

# ***IT IS SETTLED!***

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

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## Generic and Specific Laws

In the past two articles, examples have been given of commands to: 1-an individual; 2-the first two people; 3-a nation. The individual was Naaman, a leper. God commanded, "**Go and dip 7 times in the Jordan River.**" Naaman was not cleansed of leprosy until he obeyed. The first two people, Adam and Eve, were commanded by God to **not** eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As long as they obeyed and did not eat of that tree, they were free from sin. But, the moment they ate of the fruit of that tree, they died spiritually, having become disobedient to God. God banished them from the Garden, so they could not eat of the tree of life and live forever. Thus, physical death comes to all, from that time to this present day. The third example was the nation of Israel. God commanded them to march around Jericho one time a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day, and they would be given the city. Question: when were they given the city?

What lesson must we learn from these examples? The lesson is that, when God gave a specific command, man had no choice (if he desired to be obedient to God) but to obey the command exactly as God stated it. There are so many examples of this principle in God's Word that it would not be possible to note them all. In the weeks to come, more of them may be studied in this column. Today, we look at the example of Noah. God told Noah, a righteous man in a wicked world, to build an ark; build it out of gopher wood; make it 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, 30 cubits high, with three stories, one window, and one door. Which of these commands could Noah have rejected, and been obedient to God? The answer is **none!** When God specified the materials and dimensions of the ark, Noah had no choice in the matter, but to obey.

God has given man two **types** of laws: generic and specific. Mark 16:15,16 shows clearly both types. First, look at this *command*: "*Go ye into all the world.*" The command is to go; the method of going is not specified. It could be on foot, by ship, by horseback, etc. So, the method of going is generic. They were told what to preach - the gospel. That is specific; there could be, and can be today, no variations. Jesus' command to those who hear the preaching of the gospel and desire salvation is: "*He that **believeth** and **is baptized** shall be saved.*" There is no variance in Jesus' command. It is specific.

Recently, a letter from a reader was received. Reference was made to the equation used in a previous article. We appreciate so much his writing and his concern for what was stated. The equation for salvation, "Belief(1)+baptism(1)=salvation," correctly mirrors Jesus' command in Mark 16:15,16. Since the equation is a true statement, showing the simplicity of Jesus' command, we can conclude that any variation from the equation (such as, "He that believes and is **not** baptized shall be saved") is false. The writer of the letter correctly concluded from the equation given in the previous article the truth that was intended. In a second letter from him, he says, "By looking at both sides of this equation you have supplied,

one comes to the result that, if you believe and are baptized, then you have salvation, but if you believe and are not baptized, then you have damnation." We appreciate his conclusion, for that is exactly what God's Word teaches! Next week, we'll study some examples of this from God's Word. Please keep studying your Bible! Please keep reading!