

The Two Sides of the Fourth Commandment

God's Character Revealed



Exodus Chapter 20
Creator



Deuteronomy Chapter 5
Redeemer

For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
The Exodus: God’s First Covenant.....	3
The First Table of Stone.....	6
The Second Table of Stone.....	8
God’s Law Expressed.....	10
The Two Fourth Commandments.....	14
Conclusion.....	15

Acknowledgements

The idea that the tables of stones were written on both side as stated in Exo. 32:15 was from the book “The Pathway Back to the Throne of God” by Sarah Peck.

The idea that God’s Intent in Exodus after He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt was to lead them and bring them into heaven itself (Psalm 78:54) was from 1897 General Conference Bulletin, Sermons by A. T. Jones.

The idea of the law of God to one born again is a positive affirmation that comes from “The Law of Life” by E. J. Waggoner

This treatise expands on these three thoughts.

Note1: In Exo. 32:1-14, the people had no problem when they were told/invited by Aaron: “tomorrow to come to worship the golden calf; to eat, drink and play.”

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Introduction

The purpose of this treatise is to clear up many misconceptions about the Sabbath, its significance, and specifically what the Sabbath means and is to every believer. This treatise will not address any false doctrines, such as reasons for keeping Sunday, but will state the truth about the Sabbath from the Scriptures alone. For many people do not know that the Ten Commandment law spoken by God incorporates both redemption and salvation.

The evidence will be presented in such a manner that even a child can understand. This treatise is not a complete or exhaustive presentation regarding the topics presented. Each person must make the effort to study for himself, prove all things for himself, hold fast that which is good, and grow in grace. Please consider prayerfully the following thoughts.

The Exodus: God's First Covenant

The children of Israel had been delivered from the bondage of the Egypt by God through a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm (Exodus Chapters 1-14). The people had witnessed great temptations which their eyes saw; the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the stretched-out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought them out of Egypt (Deuteronomy 7:19). In these events, God fulfilled his promise which He made to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-21.

Psalm 78:52 The Lord guided them in the wilderness like a flock. 53 And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. 54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain Sinai/Zion.

Exo. 19:3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 **Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and**

keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 **And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.** These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

As Israel approached the promise land, before entering the promise land, God spoke his covenant to the people. Verses 5 and 6 define the covenant, and God's purpose for bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt. In His covenant, the people of Israel were to be priests of God. The blessings of the covenant were conditional upon man's obedience to terms of the covenant (keeping his commandments). Then the Lord God made an incredible, spectacular, joyous promise:

Exo. 19:9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. 10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 **And be ready against the third day:** for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai... 15 And he (Moses) said unto the people, **Be ready against the third day:** come not at your wives.

The Lord, the God of the universe was to come down from heaven to speak with them. A. T. Jones in his 1897 General Conference sermons presented the proposition that from the theme of Exodus, God originally intended to lead the people to heaven itself. The basis for this statement was Psalm 78:54. The reader can study this thought further on his own. Regardless, whether God was leading the people to an earthly or heavenly destination, joy should have filled the people's hearts. God instructed the people what they needed to do to be prepared to meet Him.

Exo. 19:19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of

the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. 23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Exo. 19:22 (YLT) and also the priests who are coming nigh unto Jehovah do sanctify themselves, lest Jehovah break forth on them.'

However in Exo. 19:20, when God came down and in verse 22 asked that the priests whom had sanctified themselves come up with Moses into the mountain, not one person in Israel had sanctified themselves, except Moses, Aaron and Joshua (possibly Miriam). Remember in Exo 19:6, that all of Israel were to be a kingdom of priests. Therefore, God's call to come up into the mountain in verse 22 was for all of Israel. Not one person in Israel could come up to the mountain because of their failure to sanctify themselves. The people had come physically out of Egypt, but not spiritually. This fact was revealed in Exodus 19:22. See Note 1, on page 2.

One thing we always want to keep in mind; God is not a respecter of persons. God's response seen in Exo 19:24; God was wroth, extremely angry. God's desire was that all would come up to the mountain. The bounds set in Exo. 19:12-13 were a message of love; a warning to those who would fail to sanctify themselves. But God in his love, mercy and faithfulness (his faithfulness to the very few that did sanctify themselves) came down to speak to His people. What a dreadful and awesome sight that must have been.

