

The “Shall Nots” of Scripture

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Days of Praise

The “Shall Nots” of Scripture

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“The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.” (Psalm 34:10)

Many worldly minded people tend to resent the Bible as a book of prohibitions, or “*thou shalt not*”s, as in the Ten Commandments. The fact is, however, that many of God’s most precious promises use the phrase “*shall not*” in a diametrically opposite way, not listing prohibitions but provisions!

As a beautiful example, there is the opening verse of the much-loved 23rd Psalm—“The LORD is my shepherd; I *shall not* want.” Or, as in the words of our text, “they that seek the LORD *shall not* want any good thing.”

There is the great promise of salvation and everlasting life: “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and *shall not* come into condemnation” (John 5:24). Following salvation, there is the promise of divine guidance. “He that followeth me *shall not* walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). With such assurances, we can rejoice with the psalmist: “The LORD...is at my right hand, I *shall not* be moved;...Though he fall, he *shall not* be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand” (Psalm 16:8; 37:24). No matter how great the trial, the Lord will not leave us. “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they *shall not* overflow thee” (Isaiah 43:2).

God’s Word and God’s purposes can never fail. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words *shall not* pass away” (Matthew 24:35). “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell *shall not* prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). “Sin *shall not* have dominion over you” (Romans 6:14).

We should never resent God’s “negative” commands, for His gracious “*shall not*” promises are far greater! HMM

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