

Jesus' Commandments

Here's an interesting statement from Jesus: "I have kept My Father's commandments".

John 15:9-10 (NKJV) – "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

What's interesting in this verse is that Father commands Jesus – well, at least according to this translation.

The Greek word for 'commandment' used here is *entolē* (ἐντολή). The word means¹:

- (1) an order, command, charge, precept, injunction
 - *Useage*: that which is prescribed to one by reason of his office
- (2) a commandment
 - *Useage*: a prescribed rule in accordance with which a thing is done
 - e.g. (i) a precept relating to lineage, of the Mosaic precept concerning the priesthood
 - e.g. (ii) ethically used of the commandments in the Mosaic law or Jewish tradition

So why would Father command Jesus, his Son incarnate, who always does what Father has him do or say?

The answer lies in the translator's use of the word 'commandment'. This word can have other meanings, as Thayer's notes show above, however, 'commandment' was the one chosen by the translators. Why? When your theology is religious or legalistic, you'll always interpret or translate scripture from that perspective. To the religious and legalist, God always commands his subordinates because that's how God operates. To attribute to him any other way of operating is blasphemous.

May I be so bold as to say that there was no need for Father to command Jesus to do anything. He was totally submissive to Father, so he would only need to tell him what to do or say, and it would be done. This fits neatly into the useage of the Greek word: 'that which is prescribed to one by reason of his office'. Jesus would have been prescribed tasks by Father because of his relationship with him, and because of his office as his prefect representative on Earth.

In the same way Jesus' statement in the same verse, "If you keep my commandments...", is also a religious translation. The Amplified makes this quite clear, stating: "if you continue to obey My instructions". This is not blasphemy or dishonouring of Jesus, it actually fits in with his relationship with his disciples. Later in verse 14 he says, "*You are My friends...*" and in verse 15, "*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*" Here he's addressing his loved ones in the Upper Room before his betrayal, encouraging them to follow what he has taught them during their time together.

Jesus is only recorded as giving his disciples 1 commandment; to love one another.² Again the Greek word used is *entolē*. So the word could easily be translated as 'precept' or 'injunction'.

I notice that all the 54 versions listed for the verse in Bible Gateway³ use either 'command', 'commandment' or 'law'. It's very hard to get away from out religious hangups and teach what's really on Father's heart.

1 – Thayer's definition – from my online bible software.

2 – John 13:34

3 – www.biblegateway.com

Also note that Jesus said, “*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you”⁴ and “*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love*”⁵. Both these refer to multiple commands of Jesus. Really??? We only have one command recorded: the New Commandment. Surely, if there were many commandments, they would have been meticulously included in one or all of the Gospel accounts. Strangely, there are no others.*

This means that Jesus was referring to his teachings which included many injunctions, precepts, principles and behaviours that should be followed by the born-again sons of God that would follow him.

Actually, according to Vine⁶, *entolē* is translated ‘precepts’ instead of ‘commandments’ on 2 occasions in the KJV and NKJV New Testament⁷ when referring to the commandments Moses gave to the people. Interestingly, 26 of the 54 bible translations of Hebrews 9:19 that I checked⁸ translate it as ‘commandment’; 14 translate it as ‘command’; and just 7 render it as ‘precept’. This clearly shows the translator’s power in choosing words in English bible translations due to their predisposing worldview, or possibly their whim.

To conclude, the use of ‘commands’ and ‘commandments’ in the translations of the NT clearly reinforce a religious and a legalistic mindset. Jesus relates to us as family and friends: Father relates to us as sons. We need to dump our religious baggage and legalism, and jump into this relationship which is available to us. Of course it will produce cries of “heresy”, but if that’s what being in the Kingdom is about, yahoo!

BTW: Lance Wallnau’s article “50 Commands of Jesus”⁹ shows clearly that there was only one ‘command’ given by Jesus (more like an injunction). The remainder are statements of spiritual fact that needed to be aligned with to know how to live as a Kingdom citizen. (Others list 55 commandments)¹⁰

Why do we always move towards legalism instead of the freedom of the Gospel of the Kingdom?

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4 – John 15:14

5 – John 15:14

6 – www.menfak.no/bibelprog/vines?word=%AFt0002185

7 – Mark 10:5; Hebrews 9:19

8 – www.biblegateway.com

9 – canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/50-commands-of-jesus-summary.pdf

10 – canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/the-55-commands-of-jesus-christ.pdf