

END-TIMES ISSUES



#69 Commandment #4 – Does it apply to us?

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THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
Exodus 20:8 (BSB)

THE SABBATH? ISN'T THAT FOR JEWS!

IF I CAN'T FIND THE COMMAND REPEATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

THEN IT DOESN'T APPLY TO ME!

⇒ **The issue:**

- The Fourth Commandment *isn't* re-quoted in the New Testament. *But does that mean it doesn't have a New Testament application?*
- In reality, none of the Commandments related to God (Commandments #1 through #4) are re-quoted in the New Testament! So if we applied that argument to the *Fourth* Commandment, we are in danger of "cancelling" *all* of our obligations related to God!

How important are the Ten Commandments?

⇒ They were **important enough that God himself spoke them to the people.** And he wrote them on two stone tablets.

- It was not Moses who spoke them or wrote them down.

The LORD spoke these commandments in a loud voice to your whole assembly out of the fire, the cloud, and the deep darkness on the mountain; **He added nothing more.** And **He wrote them on two tablets of stone** and gave them to me.

Deuteronomy 5:22 (BSB)

⇒ **Today, we don't have those stone tablets; but we do have a written record of the commandments that were written on them.**

- They are quoted in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.
- In Leviticus 19, they are presented in a different form (and not in the exact same sequence) – as *examples* of how they are to be applied to life.

Why don't we have those stone tablets? Where did they go?

⇒ They were stored in a special chest, called the "**ark of the covenant.**"

- They were still present in this chest, when it was placed in the Most Holy Place in the temple (1 Kings 8:9). During Josiah's reign (2 Chronicles 35:3), this chest was apparently *returned* to the temple – which could suggest that the priests had removed it, perhaps because of apostasy (when the temple was profaned).
- When Israel totally forsook the covenant that God had made with them, God destroyed both the nation and the temple. The chest and its contents "disappeared" – destroyed? taken by Babylon? removed and hidden by the priests? buried? Nobody knows.
- There is no evidence that the chest or its contents still exist anywhere. Or that they *don't* exist. All suggestions are speculation.
- Jeremiah speaks of a *future* day, when the nation will return to God. At that glorious time, nobody will even think about the ark... and we are told that *another ark will not be made* (Jeremiah 3:14-18).

HOW OFTEN ARE THESE COMMANDS QUOTED IN THE REST OF SCRIPTURE – i.e., after the time of Moses?

After all, they were so important, that **God himself communicated them** (instead of letting Moses do so).

We should give this information some consideration, *before* we make the claim that "not being mentioned in the New Testament" somehow *proves* that we don't need to obey the Fourth Commandment!

⇒ **Here is what we will find out:**

- As we already know, the Ten Commandments can be placed into *two* categories: those expressing love for *God*, and those expressing love for *neighbor*.
- If we consider all of the commandments as representing *categories* of commands, instructions and examples, then all can be found in both Testaments.
- If we are looking for exact quotes, then NO "love for God" command is repeated in *either* testament; and all "love for neighbor" commands are repeated only in the New Testament!

COMMANDMENT #1

You shall have no other gods before Me.
Exodus 20:3 (BSB)

⇒ **The prophets and apostles often refer to our obligation to worship only the true God. But they don't quote this first commandment.**

- The Old Testament** has a few passages that resemble a *summary* of the First Commandment (possibly combined with the Second).

For the LORD had made a covenant with the Israelites and commanded them, "Do not worship other gods or bow down to them; do not serve them or sacrifice to them."

2 Kings 17:35 (BSB)

"Do not worship other gods" is repeated *twice* more in the context (vs. 36-40), as well as several of the "positive" obligations implied by this commandment.

(Two more O.T. passages – not quite a quote of the First Commandment.)

There must be no strange god among you,
nor shall you bow to a foreign god.

Psalms 81:9 (BSB)

Do not follow other gods to serve and worship
them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the
works of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.

Jeremiah 25:6 (BSB)

- **The New Testament** contains no quote of this commandment, although it frequently focuses on the *concept* that this commandment represents.

"... God is One and there is no other but Him, ..."

Mark 12:32b (BSB)

We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world,
and that there is no God but one.

1 Corinthians 8:4b (BSB)

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COMMANDMENT #2

You shall not make for yourself an idol
[or "carved image"] ... You shall not
bow down to them or worship them; ...

Exodus 20:4a, 5a (BSB)

⇒ **The prophets and apostles often speak against making "images" (or representations) of the true God, or of any false god. But they don't quote this second commandment.**

- **The Old Testament** has some passages that focus on worship or "bowing down" to an image. Some of these may resemble a *summary* of the second commandment.

✓ This is close to a quote; but it's *not* after the time of Moses.

"Do not make any idols."

Exodus 34:17 (NIV)

✓ Jeremiah 32:18 describes God in terms of loving and punishing, as described in this commandment (vs. 5b-6).

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- **The New Testament** contains no quote of this commandment, although it frequently focuses on the *concept* that this commandment represents – a *truthful* expression of who God is.

COMMANDMENT #3

You shall not take the name of the LORD
your God in vain [or "misuse" it], ...

Exodus 20:7a (BSB)

⇒ **The prophets and apostles often mention God's name and/or its significance (i.e., "who God is"). But *neither* quotes this third commandment.**

- **The Old Testament** has a passage that comes as close as any to expressing this commandment. It is not a command, but a description of what some of God's enemies were doing.

Your enemies take Your name in vain.

Psalms 139:20b (BSB)

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COMMANDMENT #4

Remember the Sabbath
day by keeping it holy.

Exodus 20:8 (BSB)

⇒ **The prophets and apostles often refer to our obligation to devote time to God. The Old Testament and Jesus talk about the Sabbath quite often. But they don't quote this fourth commandment.**

- **The Old Testament** has *much* to say about the Sabbath – commands, descriptions, examples, etc. But the only direct commands (parallel to the Exodus 20:8 passage) are found in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy – during the time of Moses.

"Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths.'"

Exodus 31:13a (NIV); see also vs. 14, 16.

✓ This is also seen in Leviticus 19:3, 30 (applications of the Ten Commandments); Leviticus 26:2 (a command); and Deuteronomy 5:12, 15 (a repeat of the Ten Commandments).

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- **The New Testament** contains no quote of this commandment, although it frequently focuses on the *concept* that this commandment represents: *God deserves our attention!*
 - ✓ Jesus talks about the Sabbath quite often. We learn a lot about its significance from Jesus.
 - ✓ The book of Acts mentions the Sabbath several times, such as: "They went [somewhere] on the Sabbath."
 - ✓ In the rest of the New Testament, it is only mentioned twice:
 - ① Don't let people who are preoccupied with ceremonial practices judge you with regard to a Sabbath day.
 - ② A reference to the eternal "sabbath rest" that God has for his people.

Therefore let no one judge you ... with regard to ... a Sabbath.

Colossians 2:16 (BSB)

Paul described such things as "shadows" of a greater reality.

There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

Hebrews 4:9 (BSB); see chapters 3-4.

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COMMANDMENT #5

Honor your father and
mother, ...

Exodus 20:12a (BSB)

⇒ **The prophets and apostles often refer to our obligation to honor parents – as well as *all* authority. They also mention the implied obligations that authority has toward those under it.**

- **The Old Testament** *never* quotes this command after the time of Moses. Leviticus 19 expresses this command in a similar way.

Each of you must respect his mother and father, ...

Leviticus 19:3a (BSB)

- **The New Testament**, in contrast, contains *several* quotes of this commandment, in addition to its frequent focus on the *concepts* that this commandment represents.

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- ✓ Jesus, to the religious rulers who were violating this command:

For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'

Matthew 15:4 (BSB); parallel passage: Mark 7:10.

- ✓ Jesus, when answering the rich young ruler, who asked about eternal life:

"You know the commandments: '... honor your father and mother.' "

Mark 10:19 (BSB); parallel passages: Matthew 19:19; Luke 18:20.

- ✓ Paul, teaching children their responsibility toward their parents:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (which is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on the earth."

Ephesians 6:1-3 (BSB)

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COMMANDMENT #6

You shall not murder.

Exodus 20:13 (BSB)

- ⇒ The prophets and apostles often refer to our obligation to **NOT destroy another person – whether physically, or in any other way (such as anger or attack of their reputation). They also mention the implied obligation to build-up (encourage, etc.) other people.**

- **The Old Testament** *never* quotes this command after the time of Moses. The parallel concept in Leviticus 19 focuses on *hatred*.

You must not harbor hatred against your brother in your heart.

Leviticus 19:17a (BSB)

- **The New Testament**, in contrast, contains *several* quotes of this commandment, in addition to its frequent focus on the *concepts* that this commandment represents.

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- ✓ Jesus, during the "Sermon on the Mount," correcting a misconception:

"You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Do not murder' ... "

Matthew 5:21a (BSB)

- ✓ Jesus, when answering the rich young ruler, who asked about eternal life:

"You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, ...' "

Mark 10:19 (BSB); parallel passages: Matthew 19:18; Luke 18:20.

- ✓ Paul, describing the nature of "love your neighbor as yourself":

The commandments ... "Do not murder," [and several others] are summed up in this one decree: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Romans 13:9 (BSB)

- ✓ James, describing the nature of "breaking the law":

For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder."

James 2:11 (BSB)

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COMMANDMENT #7

You shall not commit adultery.

Exodus 20:14 (BSB)

- ⇒ The prophets and apostles often refer to our obligation to **NOT commit any type of sexual sin – whether physically, or in any other way (such as sexual lust). They also mention the obligation to promote sexual purity (implied by this command), the nature of marriage, etc.**

- **The Old Testament** *never* quotes this command after the time of Moses. The book of Leviticus warns against many of the ways that people violate this commandment (especially ch. 18).

- **The New Testament**, in contrast, contains *several* quotes of this commandment, in addition to its frequent focus on the *concepts* that this commandment represents.

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- ✓ Jesus, during the "Sermon on the Mount," correcting a misconception:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' "

Matthew 5:27 (BSB)

- ✓ Jesus, when answering the rich young ruler, who asked about eternal life:

"You know the commandments: ... 'do not commit adultery, ...' "

Mark 10:19 (BSB); parallel passages: Matthew 19:18; Luke 18:20.

- ✓ Paul, describing the nature of "love your neighbor as yourself":

The commandments "Do not commit adultery," [and several others] are summed up in this one decree: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Romans 13:9 (BSB)

- ✓ James, describing the nature of "breaking the law":

For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder."

James 2:11 (BSB)

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COMMANDMENT #8

You shall not steal.

Exodus 20:15 (BSB)

- ⇒ The prophets and apostles often refer to our obligation to **NOT take away from our neighbor – whether directly, or indirectly. They also mention the implied obligation to use our own abilities to build-up or help others.**

- **The Old Testament** *never* quotes this command after the time of Moses. The command, as described in Leviticus, is basically the same as in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

- **The New Testament**, in contrast, contains quotes of this commandment, in addition to its frequent focus on the *concepts* that this commandment represents.

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- ✓ Jesus, when answering the rich young ruler, who asked about eternal life:

"You know the commandments: '... do not steal,' ... "
Mark 10:19 (BSB); parallel passages: Matthew 19:18; Luke 18:20.

- ✓ Paul, describing the nature of "love your neighbor as yourself":
The commandments... "Do not steal," [and several others] are summed up in this one decree: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Romans 13:9 (BSB)

- ✓ This is similar, but not an exact quote. "Stop stealing!"

Let him who stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, producing with his hands something that is good, that he may have something to give to him who has need.

Eph 4:28 (WEB)

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COMMANDMENT #9

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
Exodus 20:16 (BSB)

- ⇒ The prophets and apostles often refer to our obligation to **NOT bear false witness (or testimony) against others – whether in a court of law (false testimony) or on a personal level (lying).** They also mention the implied obligation to speak the truth.

- The **Old Testament** never quotes this command after the time of Moses. Exodus and Deuteronomy use the phrase "false witness"; Leviticus uses the word "lie."

You must not lie or deceive one another.
Leviticus 19:11b (BSB)

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- The **New Testament**, in contrast, contains quotes of this commandment, in addition to its frequent focus on the *concepts* that this commandment represents.

- ✓ Jesus, when answering the rich young ruler, who asked about eternal life:

"You know the commandments: '... do not bear false witness,' ... "
Mark 10:19 (BSB); parallel passages: Matthew 19:18; Luke 18:20.

- ✓ Paul, when instructing the Corinthians on how to live in Christ:

Do not lie to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Colossians 3:9-10 (BSB)

(This is more like the Leviticus 19:11 passage.)

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COMMANDMENT #10

You shall not covet ...
Exodus 20:17a (BSB)

- ⇒ The prophets and apostles often refer to our obligation to **NOT crave anything that belongs to someone else, or that is sinful. Instead, we should desire what is good for our "neighbor."**

- The **Old Testament** never quotes this command after the time of Moses. It is repeated once in Deuteronomy.

