

Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Statutes (in the Old Testament)

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

Topics, Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines		
Introductory Remarks	God's Covenants with Abraham	The Meaning of Mish'mereth
The Ordinances or Statutes of God	The Commandments of God	Ten Commandments (Graphic)
The Law (Torah) of God	Torah (graphic)	The Shortened Doctrine of Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Statutes

Preface: The Bible has 4 different words which are very similar; and all of these words are found early on in the book of Genesis (although some of these words occur only in this particular verse). This is an attempt to draw some distinctions between these words.

God is speaking to Isaac, and He says these words to him:

Genesis 26:4–5 “And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My **voice** and **kept My charge**, My **commandments**, My **ordinances**, and My **Laws**.”

This is a very odd place in the Bible to find these particular words. We generally associate them with the Mosaic Law. However, God will not give the Law to Moses for another 500 years, and yet here, we are told that Abraham obeyed God’s voice and kept God’s charge, as well as His commandments, statutes and laws. Which laws, commandments, and statutes are we talking about and what do these various terms mean?

We should take a look at the second verb found here, which is the Qal imperfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*], which means *to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. We more or less understand this in relationship with Moses and with the people of Israel—the Law of God was kept, guarded, protected, preserved and taught from generation to generation. We ought to understand roughly the same thing with Abraham, except that he did not pass this along to a nation as we think of one, but to his wife, his children and to the people who were slaves to him or who worked for him. We do not have, however, a list of specific laws and commandments which God gave to him and which Abraham preserved, other than the promises which God made to him.

Therefore, let's first see what Abraham was actually responsible for, according to the Word of God:

Examine the covenants which God makes with Abraham; see Dean #067

I found it interesting that God did not sit down with Abraham at one point in time, give him all of the promises, and then let Abraham take over from there. There are several reasons for this: (1) doctrine is built upon doctrine; (2) repetition is important to the spiritual life; (3) God is not a deist. That is, God does not set everything in motion, and then walk away from it, letting us fend for ourselves with what He left us. God is intimately and regularly a part of Abraham's life; therefore, we will expect God to contact Abraham regularly.

You will notice that God's message to Abraham becomes more complex with time.

The reason that we are looking at these all at once is so that we can see just what things God told Abraham.

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture

Commentary

Abraham is in Charan (Haran, which is about 1700 miles northwest of Ur), which is Abraham's likely birthplace, not far from the Persian Gulf. God is telling Abraham to move a few hundred miles to the southwest into the Land of Promise.

Now Yahweh said to Abram, "Get out of your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you, and make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. In you will all of the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3).

God first tells Abram that he must move—that is a command. Then God promises that He will make a great nation from Abram and bless him and make him famous. Furthermore, Abram would be a blessing to others. Then God promises to bless those who bless Abram and curse those who curse him. Finally, God promises that *in Abram* all the families of the earth would be blessed (which is a promise of Messiah).

Abraham enters into the Land of Promise.

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture

Commentary

Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, at the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. But the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your offspring." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and worshiped Him (Gen. 12:6–8).

God first tells Abram that He will give his seed (Seed) the land in which he stands. Abram goes into Canaan and God tells him that this will be the land of his offspring.

These are all promises from God to Abram; and Abram has preserved them.

God waits for Abram to first separate from Lot, which he chooses to do from his own volition.

Yahweh said to Abram, after Lot was separated from him, "Now, lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land which you see, I will give to you, and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then your seed may also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it to you." (Gen. 13:14–17).

God then promises Abram a huge chunk of land, which would be as far as Abram could see in all directions. Furthermore, those who have been descended from Abram will be like the dust of the earth (i.e., an old and childless Abram would have millions of descendants). Therefore, God has expanded upon His promises from Gen. 12.

Then God tells Abram to wander throughout the land which He has given him—a commandment which Abraham obeyed.

Abram has just enjoyed a tremendous military victory and he has met with the great High Priest, Melchizedek, Who is a type of Christ. There is a chance that Abram was given the Holy Scriptures at this point as well (the first 10–12 chapters of Genesis; and perhaps the book of Job).

After these things [the rescue of Lot and the great military victory] the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Don't be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." Abram said, "Lord Yahweh, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and he who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" Abram said, "Behold, to me you have given no seed: and, behold, one born in my house is my heir." Behold, the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir, but he who will come forth out of your own body will be your heir." Yahweh brought him outside, and said, "Look now toward the sky, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." (Gen. 15:1–5).

God explains to Abram what He is to him. God is Abram's shield, as was proven in the previous chapter when Abram and his men defeated a great army. Furthermore, God is Abram's great reward.

However, Abram starts out by complaining that he is childless and that his heir will be someone to whom he is not even related.

God makes it clear that Abram's heir will come directly from him. Then God *repeats* His promise, that Abram will have millions of descendants (using stars this time as an illustration).

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture	Commentary
<p>He said to Abram, "So will your seed be." He believed in Yahweh; and He imputed it to him for righteousness. He said to him, "I am Yahweh who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it." (Gen. 15:6-7).</p>	<p>Abram's faith is counted to him as righteousness.</p> <p>God then <i>repeats</i> the promise that Abram would inherit all of the land upon which he stands.</p>
<p>He said, "Lord Yahweh, how will I know that I will inherit it?" He said to him, "Take me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon." He took him all these, and divided them in the middle, and laid each half opposite the other; but he didn't divide the birds. The birds of prey came down on the carcasses, and Abram drove them away (Gen. 15:8-11).</p>	<p>God illustrates what will happen in the future. The land will be given to the Jews, and various groups will continually try to take this land away from them, and the Jews will continually have to drive them away.</p> <p>God is not dealing with Abram's unbelief, at this point, but the unbelief of the generations which will follow him.</p> <p>Now, what God is doing here is making a covenant with Abraham. This is how Abraham knows that God will keep His promises.</p>
<p>When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. Now terror and great darkness fell on him. He said to Abram, "Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. They will afflict them four hundred years. I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great substance. But you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age. In the fourth generation they will come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full." (Gen. 15:12-16).</p>	<p>Then God prophesies to Abram what would happen to his descendants over the next 400+ years. Again, God is not as concerned with Abram's lack of faith as He is with the generations which will follow him.</p>
<p>It came to pass that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. In that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites." (Gen. 15:17-21).</p>	<p>God becomes very specific about the land which He is giving to Abram and to his descendants: the land which lies between the Nile (the River of Egypt) and the Euphrates River. This would include a small portion of modern Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and most of Iraq. Right now, Israel occupies approximately 0.2% of the Middle East; God is giving to them approximately half of the Middle East (this is because most of the Arabs who occupy this land today will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire).</p>

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture

Commentary

Unfortunately, at the urging of his wife, Abram will misapply this doctrine in Gen. 16 and he will father a child by Sarai's personal servant girl, Hagar.