Exo. 18:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as

the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

Hebrews 12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

God wanted to write the law in the hearts of the people. God has only one covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal. Chpt. 3, Isaiah 51:7, Psalm 37:31, 40:8). God in his mercy, wrote the law, the covenant on two tables of stone. In addition, God in Exodus 25:8-9 gave man the sanctuary service, detailing the plan of salvation. This is the same plan of salvation first introduced in Genesis 3:15, 4:3-7, and the means by which the children of Israel were to sanctify themselves in Exodus Chapter 19.

One comment to notice, that God made this covenant with all the people that came out of Egypt, not just biological Israel. Remember a mixed multitude came out of Egypt (Exo.12:38-51). God is not a respecter of persons. (Read Deuteronomy Chpt. 29, Romans 2:28-29, Acts 10:34, Deut. 10:17).

The First Table of Stone

Deut. 33:2 The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

Exodus 34:28 — And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Deut. 10:4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.

Exodus Chapter 20 recounts God speaking the Ten Commandments, The Law, His Covenant to His people Israel (Exo. 34:28, Duet. 4:13). God wrote the commandments on two tables of stone. Question? What did God speak on Mt. Sinai? What was written by the finger of God on the two tables of stone? These may seem strange questions in light of what was just

written. The apparent simple answer to the questions is God spoke the Ten Commandments and wrote them on two tables of stone. But, what has all this to do with the Sabbath Day as a sign of God has our redeemer?

Many people have in their minds, what God spoke in Exodus. Further, they believe that on one table was written the first four commandments (man's duty to God), and the second table the last six commandments (man's duty to his fellow man). However please consider Exo 32:15-16:

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, graven upon the tables.

Exo 32:15 states that the tables of the testimony (the Ten Commandments) were written on both sides of each table, not one side. What else do the scriptures say about how the law was written?

Zech. 5:3 Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it.

Zechariah sees a scroll, with those condemned written on both sides. One side of the scroll makes reference to those condemned for stealing; which represents/incorporates the portion of the law regarding man's duty toward man (the last six commandments of the law). On the other side of the scroll are those condemned for swearing (the third commandment); and represents/incorporates the first four commandments of the law; man's duty toward God. When we consider this principle and apply this principle to the law written by God on the tables of stone in Exodus Chapter 20, we conclude that on one table's front side were written first four commandments and on the back side the last six commandments. God wrote the law spoken in Exodus Chapter 20 on the first table. What then was written on

the second table? To answer this question, we must consider how God speaks.

The Second Table of Stone

Dan 7:9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

Heb. 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, Read also Rev. 4, 5

Rev. 4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Rev. 8:5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Rev. 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings...

Psalm 104:4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire; (see also Psalm 103:20, Heb 1:13-14)

2 Sam 22:14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice.

Job 40:8 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? 9 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

Psalm 147:4 He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

John 12:27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. 28 Father,

glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. 29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. 30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. (See Psalm 29 regarding voice of God)

In these verses above, we see a description of the throne of God. In Revelation 4:5, 8:5 and 11:19, we see that voices proceed from the throne of God. Thousands of angels are ministering before the throne of God. We also know that God sends the angels from the throne of God to minister unto us, his people.

Job 37:2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. 3 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. 4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. 5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

Let us use our imagination for a moment. When God directs, His thousands of angels to minister before the throne of God, or when he telleth and calleth all the stars, does God speak (calleth) as a man does; to one Angel (star) or one group of angels (stars) one at a time? If so, it would literally take God years to send out all the angels to minister to the needs of all the billions of the people on the earth. However, man needs assistance now, not years from now. Where would mankind be if this was the case? We know that God is majestic, is not limited as a man. In John 12:28-30, when God spoke some people heard one thing, and some heard another. The same thought is witnessed by Paul in Acts 22:9: And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. We know that when God speaks, God being God, can speak/voice many thoughts to many different individuals at once.

Therefore, we may consider similarly the possibility that when God spoke on Mt. Sinai, that God spoke more than one thing at the same time. Further then, depending on who you were, you heard one thing, or something different than which another

person heard when God spoke.

