

# Design of God's Commandments

Fred R. Coulter—December 9, 2009

Why has God designed the Ten Commandments the way that He has? A lot of people say, 'Why are some of them so negative?' Because human beings do not like 'thou shalt not.' Because going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, what did God say concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? 'You shall not eat of it.' And even Eve said, 'You shall not touch it.'

A lot of people say, 'Well, maybe she added that to what God said.' But you can't be too sure about that because you don't know the time frame that they had in the Garden of Eden, and maybe that was a secondary command that God gave as well. We don't know. But human beings cannot resist going against 'thou shalt not.'

God told them, 'Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat thereof, in dying you shall surely die.' Which means not instantaneous death, but it's on its way. Now for them, it was much more plausible when Satan said, 'If you eat of this tree'—and by the way we have the symbolism of it in the next room where we're going to eat. It's called a Christmas tree, which if you analyze it very carefully, what do you have? *Symbol of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

They select an evergreen so it doesn't die—right? Lives longer. But when you cut it, even an evergreen tree in dying it shall surely die, but not instantly. Isn't that something? And then the nice decorations that go round and round. All they have to do is put a serpent's head at the top and you know who that's from. Then on top there's the star, and Satan was called the light bringer or morning star. Then you have all of these lovely little decorations on there—which are what? *All sex symbols.* So everyone who brings a Christmas tree into their house acknowledges they're following the way of the world, and they are celebrating the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and Christmas is all tied in with good and evil—is it not? *Based on a lie!*

Well, when Adam and Eve were in the Garden and God was with them, He appeared to them in a form that probably was very human-like to them, just like Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection and He said, 'A spirit does not have flesh and bone like Me.' He didn't say flesh and blood. So God could manifest Himself to look like flesh and bone. How else could He talk to Adam and Eve and walk in the Garden with them, if He did not appear like them, because He made them after His image and after His likeness—correct? They had not

seen God in His glory, because no man can see God in His glory and live—is that not true?

So when the serpent came and said, 'If you eat of this fruit, you'll be like God, *to decide* good and evil.' That's the only way they became like God. They didn't become like God in any other way, but took to themselves, because God made them free moral agents, to decide good and evil by their own standards, rather than God's. So you know the rest of the story.

***All human beings have been given free moral agency and free choice.*** God has determined that everyone's going to have it. So, *this is why He designed the Ten Commandments the way that He did.* So let's come back here to Exodus 20 and let's just review them quickly. Also what you will find with the Ten Commandments and the commandments of God, which is this: You ***must*** choose. But in that choice:

- You have to choose between God and the world.
- You have to choose between righteousness and sin.
- You have to choose between obedience or disobedience.

So God makes it very clear. Exodus 20:2. Here's the first one. "I *am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The first thing He's telling you is this: *All human beings are in bondage to sin* and only God can bring you out of it. I think it's very interesting when you read Rev. 11 that the world is called, symbolized by Jerusalem, Egypt and Sodom. That's where the whole world is headed today. So God brings us out of Egypt.

Verse 3: "You shall have no other gods before Me." Now historically, you can go back and there are historical records that all the things concerning the plagues that happened in Egypt really did happen because the Egyptians recorded them. They are now able to decipher it from the hieroglyphics and the writings of the history that show that these plagues took place. So the only God that did that was the God Who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. And He says, 'No other god has done that.'

Then the next one is pretty clear. Again, what people would call a negative commandment. "You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them..." (vs 4-5).

All of these *nots* give you a choice. Are you going to choose God's way or are you going to choose your own way? And essentially when you choose your own way, whose way are you choosing? *Satan's way*, 'the god of this world'! Here's a positive New Testament command right here in the Ten Commandments. Verse 6: "But showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments." Put in your margin right there John 14:15. What did Jesus say? 'If you love Me, keep the commandments, namely My commandments.' That's the emphasis in the Greek.

Then: "'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain..." (v 7). Again, all of these commandments are designed—'thou shalt not'—give us an external perimeter beyond which we should not go. You have to choose which way you're going to go.

"Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy" (v 8). That's a positive command, and it starts out with *remember*, because the first thing that human beings do is what? *Forget!* Deut. 8 says when you come into the land and you eat and you are full, beware lest you forget the Lord your God. And what is the first thing that they do to forget the Lord their God? *The Sabbath Day*. The Sabbath becomes very important because for those who have the Spirit of God, that is the day that God fellowships with us—individually through private prayer and study; collectively when we come together. Because what we do here on the Sabbath day in studying the Word of God is a *spiritual experience*. As we read the words and hear the words, with the Spirit of God in us, this strengthens us; this gives us understanding.

Have you ever gone along and heard a sermon and all of a sudden something just becomes crystal clear to you—right? What is that? That is a *spiritual experience* with the Spirit of God and the Word of God and the one who is speaking with the Spirit of God to bring you the words of God, to add to your conversion and knowledge and depth. So the Sabbath is very important—the seventh day, not one in seven. It also reminds you that God created the heaven and earth, that is, *made* the heaven and earth for mankind, because the earth was already here before v 2 happened in Genesis 1.

Now here's a positive command with positive results, which almost every child growing up does *not* do. "Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you.... [Very few do that.] (Then He says): ...You shall not murder" (vs 12-13)—meaning that there are different steps leading up to full murder, as He explains in some of the statutes and judgments.

"You shall not commit adultery.... [Well, today it is: 'you shall commit adultery everywhere with any number of men or women you desire and you will become a hero.'] ...You shall not steal.... [A testimony to the world—all the locks, all the safes, all the bars.] ...You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.... [Everybody lies everywhere.] ...You shall not covet..." (vs 14-17).

All of these commandments involve *choices*, and all of these commandments are easy to understand—are they not? There's nothing hard to understand about it. A lot of people like to go to the Bible and use the excuse, 'Well, I can't understand the Bible,' and they go to these hard-to-understand places in the New Testament or Old Testament, and say, 'Well, I can't understand this.' Start with the simple. Start with the Ten Commandments. That's what God expects you to do, but you have to have a heart to follow along with it.

Let's come over here to Deuteronomy 5 and here's the second giving of the Ten Commandments, which we won't go through. But I want to cover something here that is very important for us to realize, which is this: Only those who enter into a relationship with God, and answering the call of God the Father through Jesus Christ, can have a change of heart. Here's an important verse for us to understand. The children of Israel couldn't stand to hear the voice of God anymore. 'Oh, we don't want to hear that lest we die. Moses, you speak to us and we'll do what you say.' What happened with that was, it gave them excuse to say, 'Well, the man Moses, who's he to tell us what to do?' Here's the reason why: because the true understanding of the commandments of God and the true choices that we need to make with the commandments of God come from a willing heart and attitude.

Deuteronomy 5:29: "'Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!'" ***That's what God wants!*** He also told them in several places, 'Do not add to and do not take away from any of the words of the law which I tell you.' What's one of the very first things that people do? *Add to, take away from!* 'Oh, well, I gotta agree with the principle of one day in seven. I'm righteous.' God says, 'You're taking away and you're adding to.'

Let's come to Deuteronomy 30 and it's interesting that the book of Deuteronomy contains an awful lot of what you might say are New Testament teachings. Now God says He's taken away *every excuse* for mankind even today, much more so than ever before in the history of the world. All the way through we see the choices that God gives us. Let's understand something about God:

- God is always true
- God cannot lie
- God's promises are sure
- His Word is as sure as the heavens and the earth

So, therefore, contrary to what men think, when we come to God, God is not on probation to us. The problem factor in the relationship between men and God are men and women. So, therefore, the Bible has in different commands 1200 *if* clauses relating to our relationship with God. So here's one of them.

Deuteronomy 30:10: "**If you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God...** [that's the sum of everything that's in the Bible. Because what you have in the printed form is what? *What God has spoken!* And if He spoke it, then it came from His voice—is that not true? Same way with what Jesus said.] ...If you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law... [Now Duncan gave a very good message on that yesterday in his presentation showing that *nowhere* in the Old Testament do you find anywhere that God secretly spoke to Moses oral traditions. He had it written down. Why was it written down? *So that you know!*] ...and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." That's what God wants. That's all that God has ever wanted. Now we have with the New Testament eternal life added to it.

