



1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. 2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. 3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

The patience and long-suffering of the Lord toward His elect people is beyond comprehension of man. When so great a Sovereign as the Creator of the Universe takes the time to write with His own Finger, once, upon Tables of Stone for our benefit, how can we understand such a High Majesty deigning to do so for mortal and sinful man? But when that same Sovereign will deign to write anew upon Tables of Stone which were broken as a result of our idolatry and licentious behavior, how much more remarkable! It is a most comforting thought to realize that we will come to the end of God's Judgment long before we out-wear His Mercy and Grace.

I was blessed to have a mother who, for all the days that I was with her, had a song in her heart. It may have been owing to her Irish heritage, or maybe even a more direct blessing of God, but she sang all day long the great hymns of the Church, folk songs, and even patriotic songs, as she went about her daily chores. Once as she sang "Are you Washed in the Blood of the Lamb," I was a bit troubled by the lyrics. I was in the 3rd grade and had figured most things out by then, but I couldn't figure out how being washed in the blood of a Lamb would cleanse me. I asked my mother about it. My mother gave me a clean sheet of paper and said, "OK, son, I want you to write down the most important things you do today on this paper. Do not erase anything; just write down those things that are most important to you." Well, I was proud of myself, so I wrote down how well I had done in school – perhaps with some fair embellishment. I noted that I had eaten all of my vegetables in the school cafeteria – major exaggeration! I commented on how well I had answered questions in class without feeling the need to admit how wrong I was on some. And, at the last of the day, I wrote how well I had done my chores – at least those I had properly done. My mother collected the paper at bedtime. She looked at it without comment.

This went on for seven days. Each morning, I was given a clean sheet of paper free of embellishments. At the close of the seventh day, my mother brought my seven papers to my attention and noted all the good that I had done, but she had an uncanny insight to the places where I had exaggerated the truth (in other words, lied!) and pointed these out to me. She also remarked, with disappointment, that all of my comments were about ME! But that was not her most important object. She said that every day, God gives the Christian boy or girl a clean sheet of paper that has been

washed by the blood of Jesus. The blood is invisible, but it washes away every smudge and lie that we have told. She told me that I might even fool her with my equivocations, but I could never fool God because He sees me always. She said the thing that most disappointed her about my papers were that they never once mentioned prayer, or the Bible, or the God who loved me so much as to shed His cleansing blood that I might have a clean sheet of paper in life every awakening hour. I never forgot that experience, and it would be well with us that we recall the patience and mercy of God in dealing with us in our own failures and sins.

When we, as children, mess up something our parents have prepared for us, we may be required to do some of the work ourselves in undoing the mess. Note that God tells Moses this time to hew the Tables of Stone himself wherein in the first writing of the Commandments, He hewed them Himself. Our sins result in greater toils and labors on our part in seeking restitution with God. So Moses hews the Tables, and God writes anew the Commandments which were broken at the sight of Israel's idolatry and orgies. *"And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest."*

God is a bit more confining with His grace now than before. He tells Moses to come up the Mount alone – Joshua was not to follow even at a distance, and neither was any man or animal to be seen on the Mount or around its base. So Moses, when morning breaks, ascends the Mount with the two Tables of Stone in hand. The Lord descends in a cloud upon the Mount to meet with Moses, to STAND with him, and to discuss with him. *5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.*

Notice in the following verses how solemnly the Lord proclaims His Name and Nature: *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.* I consider this a matter of profound importance and enlightenment to our spirits. Some consider reverence and formality in prayer unimportant, but the Lord does not. He desires that we acknowledge His holiness and majesty in prayer. He already knows what we need, but He desires to hear our love and respect in our prayers to Him. He says clearly that He forgives iniquity, but will, by no means, clear the guilty. What does this mean? It means that we are accounted righteous before God when we have repented of our iniquity and claim the salvation of Christ!

We Anglicans get blamed for too much bowing in our prayers, but Moses, with every encounter with God, bowed his head to the ground. *" 8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance."* Unless we are forgiven, every one of us, for our sins, we can in no wise be accounted the inheritance of the Lord.

God makes a covenant

God is constantly having to remind a rebellious people of His covenants He makes with them: *10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. 11 Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.* God assures us of His Providence and Protection before the enemy, but He adds a serious warning: *12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land*

whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: 13 But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: 14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: 15 Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; 16 And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. 17 Thou shalt make thee no molten gods. You may recall that the children of Israel did precisely these proscribed acts after the false prophet, Balaam, had advised Balak at Peor to cause the Children to commit fornication and to turn to idols.

We have a foretaste of our Lord's Supper here in Exodus – the Feast of Unleavened Bread which was begun at Passover. Leaven symbolizes sin and error; therefore do we use unleavened bread to symbolize the perfection of the Body of Christ. The symbol should match that which it symbolizes. *18 The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. 19 All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. 20 But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty. 21 Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. 22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. 23 Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. 24 For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year. 25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. 26 The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. 27 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. Be it sufficient to say that the first fruits belong to the Lord.*

Moses Descends from the Mount after Forty Days:

Once again we see the significance of forty days being emphasized in this account. Moses, representing the Law, fasted forty days and forty nights. Ellijah, representing the prophets, fasted forty days and forty nights. And Jesus Christ, representing the consummation of all of the Laws and the Prophets, fasted forty days and forty nights. This is the reason for our Lenten Season of fasting. *28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he (that is, God, Deut 10:1-4) wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.*

Our living testimony that condemns the world of sin may not be visible to us. It is not a thing that we would boast about, but others see and know when we have been in close communion with God. Our countenance is changed in ways that we may not comprehend. *29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. 30 And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him."*

The world of atheists and unbelievers are fearful of all who trust in God, and claim to hold our Lord in contempt. We shall see at last who is held in contempt. I honestly do not believe that there is any true atheist. I believe they hate the sovereignty of God, or any other, over them. They know that they cannot admit there is a God, else they would necessarily need to change their ways. They like the ways of hedonism and

wickedness, so they are constant in their vile denunciation of any expressions of Godliness which they fear.

The people of God will follow the example of their Godly rulers. *31 And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. 32 And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai.*

The Vail of Moses is a mystery. It was perhaps needed to shield the onlookers from the brilliance of his face after being with the Lord. Jesus, no doubt, placed a spiritual vail over His face as He communed with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus – they did not recognize Him until He removed that spiritual vail through the breaking of bread. *33 And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. 34 But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. 35 And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.*

CONCLUSION:

God forgave the national sins of Israel; and God will forgive our own national sins if we humble ourselves and repent. But sin puts a distance between us and God. We become as Prodigals who live lavishly, grow depraved and hungry, and then return to our loving Father who NEVER left us. Sins are forgiven by God when we repent of them, but sins leave scars nonetheless. God may not abide with willful sinners, so we create a separation between us and God with our sins.

We see the need for humility in prayer before God, as Moses demonstrates, and we learn of the honor and reverence due God in our prayers.

Just as God had led Israel, with a mighty out-stretched arm, out of Egypt and with many accompanying miracles, He has also led our own nation in the same wise. Our freedom and liberty were purchased with the blood of many patriotic Christian men, but also attended by the miraculous intervention of God. So after being the beneficiaries of so much blessing of God, Israel turned away from God and paid a heavy penalty. We, too, as a nation have known the tender mercies of God, and turned away to lesser gods of money, sex, drugs, and other hedonistic pursuits. Do you believe we will get away with it any more than the Children of Israel?