God's Law Expressed

In Matt 22:34-40, a lawyer asked Jesus tempting Him, what is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus responded:

37 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Jesus' response contained only two commandments. Moreover, the words spoken by Jesus were quite different than the wording of the Ten Commandment Law spoken in Exodus. We know that God has only one law (Exo. 12:49, Lev. 7:7, Num. 15:16, 29, James 2:10). Jesus is God. As God, Jesus knows the law, for it is His law. Jesus came to magnify the law and make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21, Matt 5:17-19, Deut. 4:2). How can we account for this apparent discrepancy?

Let us imagine that we were in heaven before Lucifer rebelled. In this scenario, someone asked God the question, "what is the law of heaven?" Suppose that God had responded "thou shall not kill, thou shall not steal, thou shall not bear false witness." What would have been the response of the angels in heaven? Would it not have been: "What do you mean?" "What is killing, stealing, bearing false witness?" The law that Jesus spoke in Matt. 22:37-40 is the same law but communicated in different manner, and for a different realm and purpose. The law that Jesus spoke in Matt. 22:37-40 is the law spoken in a language for the realm of heaven where no sin is; a law of love. Jesus never lies. If this was not the case Jesus would have in bearing false witness committed sin when He stated the law in Matt. 22:37-40. If Jesus had sinned he could not have been the perfect sacrifice.

What was God's purpose for stating the Law on Mt. Sinai in the language used as recorded in Exodus Chapter 20? The law

stated in this manner convicts a person of sin and points out their need for a redeemer (1 Tim 2:9, Rom. 3:20, Roman 7:12, Gal 2:16-21). We must remember that the word of God is infinite, exceeding broad (Psalm 119:96). Hence, all the details of an event may not always be made or found in one account. The Bible states in Isaiah “For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little:”

We have taken a brief detour from our original question, how was the law written on the tables of stone (Deut. 10:4)? We have shown that the commandments spoken in Exodus chapter 20 were written on the first table. We have shown that the voice of God speaking can comprise different messages to different people at the same time/instance. Finally, we concluded that there is more than one way which God’s law can be stated. Now the question arises, is there another way of stating the Ten Commandment law, the same law in different wording? The answer is yes.

Deut 5:1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. 4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire 5...saying, 6 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage... 12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. 13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: 14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. 15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Deut. 5:1-21, Moses recounts the event in Exo. Chapter 20 when God spoke the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. When one compares each commandment spoken by God in Exodus with each commandment recounted by Moses in Deuteronomy, you will observe that the commandments are all the same, except the fourth and tenth commandment. Exodus 20:8-11 speak of God as the creator (For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it). Deuteronomy 5:13-15 speak of God as the redeemer (And remember that thou **wast a servant** in the land of Egypt, **and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm**: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day).

When we apply this reasoning to the two accounts which God spoke to the people on Mt Sinai, the first in twentieth chapter of Exodus and the second in Deuteronomy Chapter 5, the people who failed to sanctify themselves per the Lord's instruction heard the Law spoken in words accounted in Exodus. The law stated in this manner convicts a person of sin and their need for a redeemer (1 Tim 2:9). Those who had sanctified themselves, such as the three stated above, heard the law spoken in the words accounted in Deuteronomy, a testimony that they had been sanctified, redeemed, delivered from sin/Egypt, born again through the High Priestly ministry of Jesus (review the Passover account in Exodus Chapter 12).

Consider the following from "*The Law of Life*" by E. J. Waggoner:

...Every commandment of God is a promise God has pledged Himself that every believer shall be kept from taking His name in vain,—that is, that every believer shall keep the whole law, doing nothing that can in any way dishonor God.

Exodus 20:7...the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain.

This is a negative statement, the positive form of which would be:

“The Lord will hold him guiltless that does not take His name in vain.”

Is not that grand? The person who keeps the third commandment is counted guiltless before God.

Romans 4:7 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute sin. And He does not impute sin to the man who does not take His name in vain.

...By the new birth we are delivered from all the evil inherited in the first birth, and this is the comfort that parents may have, not simply for themselves, when they think of their sinful heritage, but for the children who through their ignorance or self-will, may have been born after the flesh. The commandments of God are not mere negative precepts, but positive assurances:

“You shall not commit adultery.”