"For this commandment which I command you today *is* not hidden from you, neither is it far off.... [It's not in heaven that you should say, 'Who's going to get us a rocket ship to go up to heaven to bring it down for us. We know it's up there on Mars someplace. Now if we'd just get it down here we'd do it.' *No!*] ...*It is* not in heaven *that you should* say, 'Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?' Neither *is* it beyond the sea *that you should* say... [You don't need to go to Tibet.] ...'Who shall go over the sea for us to bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?' But the word *is* very near you... [With all the Bibles today, that prophecy is not only applicable everywhere in the world, but also being fulfilled at a fantastic rate. It is near you.] ...in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may do it" (vs 11-14). Meaning it's in a language you can understand. Did anybody here today misunderstand the Ten Commandments? *No!*

"Behold, I have set before you this day... [Now that's for everyone everywhere in their lives, everyday. But when He gave it, he gave it to them. Moses wrote it, he read every word. They said, 'Yes, everything that God has said, we will do.' So they had a contract, which is called a *covenant*. A

covenant is a super-binding contract. So He said:] ...Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.... [We have to choose.] ...In that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it" (vs 15-16). Now that's a tremendous thing—isn't it? Isn't that what everyone wants? Everyone wants the blessings of God, but they don't want to obey to get them. Or they want to adjust the commandments of God to make them how they would like them. Every atheist who says, 'I have moral values, but I don't believe in God.' You can tell him, 'You're a thief! Because every moral value that you claim to have *came from God*, so how can you say there is no God'?

So God wants it to go well with you. He wants to bless you, but there is the way, and it is the *if*. We're seeing it happen to us in this nation today. There are people out there searching around, 'Where is God?' Whatever we can do to help them, we want to help them. That's why it's so important, as we talked about yesterday, in light of what happened with Tiger Woods. Frank Luntz, in his book, said, '***People do not hear what you say, they hear what they want to hear.***' The biggest obstruction to people listening to what you have to say, is what he called persona. Persona for us means Christ in us. But persona means your personality, your behavior, your attitude, and everything that you project yourself to be.

So now they have found out that the one man that a lot of people thought was clean and honest and good and a fantastic player of golf, and one that made hundreds of millions of dollars turned out to be someone who committed adultery on such a vast scale that you could almost say, he sounds like Solomon. So what happens? Endorsements are going, because he chose the wrong way.

And here's what happens if you choose the wrong way, v 17: "But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them... [What god did he worship? The god of sex, yes!] ...I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish... [You don't die right away, but you can destroy your life along the way—isn't that true? Happens to everyone who commits adultery, happens to everyone who gets involved in drugs, happens to everyone who's a liar, a cheat, and stealing—right? Then if you're a public person, look at our political parties in Washington, D.C., those who sit in seats of power. And they're political persona is so corrupt and they've chosen to do that and chosen to go that way. They are ensconced so deeply that they laugh at their

constituents and brag about spending your tax money as if there's no tomorrow.] ...you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it" (vs 17-18).

Now here's what God called to record. He wants everyone to know this is the simplest thing to understand: Is the Word of God binding upon me? *The answer is yes!* He gave you two witnesses that you can never mistake, v 19: "I call **heaven**... [Can anyone look up and see the sky? As Marlin talked about, looking at the stars. *Yes*, everyone can do that—right? There's no one anywhere in the world that cannot see that—correct? *Yes, indeed!*] ...and **earth**... [You stand on it. You can't mistake those two witnesses—can you? We'll see what Jesus said about that in just a minute.] ...I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live, That you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for **He is your life**... [And remember, every breath you take is because of the grace of God, whether you are saint or whether you are sinner.] ...so that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them" (vs 19-20).

