

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

September 1, 2006

Volume 5 Number 17

The Two Tables of Stone

After God spoke to Moses upon Mount Sinai, He wrote upon two tables, or tablets, of stone,” and gave them to him:

18 And he gave to Moses, when he had made an end of speaking with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God. -Exodus 31

They were called “two tables of testimony” because they provided a testimony, or witness, of the words that Yahweh, the God of Israel, had spoken to Moses. Written on both sides, each table was engraved with the “writing of God:”

15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written.

16 And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, engraven upon the tables. -Exodus 32

While Moses was receiving the ten commandments, the people of Israel were already breaking them by worshipping another god. Just as Israel broke Yahweh’s commandments, Moses also broke the two stone tables. Nevertheless, Yahweh showed His love for us by writing them again:

12 And Yahweh spoke unto you out of the midst of the fire: you heard the voice of the words, but saw no likeness; only *you heard* a voice.

13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. -Deuteronomy 4

Why did Yahweh write the ten commandments upon *two* tables? Would the words have been too many to write upon one table? Might the required size of one stone have been too large for Moses to carry? Or could there be another reason?

Let us look more carefully at the ten commandments. (They are presented in detail in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.) The first three concern our relationship with Yahweh. They are summarized as follows:

- I. You shall have no other gods before me.
- II. You shall not make or bow down to any graven image or likeness of anything.
- III. You shall not take the name of Yahweh in vain.

The Hebrew word which is translated as “before” is פָּנִים (paniyim), which also means “face” or “presence.” Therefore, we must not have any other “god” in His presence. (Since He is present everywhere, Yahweh is telling us that He *must* be our *only* God.) The Hebrew word שָׁוֵא (shav’) is translated as “vain.” It means “empty” or “worthless.” In other words, we must not make Yahweh’s name without meaning. An example might be the use of imprecise words, such as titles, as His name. The use of titles as names can cause confusion over which “god” we are addressing.

Yahweh summarized His commandments concerning our relationship with Him into one Great Commandment. During an exchange with a lawyer of the Pharisees, Yahshua (Jesus) explained:

37 Yahshua said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment. -Matthew 22

Our love for Him must be total and complete:

4 Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our God *is* one Yahweh:

5 And you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. -Deuteronomy 6

If we “hear” Yahweh, then we will obey Him. The same Hebrew word, שָׁמַע (shama), means both “to hear” and “to obey.” If we hear Him, we will obey Him and we will love Him.

Yahshua explained that there is also a Second Great Commandment. It is similar to the first because it is also about love. However, it concerns our relationships with others. We must love them in the way that we love ourselves:

39 And the second *is* like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. -Matthew 22

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

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The Second Great Commandment is detailed in the last seven of the ten commandments:

- IV. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- V. Honor your father and mother.
- VI. You shall not kill.
- VII. You shall not commit adultery.
- VIII. You shall not steal.
- IX. You shall not witness falsely against your neighbor.
- X. You shall not covet any thing that *is* your neighbor's.

If we keep the First Great Commandment, we will obey Yahweh and keep the others:

- 12 And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul,
- 13 To keep the commandments of Yahweh, and his statutes, which I command you this day for your good? -Deuteronomy 10

The two Great Commandments are the basis for the ten commandments, which were written on the two stone tables, or tablets. If we were to summarize the contents of each of the two stone tables it would be: 1. Love Yahweh; and 2. Love others, as well as ourselves. The ten commandments are not a list of "rules" imposed upon us by a merciless God. They are an expression of His love for us. They can actually be summed up in one word: LOVE.

Unless we love, we cannot even know God, because God *is* LOVE. John explains:

- 7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.
- 8 He that loves not knows not God; for God is love. -1 John 4

While we are commanded to "love," many of us do not even know what love is. The Greek word used to describe the love of Yahweh is "agape." This is the kind of love He gives us and it is the kind that He wants us to give to Him and to others. It is infinitely unselfish and unconditional affection. It is distinguished from other

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Greek words for love, which also include "eros," as romantic or sensual love, "phileo," as the love given to a friend, and "storge," as the love given to one's family. Each of these very different feelings is applied to one English word, "love."

When our gestures of love are inappropriately offered or received they lead to confusion. For example, when we bow to an image, we are offering an inappropriate gesture of love that belongs only to Yahweh. This confusion was demonstrated by the people of Judah as they worshipped the Queen of Heaven:

- 18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.
- 19 Do they provoke me to anger? says Yahweh: *do they not provoke themselves* to the confusion of their own faces? -Jeremiah 7

We must put the words of Yahweh in our hearts, teach them to our children, and dwell upon them continually:

- 6 And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart:
- 7 And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. -Deuteronomy 6

With total love for Yahweh and the knowledge that He alone is God, there will be no room to accept the belief that the antichrist "Beast" is also God. We will not allow his name, or the number representing his name, into our minds (foreheads). Neither will we perform the works of worship that he requires of his disciples:

- 16 And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:
- 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. -Revelation 13

Instead, if we know that Yahweh is the one God and we love Him completely (see Deuteronomy 6:4-7), we will remember His name and perform His commandments:

- 8 And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. -Deuteronomy 6

Even though we may have been deceived into sharing our love for Yahweh with other gods, He invites us back to Him:

- 29 But if from there you shall seek Yahweh your God, you shall find *him*, if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. -Deuteronomy 4

The love of God does not change. Yahweh commanded us to love Him exclusively and to show His love to others. His love for us is written in two tables of stone.