This is a promise that the stream of God’s life, if we but yield to it, will flow through us undefiled, making us in all our ways perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. This is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Given free course through us, it cleanses us from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, itself remaining undefiled.

For by the power of the incarnation and the resurrection of Christ, His life will, if we believe, work mightily in us to swallow up death in victory. We may then rejoice in this commandment more than in all riches, and, submitting to the everlasting life, may begin a new life, fresh and clean, and find even in this sin-cursed earth, an Eden of joy. (End of Excerpt)

Before one is born again, the commandments act upon the person as a negative, “thou shall not”, which convicts one of sin. When one is converted, made new in the inner man, righteous as Jesus is righteous, the commandments are a positive testimony “thou shall not” sin. There is power in the word of God.

This is consistent. God is not a respecter of persons. Sin cannot dwell in the presence of God. If Moses had come up into the mountain unconverted, with sin in his heart, he would have been

consumed by the glory of God (Psalm 15, Isaiah 33:14). Further, if Moses in his recounting the events of Exodus Chapter 20 in Deuteronomy Chapter 5, had spoken erroneously, borne false witness; he having committed sin, similarly would have been consumed. So we can conclude that the second table contains the law written with the words spoken in Deuteronomy Chapter 5, in the same manner as the first table documented above.

The Two Fourth Commandments

We know that God's law reflects and is an expression of his character/name (Rev 14:1, Matt 12:34, Luke 6:45). Consider:

Exo. 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. (See also Exodus 33:11-19)

God's character just described is more completely revealed in the Fourth Commandment in Exodus and Deuteronomy when both are considered together. Each of the fourth commandments reveals different characteristics of God's character. In Exodus Chapter 20, we see God as the creator; as all powerful, all knowing, and omniscient, which He is. Also, as the creator we see His qualifications for Him being the ruler of the universe. However, this view does not fully bring out God's character as long suffering, gracious as spoken of in Exodus 34:6-7 just quoted. In Deuteronomy Chapter 5, we see God as our Saviour and Redeemer; by which is personified long suffering and graciousness. When we add the characteristics of God as stated/revealed in Deuteronomy Chapter 5 (God as our redeemer) to the characteristics of God spoken in Exodus, we see revealed a more complete picture of God's character, and witness a greater representation/testimony of God's character as stated in Exodus 34:6-7 (Exodus 3:15, 6:1-8).

The Sabbath expressed together in the fourth command of Exodus and Deuteronomy is a memorial (Exo. 31:17) of what God is to his people: creator and redeemer. Further, The fourth commandment expressed together in Exodus and Deuteronomy gives a more deep and complete understanding of the second commandment. Justice (conviction of sin, guilt, as stated in Exodus) for those who have not been born again and rejected His grace, and His mercy to those whom have accepted His grace (for those who have been born again, as stated in Deuteronomy). Now consider:

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

How does the word divide as sword? On one edge of the sword is the law spoken in Exodus that convicts man of sin and on the other edge is the law spoken in Deuteronomy which shows God's mercy. One who is born again is able to keep the law through Jesus while in this sinful world.

Conclusion

The Seventh Day Sabbath is a sign that God is our creator and redeemer. The Sabbath is the sign of the covenant that God made with all mankind (Exo. 31:17, Ezek. 20:12, 20). We have seen that God has only one covenant, the law written in the heart. We have fully seen that when the law is written in one's heart, the commandments are positives and that there is power in the word to enable one to keep them. God's desire is the final fulfilment of His original intent back in Genesis and Exodus, to bring us to heaven to reign with Him eternally (Eph. 1:10). God's people did not prepare themselves for this event in Exodus Chapter 19. God is waiting on us to prepare ourselves. What is your response today? God be with you toward this end.

Excerpt From The Great Controversy p670.3

“Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.” Verse 4. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan’s rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. Satan’s own works have condemned him. God’s wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created. “All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee.” Psalm 145:10. The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that with the existence of God’s law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created. With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: “Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.”

Before the universe has been clearly presented the great sacrifice made by the Father and the Son in man’s behalf. The hour has come when Christ occupies His rightful position and is glorified above principalities and powers and every name that is named. It was for the joy that was set before Him—that He might bring many sons unto glory—that He endured the cross and despised the shame. And inconceivably great as was the sorrow and the shame, yet greater is the joy and the glory.