:20); and *gave* (John 14:31—this is not a separate occurrence).
  - ii. Our only interest is Acts 1:2 and Heb. 11:22: Acts 1:1–2: **In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.** Here, the verb is simply used in its participial form, which can be used as a noun. I don't know that there is any important difference between the participial use here or how entolê is used.

- g. We have a similar use of a verb (Strong's #2753) translated *commandment* (in the KJV) when used in the participle in Acts 25:23. There is no need to go into any detail here.
  - h. We have another verb found 8 times in the New Testament, generally translated *to charge, to give commandment*. Strong's #1291.
  - i. A similar verb is found 30 times in the New Testament. Strong's #3853.
2. Still with the Greek, let's look at the word translated *law*:
- a. The most common word translated *law* is the masculine noun *nomos* (νόμος) [pronounced *NOM-oss*], which means *law*. Strong's #3551. There are no other words in the New Testament translated *law* apart from a combination of words which represent one word in the Greek (*teacher of the law, being without law, mother-in-law*).
    - i. It is found nearly 200 times in the New Testament, and translated *law* or *laws* every time in the KJV (it is only found translated *laws* in Heb. 8:10 10:16).
    - ii. Thayer gives us a plethora of meanings: 1) *anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law, a command; 1a) of any law whatsoever; 1a1) a law or rule producing a state approved of God; 1a1a) by the observance of which is approved of God; 1a2) a precept or injunction; 1a3) the rule of action prescribed by reason; 1b) of the Mosaic law, and referring, acc. to the context. either to the volume of the law or to its contents; 1c) the Christian religion: the law demanding faith, the moral instruction given by Christ, especially the precept concerning love; 1d) the name of the more important part (the Pentateuch), is put for the entire collection of the sacred books of the OT.*
    - iii. From Zodhiates: *Nomos* comes from a verb which means *to divide among, to parcel out, to allot*. Therefore, etymologically, *nomos* means *something which is parceled out, allotted, what one has in use and possession; and therefore, usage, custom*. It is primarily used to refer to particular laws, statutes and ordinances, and is used primarily in the New Testament to refer to the Mosaic Law. These can be laws relating to civil rights and duties; the law of marriage, the function of the Levitical Priesthood; laws relating to external religious rites, like purification, circumcision and sacrifices; and laws relating to the heart and conduct of men. There is the implication that the law referred to is in writing. The primary use of *nomos* is with regard to the Mosaic Law: it can refer to the Mosaic Law directly, to the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, or for the books or scrolls which contain the Mosaic Law (in which cases, *nomos* appears to refer to the first section of the Old Testament, the first 5 books of the Bible). There are two additional metaphorical uses: for a *perfect, complete law* (as established by the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Church Age) and also to a *law, rule, norm or standard* with regards to judging or acting.<sup>4</sup>
    - iv. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider devote over 6 pages to *nomos*: it comes from *nemō* (νέμω) [pronounced *NEHM-oh*], which means *to assign*.
      - (1) By the time of the New Testament, *nomos* came to refer to, in general, the entire Mosaic Law, whereas *entolē* referred to an individual commandment from the Law (these would be the primary uses within the New Testament). *Nomos* is not used for the instructions of the priests or patriarchs nor is it used to refer to individual commands take out from the Mosaic Law. Some would make a connection between the cosmic order of things and the Mosaic Law.
      - (2) This word is often used in a twofold description of the Old Testament: the Law and the Prophets.
    - v. Some conclusions and observations of the use of *nomos*:
      - (1) *The Law and the Prophets* refers back to the Old Testament. Matt. 5:17 11:13 22:40 Luke 16:16 John 1:45 Acts 13:15 . There is a threefold division given in Luke 24:44.
      - (2) *Nomos*, by itself and in conjunction with other words, is used to refer to the Mosaic Law. Matt. 12:5 22:36 Luke 2:22–24 10:26 John 7:19 Acts 15:5 1Cor. 9:8–9
      - (3) *Nomos* is used to refer to the entire Old Testament in John 12:34 15:25 1Cor. 14:21.
      - (4) There are some commandments in the Law which are more important than others. Matt. 23:23
      - (5) Jesus said He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. Matt. 5:18

<sup>4</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*; AMG Publishers; ©1992, pp. 1015–1016.