Then he read all the law and he wrote it out. Then he called the priests and Levites and said, 'Here is the Word of God. I want you to put it in the side of the ark, that it will always be there.' The Ark of the Covenant that was going to be in the Holy of Holies, so that the true original word of God along with the two tablets of stone and along with the omer of manna and along with Aaron's rod that budded, would always be there *for a perpetual record* that the priests could go in and bring out that law of God to get the original to copy from, so that they would have copies to disburse to all the people of Israel.

God even gave a command to the king in Deut. 17 that 'if you set up a king, he is to make himself a copy of the law that the priests have, so that he would always fear Me and that he would not exalt himself above his brethren.' I think the only king that almost did that was David. He failed on two accounts.

1. With Bathsheba.
2. The numbering of Israel.

No king, even David, with all his wonderful Psalms and everything, completely fulfilled what God required.

Let's come to the New Testament. Let's see some things here that are important for us to understand. And again, when doing *Church at*

*Home*, I'm going to make it very clear to everyone, because most of them believe that the laws have been abolished, and that very teaching has caused the downfall of the United States of America and all Israel and the world.

Now notice, Jesus verifies what was said in the Old Testament. Let's come to Matthew 5. I'm also going to do a sermon entitled this way: *Can a Man Command God?* First answer would be, *of course not*. But how many do? If you say Jesus did away with the law, or if you say Paul did away with the law, you're violating what God said, 'You shall not add to or take away from'—correct? And even though it's still in the Bible, if you ignore those passages, you're still taking away from and then you add to it—right? That's their basis and justification for Sunday-keeping and holiday-keeping and all of that. I do not know how they can avoid these Scriptures.

Again a choice, again it is clear. There is no equivocation about it. Now, knowing how men will do, Jesus said this: Matthew 5:17 "Do not think... [Don't let it enter into your mind.] ...that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." That means to bring to the full, to bring the spiritual meaning of the laws and commandments of God for the New Covenant that those laws can be written in your heart and in your minds. 'Didn't come to abolish, but to fulfill.'

Now again, notice what He says. Notice the *two witnesses*, not in Jerusalem in sackcloth, but this: "For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away... [Is it still here? Can you see the heaven? *Yes!* Can you see the earth? *Yes*, you're walking on it and as a matter of fact, you were created from it, because dust you are and unto dust you'll return.' Right? *Yes!*] ...until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled" (v 18). Now that's pretty strong—isn't it? It makes you wonder, how did the Protestants ever convince people that Jesus did away with the Law? And Jesus, who was God manifested in the flesh, you think He's going to give up being law giver, because He's the one Who spoke the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai—was He not? *Yes, indeed!* You think that any man has any authority to abrogate any commandments of God? *No!* The only one who can modify and change what God has said is God Himself, which is what Jesus did to bring the spiritual applications of the laws and commandments of God *based upon love*.

Now notice, v 19. I don't know how they can get away from these Scriptures. "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever shall practice and

teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Now if you're least, that doesn't even mean you're going to be there, because this could also have the meaning *less than nothing*. You can't get anything less than nothing—right?

If you want to know how Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets we have an appendix to show you about that. We also have a chart comparing the Old Covenant and the New Covenant to show that in every instance of a change of application of the laws and commandments of God, what did Jesus do? He made them spiritual. Today we have a spiritual temple in heaven above.

- We come to the temple every day—right?
- We have a High Priest in heaven above—do we not? *Jesus Christ, yes!*
- We have a sacrifice greater than all the animal sacrifices and that was Jesus Christ—correct? *Yes!*
- We have a circumcision greater than the circumcision of the flesh—is that not correct? *Yes!*
- We have the circumcision of the heart and mind, so that we are yielded to God.

Now He also tells you something else, v 20: “For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” A very direct statement showing that what they practiced was not of the laws and commandments of God. Because their righteousness was their own manufactured traditions, which tells you directly, if you understand it correctly, *you shall not practice the traditions of the scribes and the Pharisees*, because those traditions, as He says in Mark 7, reject the commandment of God so that you may keep them.

Just like the covenant, let's come here to Matthew 22, just like the covenant that Moses gave to the children of Israel was based on love, so the New Covenant is also based on love, but with the added ingredient to change the heart. Because the carnal children of Israel at Mount Sinai God said they didn't have the heart that they would obey. They didn't have the heart that they would love, even though they were given the great commandment, *love God*. Even though they were told to love God, the way that you could really love God is with His Spirit and being converted. And you grow in grace and knowledge and love and hope and joy and faith. That's what He wants for us today, brethren. All of these things, just like in the Old Covenant, likewise with the New Covenant, all of these things are *choices*. What are we going to do today? What am I going to do today? ***Everything you do is a choice.*** Sometimes it an impulsive thing where you may sin or lose your temper or something

like that, but it's still a choice, because you didn't control yourself—right?

- You choose to control yourself
- You choose to love
- You choose to obey
- You choose to follow God

So He said here after asked which was the great law and the commandment.

Matthew 22:37: “And Jesus said to him... [Now notice how with the Spirit of God this can have great meaning for us.] ...‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’” So you're living in this life is a choice of being completely wholehearted and devoted to God—isn't that right? Does this leave anything out? That's why we can't reserve in our minds a little place for a little sin. We're to have what? Our minds cleansed with the washing of the water of the word, daily

- through prayer
- through Bible study
- through living
- through choosing God's way
- through obeying the voice of the Lord your God

He says, “This is the first and greatest commandment; And the second one is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (vs 38-39). So this is what God wants us to do.

Let's come to John 15 and let's see how Christ wants us—with His Spirit, with His laws, with His commandments written in our hearts and in our minds, with our carnal minds circumcised through the operation of baptism and the Holy Spirit—to be. How our righteousness then can exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, and that we can be truly pleasing to God and we can. John says that we please God ***when we love Him and keep His commandments.*** Don't you think as God looks down on the earth and He has His direct connection with us, with His Holy Spirit, called *Christ in us* and the begetting of the Father, don't you think He's delighted when His people love Him, love each other, and keep His commandments? *Yes, indeed!* That's well pleasing to God and this is what we are to do.

Now let's see how Jesus expressed it here: John 15:7. Notice again, that little two letter word ***if***. “***If*** you dwell in Me... [You're living in Christ. Remember, that's the ultimate goal that Jesus in His final prayer said that they may ***all*** be one in Us.] ...If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you... [Notice what it takes.

- this is why prayer
- this is why study

• this is why learning the Word of God  
...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you by My disciples.... [Now notice the comparison here in the next verse] ...As the Father has loved Me... [Can there be any more intense or perfect love than between God the Father and Jesus Christ? *Absolutely not!*] ...As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you, **live** [dwell] **in My love**.... [How? With all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your being.] (another *if*): ...If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love" (vs 7-10).

That's why John wrote in 1-John 5:2-3, 'For this is the love of God that we love the children of God and keep His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome. This is the love of God.' There you go.

"No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, **if** you do whatever I command you" (vs 13-14). Isn't that something?

- You are a friend of God.
- God the Father has called you;
- God the Father loves you.
- Christ loves you and died for you.

And the Father raised Him from the dead that you and me and all those that God has called down through the ages can have eternal life. But always remember the little two-letter word *if*—and you must choose.

So, brethren, this is why God made His laws the way that He did, and this is why the New Covenant is framed in the way that it is, because God wants us to develop His character and His love and His Truth, because ***He has a mighty fantastic future for us as the spiritual sons and daughters of God to live and rule and reign with Christ.*** God is going to use *His people* to solve the problems of this world.

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 20:2-17
- 2) Deuteronomy 5:29
- 3) Deuteronomy 30:10-20
- 4) Matthew 5:17-20
- 5) Matthew 22:37-39
- 6) John 15:7-10,13-14

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 11
- John 14:15
- Deuteronomy 8
- Genesis 1:2

- Deuteronomy 17
- Mark 7
- 1-John 5:2-3

#### Also referenced: Books:

*What Americans Really Want...Really* by Frank Luntz

FRC:lp  
Transcribed 1-21-10  
Formatted: bo—1-24-10