God appears again to Abram to straighten him out.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty. Walk before me, and be complete [spiritually mature]. I make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly." Gen. 17:1–2).

God tells Abram to walk as a mature believer before Him. God tells Abram to pay close attention to what He says.

Abram fell on his face. God talked with him, saying, "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you. You will be the father of a many nations. Neither will your name any more be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made you. I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you. Kings will come out of you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your seed after you. I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land where you are traveling, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. I will be their God." (Gen. 17:3–8).

What had not been promised before is, Abram would be a father of many nations.

God changes Abram's name from *Abram* (*exalted father*) to *Abraham* (*father of a multitude*).

God promises dried up old Abraham that he would be made exceedingly fruitful.

Finally, all of the land through which Abraham is walking, would be given to him and to his seed. "I will be their God" indicates that this does not go to everyone descended from Abraham but specifically to those who have a relationship with God.

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture	Commentary
<p>God said to Abraham, "As for you, you will keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you will keep, between me and you and your seed after you. Every male among you will be circumcised. You will be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin. It will be a token of a covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old will be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he who is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner who is not of your seed. He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. The uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul will be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant." (Gen. 17:9-14).</p>	<p>Abraham has seemed to forget what God has promised him, from time to time, so God is going to make certain that he remembers this time.</p> <p>Circumcision is hidden from others, but the male who is circumcised is aware of it.</p> <p>As we have studied, circumcision represents the new life; taking that which was dead and making it alive once again (specifically, this is a reference to Abraham's sexual potency).</p> <p>Spiritually, this refers to being born again. The circumcision speaks of being born into a new life.</p>
<p>God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you will not call her name Sarai, but her name will be Sarah. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. Yes, I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations. Kings of peoples will come from her." (Gen. 17:15-16)</p>	<p>As has been discussed, there are some cults out there that make a big deal out of changing a person's name when they enter into the cult. When names are changed in the Bible, generally speaking, God is doing the name change Himself (I do not recall any significant exceptions to this).</p>
<p>Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to him who is one hundred years old? Will Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth?" Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" (Gen. 15:17-18).</p>	<p>Abraham has the objection that, what God is suggesting is simply impossible. They are simply too old to have children. However, this is the key to circumcision; that represents new life being given to Abraham.</p> <p>Furthermore, in Abraham's eyes, fathering a child by Sarah is unnecessary, because he already has a son, Ishmael (and Abraham clearly loved Ishmael).</p>

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture

Commentary

God said, "No, but Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You will call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this set time in the next year." When he finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham (Gen. 17:19–22).

Ishmael is not going to be Abraham's heir. Recall that, he will be a wild ass of a man, indicating that he has no authority orientation. Furthermore, his descendants will be evil. God is able to know this.

It is amazing that this holds true, even until today. If you were given the choice of living in some Middle Eastern nation, you would choose Israel. In fact, Israel is so different from every other nation in that region that, you may not have even associated them with the phrase *Middle Eastern nation*.

Now, how does God know, 4000 years ago, that Abraham's son Ishmael was not the family to watch, but Abraham's yet unborn son Isaac was the man to watch? God knew this 4000 years ago, and the results are clear for us to see, even today.

Yahweh appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and saw that three men stood opposite him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, "My Lord, if now I have found grace in Your sight, please don't go away from Your servant. Now let a little water be fetched, wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. I will get a morsel of bread so you can refresh your heart. After that You may go your way, now that You have come to Your servant." They said, "Very well, do as you have said." (Gen. 18:1–5).

You will note that this time, Abraham immediately recognizes Y^ehowah God. The meal is a picture of fellowship. Abraham was excited and happy to see God.

The 3 men represent the Trinity, even though only one of them is the Revealed God.

Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quickly make ready three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and fetched a tender and good calf, and gave it to the servant. He hurried to dress it. He took butter, milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. He stood by them under the tree, and they ate (Gen. 18:6–8).

Abraham organizes a large meal, and everything is made from scratch. He does not offer up leftovers, as Lot will appear to do in Gen. 19.

God's Covenants with Abraham

Scripture	Commentary
<p>They said to him, "Where is Sarah, your wife?" He said, "See, in the tent." He said, "I will certainly return to you when the season comes round. Behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him. (Gen. 18:9-11).</p>	<p>The Revealed Member of the Trinity for the first time puts a rough date on the birth of their promised child and tells Abraham that it is Sarah who will have his child.</p>
<p>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age. It had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old will I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Will I really bear a child, yet I am old?' Is anything too hard for Yahweh? At the set time I will return to you, when the season comes round, and Sarah will have a son." Then Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid." He said, "No, but you did laugh." (Gen. 18:12-15).</p>	<p>The writer of Genesis makes certain that we know that Abraham and Sarah are past the age of having sexual relations; and Sarah is past the age of bearing children.</p> <p>Because God designed all the rules of biology, He can modify and overrule them if He so chooses to.</p> <p>In order to parallel and foreshadow the birth of Jesus, this birth needs to be miraculous.</p>
<p>I doubt that there is any race or family of people which now resides in the land which they originally lived in. Abraham, as a Jew, moved to the Land of Promise, and God gave him that land. And the Jews are still there today, despite the absolute insane hatred which is felt by most of those who live around them.</p>	
<p>The reason that we reviewed these promises, is so that we can have a list of everything which God told Abraham that Abraham recorded (prior to the birth of Isaac).</p>	

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Genesis 26:4-5 [God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham's son] "And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham **obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My ordinances, and My Laws.**"

The word translated *obeyed* is the Qal perfect of *shâma'* (שמע) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*], which means *to listen, listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, listen and take heed to, listen and take note of, listen and be cognizant of.* Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. The word for *voice* simply means *voice*. God spoke to Abraham and Abraham listened. The things which God said to Abraham are all recorded above.

Also, the word here for *listen* is actually stronger than that, indicating that Abraham heard and acted upon what God said to him. God made many promises to Abraham and Abraham listened and believed those promises; and because he had believed God, righteousness was imputed to him (Gen. 15:6).

The second thing which Abraham did was the Qal imperfect of shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] which means *to keep, to guard, to watch [over], to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. What Moses did do was preserve those things which God told him; he kept those things. We know what God said to Abraham 4000 years later because he preserved those words. We do not know exactly how he preserved them. It is my guess that Abraham repeated these things on many occasions to Isaac who passed them along to Jacob. We have no idea at what point in time these things were actually written down. However, it is my contention that man, near the time of the flood, had a much better memory than man does today. Therefore, hearing and memorizing the first 12–50 chapters of Genesis was much easier for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to do.

This is why we first studied the things which God said to Abraham. Abraham preserved these words; these words of God included God's charge, His commandments, His ordinances and His laws for Abraham at that point in time.

Now, specifically, God said that Abraham “**...kept My charge, My commandments, My ordinances, and My Laws.**”

Therefore, apart from whatever norms and standards were written on the heart of Abraham, we have those actual words from God which Moses was to preserve. These words are not used when God spoke to Moses; God did not say, “Now, this would be a list of My commandments; and tomorrow, I will give you a list of my statutes.” He just gave the words recorded above; and then God tells this to Isaac, who has surely received all of these commands and promises of the covenant from his father Abraham. Therefore, in this way, Abraham has guarded and preserved this covenant. Furthermore, Abraham recorded and kept a report of all the things which resulted from his interaction with God. He recorded what God said, and he recorded what he did as a result.

The **book of Job (HTML) (PDF)** reveals to us how men with positive volition thought about God's charge, commandments and ordinances. We hear Job's opinion and the opinions of his 3 friends as they discuss suffering and moral issues. Job would have lived a few generations prior to Abraham, so he and his friends are good gauges as to what man knew and believed in that era. We might consider them messengers from the age of the gentile patriarchs (that is, sons of Shem, Ham or Japheth prior to Abraham).

As we go over these specific words and how they are used in the Law, then we can go back and reference the covenant which God made with Abraham.

Genesis 26:4–5 [God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham's son] “And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My **charge**, My commandments, My ordinances, and My Laws.”

The first noun of note here is found in the singular (it does has the 1st person singular suffix as well—which refers to God—as they all have).

The Meaning of Mish^emereth

- 1) The first word found here is mish^emereth (מִשְׁמֶרֶת) [pronounced *mish^e-MEH-reth*], which means, *custody, guard, watch, charge; a responsibility; an obligation; a service; a keeping; an observance; that which is observed [a rite, a law]*. Strong's #4931 BDB #1038.

The Meaning of Mish^emereth

- 2) This is the only word found in the singular; the other 3 nouns are found in the plural in Gen. 26:4–5.
- 3) We do not find this word used again in Genesis; nor do we find it used in the book of Job.
- 4) The complete meanings as given by BDB: *guard, charge, function, obligation, service, watch; guard, watch, house of detention or confinement; keeping, preserving; charge, injunction; office, function (ceremonial)*. Some more updated translations might be: *supervision, direction, management, delegated authority and commission, holy orders, appointment, conferment, investiture*.
- 5) Apart from this passage, the next time this word is used is in association with the observance of the Passover. Observance of the Passover was to be the charge or responsibility of Moses and Aaron (Ex. 12:6).
- 6) It is also associated with other ritual (symbolic) observances: the Sabbath (Ex. 16:23); the manna (Ex. 16:32–34); the Tabernacle and the testimony (Num. 1:53), and with cleanness (Lev. 22:9).
- 7) It is associated with not doing the abominable things which the heathen did in the land (Lev. 18:30).
- 8) One interpretation for this passage has been that, the words which follow mish^emereth represent the *responsibility or obligation* of Abraham, which he kept.
- 9) The second interpretation is, Abraham continued the sacrifices to God, as Adam had done, as Abel had done and as Noah had done. The sacrifices look forward to our Lord's work on the cross on our behalf.
- 10) Another obligation which Moses kept was, God told him before Isaac was conceived, that Moses needed to be circumcised, as did all of the males in his compound. Circumcision was a one-time ritual which represents the new life, or life where there previously was no life. This is regeneration, which comes as a result of believing in the Revealed God (in our era, that is Jesus Christ).
- 11) God also had Abraham offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice, and Abraham obeyed God, ready to slay his own, uniquely-born son. This foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
- 12) Fundamental to the life of any person is, that Jesus Christ died for our sins and that God has allowed us to apprehend salvation through faith in Him.

The 3 words which follow are all feminine plural nouns with the 1st person singular suffix.

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Genesis 26:4–5 [God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham's son] "And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My **commandments**, My ordinances, and My Laws."

The third noun is the feminine plural noun is mits^evâh (מִצְוָה) [pronounced *mits^e-VAH*].

The Commandments of God

- 1) The second significant noun here is the feminine plural of mits^evâh (מִצְוָה) [pronounced *mits^e-VAH*], which means, *commandment, prohibition, precept, that which is forbidden, constraint, proscription, countermand*. Strong's #4687 BDB #846. This is nearly always translated

The Commandments of God

commandment or *commandments* in the KJV and as *command* or *commands* in Young's. It is most often found as a plural.

- 2) This word is found only once in Genesis, never in Job; and mostly in the Pentateuch, although it is found throughout the Bible.
- 3) Although we do not find this noun except here in Genesis and then in the Law, its verbal cognate is found many places in the book of Genesis. It is the Piel of tsâvâh (צָוָה) [pronounced *tsaw-VAW*], which means *to commission, to mandate, to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge, command, order; to instruct* [as in, giving an order]. This is a verb found almost exclusively in the Piel. Strong's #6680 BDB #845.
 - (1) The verb is associate with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; God *commanded* Adam and the woman not to eat of it. Gen. 2:16 3:11, 17
 - (2) This verb is associated with God tells Noah what to do. Gen. 6:22 7:5, 9, 16
 - (3) Interestingly enough, we do not find this word associated with God and Abraham. The only time this word is used is when the pharaoh gives command concerning Abraham (Gen. 12:20).
 - (4) However, again, circumcision comes to mind, where God commanded Abraham concerning circumcision (although that particular verb is not used).
- 4) Back to the noun: after God made the bitter waters sweet, He spoke to the Jews about keeping the commandments of God in Ex. 15:26 (the second time this word is found in the Bible).
- 5) This is the word used with the *Ten Commandments* in Ex. 20:6 34:29 Lev. 27:34 Deut. 4:13 5:10, 29 10:4.



Graphic is from <http://yahwehistruth.com/> accessed April 23, 2014.

- 6) These commandments are often associated with life and death. Prov. 4:4 7:1–2
- 7) These commandments are often associated with the Jews prospering in the land of Canaan. Ex. 15:26 Deut. 4:40 5:29 6:17ff Deut. 11:8

The Commandments of God

- 8) These commandments are often associated with blessing and cursing. Lev. 25:14ff Psalm 89:31-34 Isa. 48:18
- 9) Keeping these commandments was showing love toward God. Deut. 5:10 7:9 Joshua 22:5 Daniel 9:4
- 10) The Jews were to keep these commandments in memory of what God had done for them. Deut. 8:11-14 Psalm 78:7 Prov. 3:1
- 11) Keeping these commandments were for the benefit of the Jews in the land. When the commandments were not kept, there were great problems. Deut. 10:13 Judges 2:17 1Kings 2:3 Isa. 48:18
- 12) Keeping these commandments indicated a fear/respect of God. Deut. 6:1-2 8:6 Psalm 112:1
- 13) It is a sign of wisdom to keep the commandments of God. Prov. 10:8
- 14) The Jews were not to add or take from these commandments. Deut. 4:2
- 15) Whether or not the Jews chose to keep God's commandments were a test to them. Deut. 8:2
- 16) Although obeying the commandments of God is an individual matter, most often these commands, as you may have noticed above, are associated with Israel as a nation.
- 17) These appear to be the most important mandates to come from God.
- 18) Based upon the points above, I would associate the commandments with the laws of divine establishment. It is these laws which are to the benefit of the people in the land, which would be naturally associated with blessing and cursing (cursing when the commandments are not kept).
- 19) Adhering to the laws of divine establishment result in blessing from God as well as natural blessing, which a nation can expect from following the directives of God.
- 20) Therefore, logically, such laws are also appropriate to us today—particularly commandments #5-10, most of which were probably known and understood by Abraham without having God delineate them.
- 21) We may assume, based upon this verse, that Abraham adhered to these commandments in some form or another. He would have learned these as a young man, likely from his father or grandfather; and he held to these values for all of his life.
- 22) When encountering God, God would tell Abraham what to do (go west, Abram).
- 23) Based on how this word is used in Exodus and elsewhere, let me suggest that this word is closely associated with moral laws and the laws of divine establishment. Many of these would have been understood, passed down by the patriarchs.
- 24) Parents always pass something along to their children. If it is not an adherence to law and delegated authority, then it is antinomianism. Having listened to the rationalizations of parents, some simply raise their children not to bother them too much, and that is the extent of their training. This is how a young person simply picks up the norms and standards of his contemporaries, which are never very high.

You will certainly notice some overlap, where the other words found in this verse are found in some of the passages noticed above. There is clearly an overlap as well in the way that these words are used elsewhere in Scripture.

Application: Interestingly enough, one political party in our country actually encourages people to break the tenth commandment (*You will not inordinately desire that which your neighbor has*), so that they will vote this party into power, with the notion that party will take some of these things away from the rich and give to them, the poor—the ones who are encouraged *to covet*.

There is a careful balance that the Bible establishes, between societal care of the poor and the helpless without this becoming a deterrent to personal faith in God or a deterrent to work. Recall that when the farmers were told to not harvest the entirety of their fields, it was so that the widows and orphans could come in and harvest what remained. So, the poor were not to simply sit at home, and the prosperous farmers were to bring the food to them; they had to work for this food. These fields did not belong to the poor; but they had to work these fields in order to eat.

Genesis 26:4–5 [God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham’s son] “And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My **ordinances**, and My Laws.”

The third word is chuqqâh (חֻקִּים) [pronounced *khoo-KAWH*]. Most of the citations will be confined to Genesis, Job and the writings of Moses.

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- 1) The third word is chuqqâh (חֻקִּים) [pronounced *khoo-KAWH*], which means, *that which is established or defined; statute, ordinance, law*. Strong's #2708 BDB #349. This is the feminine plural found in our passage. Found 106 times in the Bible. It is only found this one time in Genesis and is not found at all in Job.
- 2) The masculine form of this word found more often in the Old Testament: chôq (חֹק) [pronounced *khoke*], and it means, *decree, that which is decreed; statute; boundary, defined limit; an appointed portion of labor, a task*. The key concept here is the setting of a boundary or a limit. Strong's #2706 BDB #349. Sometimes these kinds of words can have very different meanings and sometimes the shadings are lost to us. These seem to be used almost the same number of times. The masculine version is found 126 times. For the points which follow, I will follow out the masculine and feminine occurrences.
- 3) The masculine version is found in Gen. 47:22, 26 Job 14:13 23:12, 14 28:26 38:10. The feminine version is found only in Gen. 26:5.
- 4) The first use of this word chôq in Gen. 47:22 is quite fascinating: **Only he didn't buy the land of the priests, for the priests had a **portion** from Pharaoh, and ate their portion which Pharaoh gave them. That is why they didn't sell their land.** (WEB) The word *portion* is chôq; it indicates a specific and limited piece of land here. In Gen. 47:26, we find this word used more in the way we would expect it to be used: **Joseph made it a **statute** concerning the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth. Only the land of the priests alone didn't become Pharaoh's.** (WEB) Joseph set up a form of taxation in Egypt; a 20% flat tax (which also appears to support the priests—to some degree or another).
- 5) Job uses this word. Now, recall that Job has had his family wiped out and he is suffering great pain from his diseases. He says to God, before his 3 friends: **"Oh that You would hide me in Sheol, That You would keep me secret, until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a **set time**, and remember me!"** (Job 14:13; WEB) It is not the word you would think has chôq behind it; but there is this sense of specificity and limitation.
- 6) We find this word used twice in Job 23:12–14, where Job is speaking about God to his associates: **"I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my **portion** of food. But He is unchangeable, and who can turn Him back? What He desires, that He does. For He will complete what He **appoints** for me, and many such things are in His mind."** (ESV, capitalized) It was difficult to find any translation which translates chôq both times as a noun. Again, the concepts of specificity and limitation are found

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- here.
- 7) Job uses *chôq* in a way that we would easily recognize it in Job 28:26–27 *When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the flash, the thunderclap, then He saw it, and declared it; He prepared it, and He also searched it out.* (Green’s literal translation) Job is saying that God designed a set of laws which go along with the falling of rain, which includes lightning and thunder.
 - 8) God uses this word when describing the limitations that He placed upon the oceans: *"Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?"* (Job 38:8–11; ESV)
 - 9) In short, the key to understanding this masculine version of this word is *limitations and specificity*.
 - 10) The word *chuqqâh* (חֻקָּה) [pronounced *khoo–KAWH*], which means, *that which is established or defined; statute, ordinance, law*. Strong’s #2708 BDB #349.
 - (1) *Chuqqâh* is mostly translated *statute, statutes, ordinance, ordinances* in the KJV.
 - (2) It appears to be associated with much of the ritual found in the Mosaic Law. Ex. 12:14, 17, 43 13:10 27:21 28:43 29:9, Lev. 3:17, Lev. 7:36, Lev. 10:9, Lev. 16:29, 16:31, 16:34 17:7 23:14, Lev. 23:21, 23:31, 41 24:3, Num. 9:14 10:8 15:15 18:23 19:2, 10, 21 27:11 31:21 35:29
 - (3) For this reason, the word would be best associated with the rituals which Abraham observed—the animal sacrifices which he offered up to God.
 - (4) The various rituals were very specific in how they were to be performed.

