

Exodus 34:1-4

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-34/exodus-341-4/>

The two tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments are restored. Moses prepares the two tablets and then takes them to the top of Mount Sinai to meet the LORD.

The first step in renewing the covenant made earlier was to restore the visible emblem of that covenant—the *two stone tablets* containing the Ten Commandments. To do this, the LORD commanded Moses to *cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones*. Moses was to *cut out* (lit. “chisel out”) *tablets of stone* which should be similar to the original *tablets*. The LORD would then *write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered*. Moses *shattered* the first *tablets* when he descended Mount Sinai to confront the Israelites about their sin with the golden calf ([Exodus 32:19](#)).

This is a new approach compared to the creation of the original *tablets*. Previously, “...the LORD said to Moses, ‘Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction’” ([Exodus 24:12](#)). This indicates that God did the full preparation, then handed them to Moses ([Exodus 31:18](#)). Perhaps to indicate that the law came from God and God only.

Now, after chapter 33 in which the intimacy between God and Moses seems to have elevated materially, God gives Moses a role in the process, telling Moses to *cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones* which Moses had *shattered*. Perhaps God was also letting Moses know, “If you shatter these again, you are going to have to go to the trouble to make a new set.” It appears that God is teaching stewardship to the man He favors so greatly, as Moses goes about his job. Moses will prepare the *stone tablets*, but God will still *write the words*. It is now a partnership, with God providing the content and Moses providing the medium. This might provide a picture of how the Bible was delivered to us by God through the agency of human authors ([2 Peter 1:20-21](#)).

Furthermore, the LORD told Moses the time (*be ready by morning – v. 2*), the place (*to Mount Sinai*), and what to do when he arrives (*present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain*).

Because the occasion was very solemn, the LORD instructed that *no man is to come up with you, nor let any man be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and the herds may not graze in front of that mountain.*

Because of Moses' unique relationship with the LORD, he and he alone could be a participant in the covenant renewal process. In this case, not even Moses' faithful assistant Joshua is allowed to come along.

Moses obeyed the LORD's instructions. First, *he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones* (v. 4). This might have involved considerable effort, given that the stones were thin enough to shatter. Then, he *rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, exactly as the Lord had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand.* Moses did not try to write on the *tablets*. He did as God asked, and simply took the *tablets* up the mountain.

The *stone tablets* were to be a sign of the renewed covenant between the LORD and the Israelites. Therefore, Moses was to supply these replacement *tablets* upon which the LORD would again write the Ten Commandments.

Biblical Text:

¹Now the Lord said to Moses, "Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered. ²So be ready by morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain. ³No man is to come up with you, nor let any man be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and the herds may not graze in front of that mountain."⁴ So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand.