

Three New Commands You Must Not Neglect

Jim Elliff

Christ instituted new laws. Can He do that? Yes, of course. He has every right to do so. After all, He has been “given all authority in heaven and on earth” (Mt. 28:18).

At times Christ interpreted old commands in a fresh way. At other times He carried forward exact commands previously given to Jews under the Old Covenant. But He also made new laws appropriate for the New Testament people of God. And all commands from Him are non-negotiable for believers.

**NEW
Laws?**

Matthew 28:18-20 contains three new commands from Jesus. Are you obeying them?

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (28:18-20).

What does He demand that we do?

1. Christ commands His followers to make disciples of all nations.

The Old Covenant people were to be an object lesson to the nations, but the command to witness to the nations is peculiar to these last days—the time beginning with Christ and ending at His second coming.

Are you making disciples of the nations? The word “disciple” means follower. A person may be a student of Christ, with some genuine interest, and still not be a follower of the Master. Our job is to introduce people to the One who demands their future, their dreams, their possessions, their all.

2. Christ commands that we baptize all disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Again, this is an entirely new command of Christ, not a different application of a command given through Moses. Though there were baptisms of a type in the Old Covenant, none are the same as Christ is commanding here. Christ, the law-giver, has issued a command peculiar to our age. This baptism is a symbolic drama of the new believer’s union with Christ and cleansing from sin.

The word “baptize” means “immerse.” Almost all lexicons state this. Henry Meecham, noted Greek scholar, says, “Nowhere does the Bible show the sprinkling or pouring of water upon a person for baptism. There are seven New Testament passages containing the word ‘pour,’ but none of them refer to baptism. ‘Baptizo’ is used 127 times and is never once translated ‘sprinkling’ or ‘pouring.’” Philip Schaff, lauded Presbyterian church historian, says, “Immersion, and not sprinkling, was unquestionably the original, normal form of baptism. Immersion shows the very meaning of the Greek word ‘baptize.’”

The question is: Are you, as a church under the authority of Christ, baptizing new disciples of Christ?

3. Christ commands that new followers of Christ be taught to observe all that Christ has commanded.

Here, again, we find an entirely new law. It could not have been done in the Old Testament, for Christ had not stated His laws for the kingdom at that point. I know that Christ is part of the Trinity and that he had something to do with everything God said in the Old Testament. But here the emphasis is on Christ and His authority. “All authority is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go *therefore* . . .” In other words, His commands flow from His authority in this passage and could hardly be read any other way.

When Christ gave His Sermon on the Mount, he ended with this pointed application:

But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” (Mt. 7:24-27)

Are you obeying these new commands of Christ?

If it seems to be a difficult task, don’t worry, for Christ Himself will help you carry out what He commands. He promised His presence to all true followers: “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” And that’s a promise that is brand new as well!