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Let’s go to the word which most believers know: *torah*.

Genesis 26:4–5 [God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham’s son] *“And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My ordinances, and My Laws.”*

The final word in Gen. 26:5 is *tôwrah* (תּוֹרָה or הֲרָט) [pronounced *TOH-rah*], a word that you may already know.

Unless otherwise noted, the Bible verses come from Green’s literal translation (however, from time to time, quotation marks may be added). Again, most of the citations will be confined to Genesis, Job and the writings of Moses.

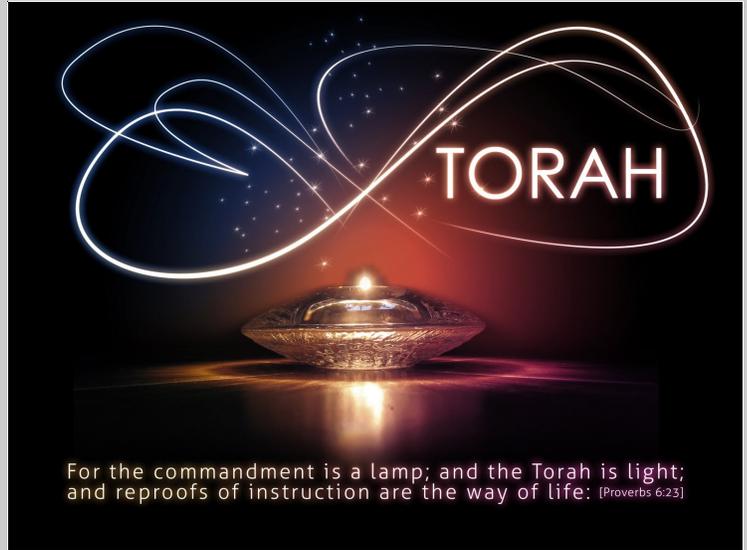
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- 1) The final word is *tôwrah* (תּוֹרָה or הֲרָט) [pronounced *TOH-rah*], which means, *instruction, doctrine; [human and divine] law, direction, regulations, protocol; custom*; it is transliterated *Torah*. Strong’s #8451 and #8452 BDB #435. It is nearly always translated *law, laws*.
- 2) Gen. 26:5 is the first time that this word occurs in Scripture. God has always had instruction,

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doctrine and laws—up to this point, they have not been enumerated (with the exception of mankind needed to have a consequence for murdering someone, that consequence being execution (Gen. 9:5).

- 3) Although this word torah does not occur again in Genesis, it will be found many times in the Pentateuch and throughout Scripture.
- 4) However, the next time that we have this word used in time is in Job 22:22 by Eliphaz: “Now receive the Law from His mouth and put His words in your heart.” So Eliphaz says that there is *law* and that this *Law* is from God; and that Job needs to write God’s words on his heart. That is, he needs to remember what God says.



From [Blogspot](#); accessed April 23, 2014.

- (1) In this context, Eliphaz describes some simple moral laws, and he asks Job if he thinks that God cannot see him through the dark clouds to judge him. These are the laws which Paul writes about in Rom. 2:14–15 **For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them...** (ESV)
- (2) Eliphaz is wrong to accuse Job of wrongdoing here; but even Job does not dispute that there is a Law from God written on our hearts (if we want it to be written on our hearts—Eliphaz uses the imperative mood for both phrases).
- (3) And, as discussed earlier, men, with or without God, have norms and standards; and man, because he is fallen, violates his own norms and standards.
- (4) I have heard many atheists argue for their own sets of norms and standards. I do not recall ever hearing an atheist say, “There is no God; therefore, there should be no law.” (however, I have heard arguments which are fairly close to this).
- (5) Believers simply recognize that there is this perfect standard of law and that its origin is God.
- (6) Believers and unbelievers alike should understand that, given any set of standards, all men will violate those standards. My favorite example is of a believer I knew who, when told to give me standard of behavior, it was to treat all men with dignity and respect. This apparently did not include the man whose wife he was having an affair with. The reason that I like this illustration so much is, the standard which he came up with was so low, and yet, he himself could not even hold to that standard.
- 5) Therefore, there is the Law of God written on the hearts of men; and this is the concept of right and wrong. Whether these laws would be similar or equivalent is another matter; but there are clearly standards—sometime very nebulous ones—which men have.
- 6) The next time that we find the word *ṭōwrah* is in the book of Exodus, where it is found 7 times:
 - (1) The first time we find *ṭōwrah* in the book of Exodus is Ex. 12:49 **One law shall be to the**

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native, and to the visitor, the one staying in your midst. This was a principle of law which they were to take with them into the land, and it was based upon their lives as slaves in Egypt: they were not to have two sets of laws in this new land, one for themselves and another for immigrants (which describes Egyptian law as applied to the Jews). This is repeated in Num. 15:16, 29.