You must burn up the images of their gods; do not covet the silver and gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it; for it is detestable to the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 7:25 (BSB)

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- The **New Testament**, in contrast, quotes this commandment twice, in addition to its frequent focus on the *concepts* that this commandment represents.

- ✓ Paul, describing the horribleness of sin:

For I would not have been aware of coveting if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing its opportunity through the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire.

Romans 7:7b-8a (BSB)

- ✓ Paul, describing the nature of "love your neighbor as yourself":

The commandments... "Do not covet," [and several others] are summed up in this one decree: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Romans 13:9 (BSB)

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Some observations about: Love for God and neighbor.

- ⇒ God did **not** "replace" the Ten Commandments with the two commands about love for God and neighbor.

- Some people claim that the commandments were cancelled and that today, our obligation is to simply "love" other people. (Often, it's an undefined concept of "love.")

BUT DOESN'T THE NEW TESTAMENT REPLACE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WITH THE COMMAND TO LOVE?

- This opinion is clearly false. The commands about love for God and neighbor came from the **Old Testament**! The "love" found in Scripture is not the *opposite* of a willingness to obey God!

ACTUALLY, THE COMMAND TO LOVE IS AN OLD TESTAMENT COMMAND THAT THE NEW TESTAMENT REPEATS!

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• **LOVE for God is required in both Old and New Testaments.**

And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (BSB)

Jesus declared, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' "

Matthew 22:37 (BSB)

• **LOVE for neighbor is required in both Old and New Testaments.**
(This includes foreigners, who at times, might also be enemies.)

... love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

You must treat the foreigner living among you as native-born and love him as yourself, ...

Leviticus 19:18b, 34a (BSB)

"... 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

Matthew 22:39b (BSB)

(Jesus also applied this to foreigners – Luke 10:30-37)

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⇒ **There is a connection between the "love for God" and the "love for neighbor" commands.**

- **Commandment 5:** This command is also used to describe one's attitude toward God, our "Father" – Malachi 1:6.
- **Commandment 7:** Many parallels are given between this commandment and violation of the First Commandment – which is described as "spiritual adultery (or prostitution)" – Exodus 34:16; Ezekiel 16 and 23; James 4:4; etc.
- **Commandment 8:** If we do not give God what he deserves from us, it is comparable to "robbing" God – Malachi 3:8.
- **Commandment 9:** Any misrepresentation of who God is (= a false "image" of God, violating the Second Commandment) is also described as lying. (False prophets often do this.)
- **Commandment 10:** We are to desire nothing *more than* we desire God – or it would be a violation of the First Commandment.

⇒ **If we don't love people, we don't love God** – 1 John 4:12, 20-21.

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⇒ **A summary:**

"Love for God"
Four
Commandments

NOT QUOTED after Moses' lifetime, in the Old Testament; **NOT QUOTED** in the New Testament.

Each represents a *category* of commands, instructions, etc.

Therefore, they are *all* still relevant.

"Love for Neighbor"
Six
Commandments

NOT QUOTED after Moses' lifetime, in the Old Testament; **QUOTED** in the New Testament.

Each represents a *category* of commands, instructions, etc.

Therefore, they are *all* still relevant.

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What can we conclude?

⇒ **About paying attention to Scripture:**

- We cannot judge the value of a Scripture passage, by the number of times it is repeated in *other* passages!
- God only needs to say something *once*, in order for it to be worthy of acceptance! (The *context* of what he says will determine *how* we accept it.)
- Fine sounding arguments are not necessarily a valid guide for interpreting Scripture. (The argument we examined, about the Fourth Commandment, illustrates this.)

⇒ **About the Fourth Commandment:**

- If we recognize that *all* the commandments represent *categories* of commands, teachings and examples, we will be able to see that the Fourth Commandment applies even in the New Testament era. There may be differences, since it involves a *new* covenant; but the moral issues still apply.

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Our MISSION!

❖ **The focus of the Fourth Commandment is on giving time to God... and how it is to be done.**

⇒ **How should we respond?**

↳ Based on the principle that all the commandments represent categories of commands, instructions and examples ...

↳ **Look** for New Testament commands, instructions and examples that would be related to this commandment.

↳ **Consider** ways that these passages might apply to *you*, when *you* time give to God. (Keep in mind the *context* of the passages, because that will influence *how* they apply.)

Most of the Bible is about *applying* the Ten Commandment principles, not just *repeating* them.

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Credits

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