

Exodus 31:18

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-31/exodus-3118/>

The LORD finishes speaking to Moses. This is most likely at the end of the forty days that Moses was in His presence on Mount Sinai.

Verse 18 concludes this section of Exodus that started in [Exodus 20:17](#). The Book of the Covenant was given in 20:17 to 23:33, then the instructions for building the tabernacle and its furnishings were stated in 25:1 to 31:17.

Now the LORD *had finished speaking with Moses upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.* The *finger of God* was first seen in Egypt during the plague of gnats (or lice). The Egyptian magicians could not replicate or control the lice, telling Pharaoh that it was the *finger of God* ([Exodus 8:19](#)), implying that He had a power that could not be overcome. Here, it is both a symbol of power and an anthropomorphism describing that the LORD wrote the Ten Commandments on the stones.

This demonstrates that the LORD was the source of the Ten Commandments, not a human. The tablets of the testimony served as the foundation for Israel's covenant relationship with the Suzerain (Ruler) God. It served to bind the vassals (Israel) to their Suzerain Yahweh. It set forth a superior means of building a society, based on mutual love and self-governance. It placed on each member of Israel the responsibility to care for the persons and property of every other citizen of Israel. Israel was tasked to build and live this superior way of life, and in doing so, be a beacon to the world, a holy nation.

As supreme authority, the LORD gave the tablets to Moses and His chosen people so that they would know how to please Him. The Israelites were thus urged to follow their Suzerain God wholeheartedly in order not to break His covenantal laws because He alone was their God. He is above and beyond all. They were to trust that God had their best interest at heart, and strive to love their neighbors as themselves as an expression of service and worship. The pagan religions all focused on "ways for ME to get my way" while The LORD of Israel insisted that each member of the covenant respect and serve one another.

Some scholars have seen the content of the material in chapters 25 – 31 as being organized into seven speeches. The following shows the arrangement of the speeches:

- Speech One: [Exodus 25:1–30:10](#)
 - Construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings.
- Speech Two: [Exodus 30:11-16](#)
 - The Ransom Money
- Speech Three: [Exodus 30:17-21](#)
 - The Laver
- Speech Four: [Exodus 30:22-33](#)
 - Recipe for the Anointing Oil
- Speech Five: [Exodus 30:34-38](#)
 - Recipe for the Incense
- Speech Six: [Exodus 31:1-11](#)
 - Gifted People to Work and Serve
- Speech Seven: [Exodus 31:12-17](#)
 - Instructions for Observing the Sabbath

They also see that these speeches share many similarities with the Creation account given in [Genesis 1 – 3](#):

Creation Account ([Genesis 1 – 3](#))

There are seven days of creation ([Genesis 1 – 2](#)).

Each day begins with “and God said” ([Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26](#))

The first six days are concerned with the creation of heaven and earth.

God rested from His creative work on the seventh day.

The Garden of Eden had gold and jewels ([Genesis 2:12](#)).

Sin followed the creation ([Genesis 3](#)).

God provided clothing to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness ([Genesis 3:21](#)).

The cherubim guarded the garden ([Genesis 3:24](#))

Tabernacle Account ([Exodus 25 – 31](#))

There are seven speeches in [Exodus 25 – 31](#).

Each speech begins with the phrase “the LORD [or “He”] spoke [or “said”] to Moses” ([Exodus 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1; 12](#)).

The first six speeches are concerned with the creation of the tabernacle and its furnishings.

The seventh speech contains the LORD’s command for the Israelites to observe the Sabbath by resting from their work.

The tabernacle contained gold and jewels ([Exodus 25:3, 7](#)).

Sin followed the giving of the instructions for creating the tabernacle ([Exodus 32 – 34](#)).

The LORD commanded that the priests’ nakedness be covered ([Exodus 28:42](#)).

Cherubim guarded the mercy seat ([Exodus 25:18](#)).

In addition to this, there are similar phrases in each account as seen below:

“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good” ([Genesis 1:31](#)).

“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts” ([Genesis 2:1](#)).

“the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters” ([Genesis 1:2](#))

“And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the LORD had commanded, this they had done” ([Exodus 39:43](#)).

“So the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses” ([Exodus 39:42](#)).

“I have filled him with the Spirit of God” ([Exodus 31:3](#)).

Biblical Text:

¹⁸ When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.