- (2) God speaks to Moses in Ex. 13:9 “And it shall be for a sign to you on your hand, and a memorial between your eyes, so that a Law of Jehovah may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand Jehovah brought you out from Egypt.” Israel would become known for having the Law of God.
- (3) God gave simple instructions to the people of Israel when it came to gathering up manna, and related this to obedience: *And Jehovah said to Moses, “Behold, I AM! Bread will rain from the heavens for you. And the people shall go out and gather the matter of a day in its day, so that I may test them, whether they will walk in My Law or not.”* (Ex. 16:4)
- (4) God laid out clear instructions for gathering manna, which included not to go out on the Sabbath to look for any. However, the people did anyway. *And Jehovah said to Moses, “Until when do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?”* (Ex. 16:28) Here, there are two principles involved—God gave them instructions about gathering manna, and they disobeyed those instructions. In that way, they disobeyed His *mitsvâh* (commandments). However, they also violated His *law* of the Sabbath. In Ex. 16, God was just beginning to teach the Jews about the Sabbath and about not working on the Sabbath as a memorial to what God had created. Their first lesson in this was to not gather manna on the Sabbath day.
- (5) We find *tôwrâh* used in association with another of these words in Ex. 18:16–22 [Moses to his father-in-law] “When they have a matter, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor. And I make known the **statutes** of God, and His **laws**.” And the father-in-law of Moses said to him, “The thing which you do is not good. Wearing you will wear out, both you and this people with you. For the thing is heavy for you. You are not able to do it by yourself. Now listen to my voice. I will counsel you, and may God be with you. You be for this people before God, and you bring the matters to God. And you warn them as to the **statutes** and the **laws**, and make known to them the way in which they should walk, and the work which they should do. And you, you shall look out men of ability out of all the people, who fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain. And you place these over them as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. And it shall be that every great matter they shall bring to you, and every small matter they shall judge. And you make it easy on yourself, and let them bear with you.” *Statutes* here is the word *chôq*. Here, this word is associated with judgments of the court. Let me suggest that *law* is the overriding set of standards and that *statutes* are some of the individual laws which come from the principles of God’s Law. For instance, the overriding principle is *You will not murder*; but there will be a myriad of statutes written to cover this guiding principle (what evidence is allowed? What mitigating circumstances may be considered? What about involuntary manslaughter, etc.).
- (6) The final time that *tôwrâh* is found in Exodus is Ex. 24:12 *And Jehovah said to Moses, “Come up to Me to the mountain, and be there. And I will give to you the tablets of stone, and the Law, and the commandments which I have written, to teach them.”* What logically makes sense is, the commandments of God (the Ten Commandments) would be written on the stone, as opposed to writing the myriads of directions which God gave to Moses (and Joshua) about the Tabernacle (*tent*) of God and Ark of God. God gives Moses and

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Joshua 5 or 6 chapters of instructions; so it is unlikely that Moses could be carrying stones with all these instructions on them. Joshua would have recorded that information. Having carried around granite for countertops, I can guarantee you that, coming down that mountain, Moses would have had two stones large enough for the Ten Commandments; but not large enough for 5 or 6 chapters of instructions. So, here, *law* refers to the overall principles which are expressed as commandments from God.

7) Other uses in the Pentateuch.

- (1) Tôwrâh is used to lay out the way that certain things are to be done: the burnt offering (Lev. 6:9); the grain offering (Lev. 6:14); the sin offering, guilt offering and peace offering (Lev. 6:25 7:1 , 7, 11, 37).
- (2) The law was used to distinguish between clean and unclean things and ceremonies related to that which is unclean. Lev. 11:46–47 12:7 13:59 14:2, 32, 54, 57 15:32 Num. 19:14
- (3) The word *law* is used with other ceremonies. Num. 6:13, 21
- (4) When used in association with the other words:
 - (1) Lev. 26:46 **These are the statutes** [chôq] **and the judgments** [mishpât] **and the laws** [tôwrâh] **which Jehovah has given between Him and the sons of Israel, in Mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses.**
 - (2) Num. 19:2 **This is the statute** [chuqqâh; the feminine form of chôq] **of the law** [tôwrâh] **which Jehovah has commanded** [tsâvâh—a verb], **saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer, without blemish, in which there is no blemish, on which no yoke ever came.”** We have the exact same phrasing in Num 31:21 **And Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who went to battle, “This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded Moses:...”** Again, the *statutes* here are the specific laws or statutes; and *law* refers to the overarching principles of God.
 - (3) Deut. 4:8 **And who is a great nation whose statutes and judgments are as righteous as all this Law which I set before you today?** The Mosaic Law, which came directly from God, given by Moses to the people, is far more righteous than the laws of other city-states that Moses was aware of (this was one of Moses’ areas of expertise; he would have studied these as a young man preparing to become the pharaoh of Egypt). The judgments appear to be the punishments given to those who have violated the laws and statutes of God.
 - (4) Deut. 30:10 **For you shall listen to the voice of Jehovah your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in the book of this Law.** For you shall turn back toward Jehovah your God, with all your heart and with all your soul. It is with the book of Deuteronomy that the word tôwrâh became synonymous with the entire content of the Torah, which can be seen as the Pentateuch, but reasonably applied, as we sometimes do today, to the entire Old Testament.
 - (5) Deut. 33:10 **They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, and Your Law to Israel. They shall put incense at Your nostrils, and whole burnt offering on Your altar.** This is a fascinating verse. Jacob and Israel are the same person; *Israel* is the name given this man by God. During this entire time, he believed in the Revealed God, although it is clear by his biography in Genesis that he was not the nicest of men. So *Jacob* often refers to the children of Israel who are unbelievers or who are immature believers; and *Israel* refers to believers in Israel who have experienced some spiritual growth. The implication is, the *ordinances* were taught pretty much to keep the

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people in line (as many laws are); but that the *Law* refers more to the books of Moses from standpoint of their spiritual import and impact.

- (5) The entire book of Deuteronomy is Moses explaining all these principles of God to the generation of promise, the next generation who were either children when they left Egypt or they were born in the desert-wilderness. Deut. 1:5
- (6) Tôwrâh is also used as a term for all that God taught Moses to teach His people; and therefore we have taken the term *Torah* to refer to the Pentateuch or to all of the Old Testament books. Deut. 4:44 17:11, 18–19
- 8) In summary, like most English words, there are a variety of ways in which this word is used. It can refer to the principle of an over-arching principle from God; as well as to an enumeration of regulations concerning a variety of things, which may be ceremonial or moral.
 - (1) Law can refer to the overarching principles of right and wrong, known to God, but written on the hearts of men.
 - (2) It can also stand for the content of all that Moses taught the people, as we find in Deut. 4:44 17:11, 18–19 23:3, 8 27:26 28:58, 61 29:21, 29 30:10 31:9, 11–12, 24, 26 32:46 33:4. Deut. 23:3 reads: [Moses is giving a command to the people] “**And you shall write on them all the Words of this Law when you have crossed over, so that you may go into the land which Jehovah your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah the God of your fathers has promised you.**” This use of the word tôwrâh has become the most common way that this word is used.
- 9) In this primary usage, Moses said that this law should be recorded in a number of formats, even by a future king for himself, and it should be both read and taught to the people. Deut. 31:11–12 32:46 33:10
- 10) Regarding Moses, we might see the laws as referring to all of the promises which God has made to him; and how he has preserved these promises.