- (6) Mark does not use the word *nomos* in his gospel.
- (7) The Law is often contrasted with grace and/or faith, as in John 1:17 Gal. 2:16 5:3–4. Philip. 3:9
- (8) The righteousness of God is manifested apart from the Law. Rom. 3:21
- (9) As time went on, *nomos* began to be more closely identified with the Jews than with Moses. Acts 22:3 25:8
- (10) *Nomos* can be used for the law of man (John 18:31) and to the traditions of the Jews (John 19:7—although this passage may require some exegesis).
- (11) Law is sometimes used to mean *custom, tradition, principle*: **Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law** (Rom. 3:27–28).
- (12) Paul shows the Abraham was justified by the law of faith rather than the Mosaic Law, as he predated the Mosaic Law. Rom. 4:13–16
- (13) Sin came into the world before law. Rom. 5:13. This implies that there was divine law prior to the Mosaic Law.
- (14) The law is properly fulfilled in the Church Age by those who walk according to the Spirit. Rom. 8:4 Gal. 5:23
- (15) The flesh is hostile to God's law. Rom. 8:7
- (16) Eph. 2:15 contains an interesting interplay between law, commandments and ordinances: **But now in Christ Jesus you who were once afar off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, He making us both one, and He has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity (the Law of commandments contained in ordinances) so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, making peace between them; and so that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity in Himself** (Eph. 2:13–16).

3. Greek word for judgment:

- a. The first word rendered *judgment* is the feminine noun *krisis* (κρίσις, εως, ή) [pronounced *KREE-sih*s], which is translated *judgment* (s) in the KJV. Strong's #2920.
  - i. KJV occurrences: judgment Matt. 5:21–22 (2), Matt. 10:15, Matt. 11:22, Matt. 11:24, Matt. 12:18, Matt. 12:20, Matt. 12:36, Matt. 12:41–42 (2), Matt. 23:23, Mark 6:11, Luke 10:14, Luke 11:31–32 (2), Luke 11:42, John 5:22, John 5:27, John 5:30, John 7:24, John 8:16, John 12:31, John 16:8, John 16:11, Acts 8:33, 2Th. 1:5, 1Ti. 5:24, Heb. 10:27 (2), Jam. 2:13 (2), 2Pe. 2:4, 2Pe. 2:9, 2Pe. 3:7, 1Jo. 4:17, Jud. 1:6, Jud. 1:15, Rev. 14:7, Rev. 18:10; damnation Matt. 23:33, John 5:29; accusation 2Pe. 2:11, Jud. 1:9; condemnation John 3:19, John 5:24; judgments Rev. 16:7, Rev. 19:2. You will note that this is a word favored by Matthew and John.
  - ii. Thayer definitions: 1) *a separating, sundering, separation; 1a) a trial, contest; 2) selection; 3) judgment; 3a) opinion or decision given concerning anything; 3a1) especially concerning justice and injustice, right or wrong; 3b) sentence of condemnation, damnatory judgment, condemnation and punishment; 4) the college of judges (a tribunal of seven men in the several cities of Palestine; as distinguished from the Sanhedrin, which had its seat at Jerusalem); 5) right, justice.*
  - iii. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider: *the decision of a judge, justice, judgment [by man or God].*
  - iv. Zodhiates: *judgment, judging; separation; figuratively: division, dissension, decision, crisis, turn of affairs, judgment. (I) an opinion formed and expressed; (II) an official judgement; (A) the act of judging [in the final judgment, the day of judgment]; enforcement of a judgment; the power of judging; (B) judgment given, a sentence pronounced; a sentence of punishment or condemnation; condemnation; (C) metonymically for a court of justice, a tribunal, judges; (III) rights, justice, equity; (IV) a final judgment, a universal judgment, the last judgment [of those who are lost]; (V) final judgment of believers; evaluation; (VI) judgment, separation [of men in the here and now]; (VII) judgments, evaluations [of men made by other men].<sup>5</sup>*
  - v. Kukis: *judgment, sentence, justice; evaluation.*

<sup>5</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*; AMG Publishers; ©1992, pp. 889–891. I added the word *evaluation* as that appears to be the word Zodhiates was searching for.