To sum up, we have two primary uses of the word tôwrâh: originally, it referred to fundamental principles of God which functioned as the basis for all right and wrong. However, it later became to be used almost exclusively for the content of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy; as well as a designation for the Pentateuch and the entire Old Testament. This, over time, was recognized as authoritative, indicating that, over time, man began to recognize these books as the Word of God.

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Genesis 26:4–5 “And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My **voice** and **kept My charge**, My **commandments**, My **ordinances**, and My **Laws**.”

At what point does these words make sense to mankind? When God spoke these words to Isaac, did Isaac understand them? If so, I see several general options here: that God had given out a set of laws, only spoken of in part in Gen. 9, but with a great deal of specificity. This would suggest that there was a great deal of revelation given by God—likely to Noah and to his sons—which they did not bother to write down (except for the one command of Gen. 9). God, through His interaction with mankind, said what was right and wrong. I see this option as highly unlikely.

Another option is, Adam and the woman came with a very nearly perfect concept of right and wrong, after eating from the fruit of the tree (it is this tree that gave them this knowledge). And the first thing that they realized is, they were naked. They would have passed these norms and standards along to their children and grandchildren; but even with Cain and Abel, there was a problem: Cain killed Abel. Perhaps many of these laws were so self-evident to Adam and the woman that it never occurred to them to tell their children, “Do not kill each other.” At that time, they may not have even realized that people could actually be killed.

Concerning the idea of this concept of right and wrong being in their souls from the beginning, these concepts would no doubt be distorted by the sin nature.

If you examine any of the age charts of the patriarchs which preceded Abraham, you will notice that most of their lives overlapped the life of Abraham, but that they all died out before Isaac or Jacob. And about the time that God began speaking to Abraham and guiding him was about the time that those in the flood and their sons and sons’ sons began to die off. So, there was this great wisdom—this knowledge of right and wrong—to come from Noah and his sons—all of whom lived before the flood. However, there came a point where all of the *ancestors* began to die out, almost all at once. Therefore, God took a new approach, coming first to Abraham and then to his son and grandson—and eventually speaking to Moses and nation Israel.

Application: When it comes to children, and then to their children, this would have been a different matter. Although we develop some limited concept of right and wrong, much of this comes from our parents and much of it comes from our environment. We can see great generational shifts occur before our very eyes, with children doing things which we find unimaginable. Our youth can be incredibly affected by what they are taught in school, something which many groups have discovered. For the 2012 election, some polling indicated that same-sex marriage and gay rights was the **#1 issue** among the youth. You would think that any young person with half a brain would realize that the economy and the debt of the nation *should* be most important to them, as they would inherit that debt and possibly have their lives destroyed by it. Now, you may wonder, *where does that come from?* One of the strongest political forces in the United States today is the various groups of the LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual Transgendered), who, despite being perhaps 3% of the U.S. population have a **political strategy** and fight constantly to **put their message** into the **schools**. Political groups have found that the youth is a great fertile ground for recruitment, as we have seen with the Nazi and Communist youth; with the liberal appeals in schools, and in this example, the gay agenda movement in the schools and media¹. This combined with a positive gay message in television and movies (even though the presentation of various gay characters was often very inaccurate) changed the thinking of a generation.

My point here is, Adam and the woman were physically mature when they partook of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; but their children were born like all other children, just with superior intellects and bodies. They had to receive their teaching from somewhere—which would suggest Adam and the woman, as well as from the Revealed Lord. So, somehow, Abraham knew and kept God’s commands. “I have multiplied your seed as the stars of the heavens and I have given to your seed all these lands; furthermore [lit., and], all nations of the earth of blessed [themselves] by your seed. [This is] because Abraham listened to My voice and he kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.” How these things came to Abraham, we do not know; but we may reasonably speculate.

¹ One of the brilliant moves of the gay movement was to go after both the Disney name and enterprise as well as after the youth in schools.

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From [Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Statutes \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

The Shortened Doctrine of Laws, Commandments, Ordinances and Statutes

1. This entire topic comes from: [Genesis 26:4–5](#) [God is speaking to Isaac, Abraham's son] "And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed all these lands. And in your Seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because **Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My ordinances, and My Laws.**"
2. God spoke to Abraham and Abraham heard what God had to say and he obeyed God's voice.
3. Secondly, Abraham *kept* God's charge, commandments, ordinances and laws. *To keep* is the Qal imperfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] which means *to keep, to guard, to watch [over], to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. What Abraham preserved was the first third of the book of Genesis, along with all of the things which God said to him.
4. The first thing that Abraham was to keep was the **charge** of God, which word means: *guard, charge, function, obligation, service, watch; guard, injunction*. Some more updated translations might be: *supervision, direction, management, delegated authority and commission, holy orders, appointment, conferment, investiture*.
 - 1) Apart from this passage, the next time this word is used is in association with the observance of the Passover (Ex. 12:6). It is also associated with other ritual (symbolic) observances: the Sabbath (Ex. 16:23); the manna (Ex. 16:32–34); the Tabernacle and the testimony (Num. 1:53), and with cleanness (Lev. 22:9). It is associated with not doing the abominable things which the heathen did in the land (Lev. 18:30).
 - 2) One interpretation for this passage has been that, the words which follow *mish^{er}mereth* represent the *responsibility* or *obligation* of Abraham, which he kept.
 - 3) The second interpretation is, Abraham continued the sacrifices to God, as Adam had done, as Abel had done and as Noah had done. The sacrifices look forward to our Lord's work on the cross on our behalf.
 - 4) Another obligation which Moses kept was, God told him before Isaac was conceived, that Moses needed to be circumcised, as did all of the males in his compound. Circumcision was a one-time ritual which represents the new life, or life where there previously was no life. This is regeneration, which comes as a result of believing in the Revealed God (in our era, that is Jesus Christ).
 - 5) God also had Abraham offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice, and Abraham obeyed God, ready to slay his own, uniquely-born son. This foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
5. The second thing that Abraham is said to have kept or guarded is the **commandments** of God. is the feminine plural of *mits^{er}vâh* (מִצְוָה) [pronounced *mits^{er}-VAH*], which means, *commandment, prohibition, precept, that which is forbidden, constraint, proscription, countermand*. Strong's #4687 BDB #846. This is nearly always translated *commandment* or *commandments* in the KJV and as *command* or *commands* in Young's. It is most often found as a plural.
 - 1) Although we do not find this noun except here in Genesis and then in the Law, its verbal cognate is found many places in the book of Genesis. It is the Piel of *tsâvâh* (צָוָה) [pronounced *tsaw-VAW*], which means *to commission, to mandate, to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge, command, order; to instruct* [as in, giving an order]. This is a verb found almost exclusively in the Piel. Strong's #6680 BDB #845.
 - 2) Regarding the noun translated *commandments*:

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- (1) This is the word used with the *Ten Commandments* in Ex. 20:6 34:29 Lev. 27:34 Deut. 4:13 5:10, 29 10:4.
 - (2) These commandments are often associated with life and death. Prov. 4:4 7:1–2
 - (3) These commandments are often associated with the Jews prospering in the land of Canaan. Ex. 15:26 Deut. 4:40 5:29 6:17ff Deut. 11:8
 - (4) These commandments are often associated with blessing and cursing. Lev. 25:14ff Psalm 89:31–34 Isa. 48:18
 - (5) Keeping these commandments was showing love toward God. Deut. 5:10 7:9 Joshua 22:5 Daniel 9:4
- 3) These appear to be the most important mandates to come from God.
 - 4) Based upon the points above, I would associate the commandments with the laws of divine establishment. It is these laws which are to the benefit of the people in the land, which would be naturally associated with blessing and cursing (cursing when the commandments are not kept).
 - 5) Adhering to the laws of divine establishment result in blessing from God as well as natural blessing, which a nation can expect from following the directives of God.
 - 6) Therefore, logically, such laws are also appropriate to us today—particularly commandments #5–10, most of which were probably known and understood by Abraham without having God delineate them.
 - 7) We may assume, based upon this verse, that Abraham adhered to these commandments in some form or another. He would have learned these as a young man, likely from his father or grandfather; and he held to these values for all of his life.
6. The third word is *chuqqâh* (חֻקָּה) [pronounced *khoo-KAWH*], which means, *that which is established or defined; statute, ordinance, law*. Strong's #2708 BDB #349. This is the feminine plural found in our passage. Found 106 times in the Bible. It is only found this one time in Genesis and is not found at all in Job. The masculine form of this word found more often in the Old Testament: *chôq* (חֻק) [pronounced *khoke*], and it means, *decree, that which is decreed; statute; boundary, defined limit; an appointed portion of labor, a task*. The key concept here is the setting of a boundary or a limit. Strong's #2706 BDB #349. Sometimes these kinds of words can have very different meanings and sometimes the shadings are lost to us. These seem to be used almost the same number of times. The masculine version is found 126 times. For the points which follow, I will follow out the masculine and feminine occurrences.
- 1) We find this word used twice in Job 23:12–14, where Job is speaking about God to his associates: “I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my **portion** of food. But He is unchangeable, and who can turn Him back? What He desires, that He does. For He will complete what He **appoints** for me, and many such things are in His mind.” (ESV, capitalized) The concepts of specificity and limitation are found here.
 - 2) Job uses *chôq* in a way that we would easily recognize it in Job 28:26–27 *When He made a **decree** for the rain, and a way for the flash, the thunderclap, then He saw it, and declared it; He prepared it, and He also searched it out.* (Green’s literal translation) Job is saying that God designed a set of laws which go along with the falling of rain, which includes lightning and thunder.
 - 3) God uses this word when describing the limitations that He placed upon the oceans: “Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed **limits** for it and set bars and doors, and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud

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- waves be stayed'?" (Job 38:8–11; ESV)
- 4) In short, the key to understanding this masculine version of this word is *limitations and specificity*.
 - 5) The word *chuqqâh* (חֻקָּה) [pronounced *khoo–KAWH*], which means, *that which is established or defined; statute, ordinance, law*. Strong's #2708 BDB #349.
 - (1) *Chuqqâh* is mostly translated *statute, statutes, ordinance, ordinances* in the KJV.
 - (2) It appears to be associated with much of the ritual found in the Mosaic Law. Ex. 12:14, 17, 43 13:10 27:21 28:43 29:9, Lev. 3:17, Lev. 7:36, Lev. 10:9, Lev. 16:29, 16:31, 16:34 17:7 23:14, Lev. 23:21, 23:31, 41 24:3, Num. 9:14 10:8 15:15 18:23 19:2, 10, 21 27:11 31:21 35:29
 - (3) For this reason, the word would be best associated with the rituals which Abraham observed—the animal sacrifices which he offered up to God.
 - (4) The various rituals were very specific in how they were to be performed.
 7. The final word is *tôwrah* (תּוֹרָה or הֲרֵט) [pronounced *TOH-rah*], which means, *instruction, doctrine; [human and divine] law, direction, regulations, protocol; custom; it is transliterated Torah*. Strong's #8451 and #8452 BDB #435. It is nearly always translated *law, laws*. Gen. 26:5 is the first time that this word occurs in Scripture. God has always had instruction, doctrine and laws—up to this point, they have not been enumerated (with the exception of mankind needed to have a consequence for murdering someone, that consequence being execution (Gen. 9:5)).
 - 1) Like most English words, there are a variety of ways in which this word is used. It can refer to the principle of an over-arching principle from God; as well as to an enumeration of regulations concerning a variety of things, which may be ceremonial or moral.
 - (1) Therefore, there is the Law of God written on the hearts of men; and this is the concept of right and wrong. Whether these laws would be similar or equivalent is another matter; but there are clearly standards—sometime very nebulous ones—which men have. Law can refer to the overarching principles of right and wrong, known to God, but written on the hearts of men.
 - (2) It can also stand for the content of all that Moses taught the people, as we find in Deut. 4:44 17:11, 18–19 23:3, 8 27:26 28:58, 61 29:21, 29 30:10 31:9, 11–12, 24, 26 32:46 33:4. Deut. 23:3 reads: [Moses is giving a command to the people] **“And you shall write on them all the Words of this Law when you have crossed over, so that you may go into the land which Jehovah your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah the God of your fathers has promised you.”** This use of the word *tôwrâh* has become the most common way that this word is used.
 - 2) In this primary usage, Moses said that this law should be recorded in a number of formats, even by a future king for himself, and it should be both read and taught to the people. Deut. 31:11–12 32:46 33:10
 8. In short, Abraham heard the voice of God and he obeyed Him. He also preserved God's charge (rituals and obligations), His commandments (God's prohibitions; those things which are associated with cursing and blessing), His ordinances (rituals and animal sacrifices) and His laws (God's instructions, doctrines and protocol).
 9. As a result of what Abraham preserved, we have one of the greatest books in human history, the book of Genesis, within which is the seed of nearly every doctrine that is related to God and man. His son Isaac and his grandson Jacob continued to preserve these words.

Chapter Outline

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