- vi. Summary points:
    - (1) This is clearly a word used of divine and most often eternal judgment. Matt. 5:21–22 10:15 12:18 John 5:22 12:31 Heb. 10:27 2Peter 2:4 (which is a judgment of certain angels) Rev. 18:10 19:2
    - (2) The choices of others clearly condemn those who should have known better. Matt. 12:41–42
    - (3) *Judgment* is one of the many things which the pharisees and other religious types did not fully apprehend from their study of the Law. Matt. 23:23 Luke 11:12
    - (4) This rarely refers to *human judgment* and I am not finding an instance of it referring to *evaluation*. John 7:24 8:15
  - b. There is a very similar word with the same root, the neuter noun *krima* (κρίμα) [pronounced *KREE-mah*], which means *judgment, condemnation*. Strong's #2917.
    - i. New Testament occurrences: judgment Matt. 7:2, John 9:39, Acts 24:25, Rom. 2:2–3 (2), Rom. 5:16, Gal. 5:10, Heb. 6:2, 1Peter 4:17, 2Peter 2:3, Rev. 17:1, Rev. 20:4; damnation Matt. 23:14, Mark 12:40, Luke 20:47, Rom. 3:8, Rom. 13:2, 1Cor. 11:29, 1Tim. 5:12; condemnation Luke 23:40, 1Cor. 11:34, 1Tim. 3:6, James 3:1, Jude 1:4; avenged Rev. 18:20; condemned Luke 24:20; judgments Rom. 11:33; law 1Cor. 6:7.
  - c. A much less used word is *dikê* (δική) [pronounced *DEE-kay*], sometimes rendered *judgment*. Strong's #1349.
    - i. New Testament occurrences: vengeance Acts 28:4, Jude 1:7; judgment Acts 25:15; punishment 2Thess. 1:9.
  - d. There is the word *dikaiôma* (δικαίωμα) [pronounced *dik-AH-yoh-mah*], which is usually translated *righteousness*. Strong's #1345.
    - i. righteousness Rom. 2:26, Rom. 5:18, Rom. 8:4, Rev. 19:8; ordinances Luke 1:6, Heb. 9:1, Heb. 9:10; judgment Rom. 1:32; judgments Rev. 15:4; justification Rom. 5:16.
  - e. And *dikaiokrisia* (δικαιοκρισία) [pronounced *dik-ah-yohk-ris-EE-ah*], which means *a just sentence*. Strong's #1341.
    - i. Occurrences: judgment Rom. 2:5; righteous, Rom. 2:5.
  - f. *gnômê* (γνώμη) [pronounced *GNOH-may*], which means *judgment*. Strong's #1106.
    - i. Occurrences: judgment 1Cor. 1:10, 1Cor. 7:25, 1Cor. 7:40; mind Philem. 1:14, Rev. 17:13; advice 2Cor. 8:10; agree Rev. 17:17; purposed Acts 20:3; will Rev. 17:17.
  - g. *kritêrion* (κριτήριον) [pronounced *kree-TAY-ree-on*], which means *judge*. Strong's #2922.
    - i. Occurrences: judge 1Cor. 6:2; judgment James 2:6; judgments 1Cor. 6:4.
  - h. *aisthêsis* (αἴσθησις) [pronounced *AH-ee-sthay-sis*], which means *judgment*. Strong's #144.
    - i. Occurrence: judgment Philip. 1:9.
  - i. I have not included words like *judgment seat, place of judgment*.
4. The Hebrew: