

The Great Name of God

The Great Commandment

The Great Commission

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Our Bibles start at Genesis 1:1 with this statement, *"In the beginning God."* The Hebrew the word for the book of Genesis is B'reshite and means, "In the Beginning." The word for God used in this opening statement is ... Elohim, a plural word indicating that God, although one exists in parts or aspects. We have come to know the three parts or aspects of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And since every man was created in the image of God we too are each individuals having three parts ... a spirit, a soul and a body.

God also has an actual name and it is revealed for the first time in Genesis 2:4 and is used over 7000 times in the Old Testament.

However our Bibles don't use the name but insert a special designation for it such as ... "Lord God" when the name is being used. This happened when the Hebrew people were taken captive to Babylon around 600 BC. Their leaders purposely hid the name of God so it would not be profaned among the nations.

The Hebrew people now refer to God's name as Ha Shem, meaning "The Name". They do not speak His name but are taught to say Adonai, meaning "Lord" in its place. They do not write God's name but instead substitute the tetragrammaton, YHVH, the four Hebrew letters that make up the name. God's name is "Yah-u-wah", which basically means "I AM THAT I AM."

Let's take a look at something very special about His name by just using the tetragrammaton, YHVH.

Note - Hebrew people write from right to left whereas English speaking people write from left to right. For convenience sake the following information is presented from left to right.

The Tetragrammaton

Y

H

V

H

Pronunciation of the Letters

(yad)

(hey)

(vaw)

(hey)

Ancient Hebrew Symbols for the Letters of the Tetragrammaton



Interpretation of the Symbols

"Hand"

Man with
raised hands
means
"Behold"

"Nail"

Man with
raised hands
means
"Behold"

The Great Commandment

Jesus was once asked what the Great Commandment was. As was His style He replied in an unexpected, enlightening and authoritative way.

He began by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 saying, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and all your mind. This is the **great and foremost** commandment."*

Then, he continued by quoting Leviticus 19:18, saying *"The second is like it, **You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."***

Initially, we can see that both of Jesus' statements begin with the words ... **"You shall love."** Secondly, there is a distinction between loving God and loving man. Third, loving God precedes loving man. And finally the whole issue of commandments points to what God has said in both the Law and the Prophets ... what Christians normally call the Old Testament portion of their Bibles.

The Ten Commandments on Two Tablets of Stone

Jesus' statements are a clear reference to the Ten Commandments which were spoken out loud to the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai on Shavuot ... the very day that would become known to Christians as Pentecost some fifteen hundred years later. As the Israelites stood far off from the mountain of God they heard the sound of a mighty trumpet blowing and could see the mountain covered with fire and smoke. When the Israelites heard God speak they were terrified and told Moses they no longer wanted to hear God's voice ... but would listen to what Moses told them to do.

Therefore, God in His kindness wrote out the Ten Commandments with His finger ... on two tablets of stone and gave them to Moses to give to the Israelites. The Ten Commandments were written in stone as a reminder to the Israelites of the permanence of God's word. Jesus Christ, the Word of God, alluded to this when He spoke to His disciples shortly before His crucifixion. He said *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."* (Matthew 24:35)

The two tablets were designed to be carried in the hands and each contains five commandments which correspond to the number of fingers on each hand. *My son, keep my words and treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, and my teaching as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.* (Proverbs 7:1-3)

This internalizing of God's law and commandments would become the basis of the New Covenant spoken of in Jeremiah of which Christians are partakers of. *"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

When Jesus gave His reply concerning the greatest commandment it was in two parts ... just like the two tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written.

They draw a distinction between how to love God and how to love man. The first tablet contains five commandments that demonstrate how to love God and the second tablet, with its five commandments demonstrates how to love man.

How to love God

How to love man



Key word honor

Key word covet

Each tablet has a commandment that is known as the greatest, represented by the thumb and one that is known as the least, represented by the pinkie finger. On the first tablet, which is a demonstration of how to love God, the greatest is *"You shall have no other gods before Me"* and the least is *"Honor your father and mother."* On the second tablet, which is a demonstration of how to love man, the greatest is *"You shall not murder"* and the least is *"You shall not covet anything belonging to your neighbor."*

The key word for demonstrating love for God is expressed in the least or last of the commandments on the first tablet ... Honor. The thought behind this is that if we will not honor our parents whom God has placed over us ... then we will eventually break all the remaining commandments until we finally worship and serve other gods. Honor concerns recognizing and obeying authority.

The key word for demonstrating love for man is also found in the least or last of the commandments on the second tablet ... Covet. The thought behind this is that if we desire to possess something that belongs to someone else ... then we will eventually break all of the commandments until we finally murder them to get what we want.

At the Last Supper, just prior to His crucifixion Jesus spoke about the two aspects of love ... for man and for God.

Concerning man He made three statements:

- *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34)*
- *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you." (John 15:12)*
- *"This I command you, that you love one another." (John 15:17)*

Concerning God He made four statements:

Please note: In the following verses Jesus used the word commandments ... which speak of more than just one. Most Christians think that He just issued one commandment ... "love one another".

- *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (John 14:15)*
- *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." (John 14:21)*
- *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me." (John 14:23-24)*
- *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. (John 15:10)*

In the books of Romans and Galatians, the Apostle Paul agrees with Jesus in rightly declaring that the whole law is fulfilled through love. But where does one get this power to love? It arrived in the presence of the Holy Spirit on Shavuot ... the day of Pentecost; some fifteen hundred years after God first spoke the Ten Commandments to the Israelites. God, Himself came to indwell people ... to fill them with His love and power. For it is written: *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; ... and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God ... for God is love. (1 John 4:8-9)*

In his first letter to Timothy the Apostle Paul writes, *"I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension."*

In doing this we bless God by displaying the Ten Commandments back to Him. "See Father you have made my hands holy ... I am loving You and I am loving my neighbors as myself. I am not lifting my hands in anger or dissension against You or them ... but have forgiven all."

The Great Commission

Forty days after he had been raised from the dead, Jesus gathered His disciples together and led them out of Jerusalem to a place on the Mount of Olives near Bethany. When they arrived He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem until He had baptized (immersed) them with the Holy Spirit.

Then He issued His last set of commands, which today has come to be known as the "Great Commission" and is taken from Matthew's gospel 28:18-20 and Mark's gospel 16:15-18.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing (immersing) them in the [name] of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to [observe] all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. He who has believed and has been baptized (immersed) shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Then Jesus ascended into heaven while they watched. They were awestruck! As Jesus continued to rise, a cloud ... the Sh'khinah, received Him out of their sight. Two angels appeared to them and told the disciples that Jesus would return to earth one day in the same manner that they had seen Him leave. Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem to wait for the arrival of God's promise ... the Holy Spirit.

Ten days later Shavuot ... Pentecost came with the same signs as the first time ... a trumpet blowing, fire resting on the holy mountain and God speaking out loud to the Israelites. But this time it was different. The disciples did not stand far off ... but God came near to them. They heard the sound of a rushing mighty wind as if God were blowing into the mouthpiece of a trumpet. Tongues of fire rested on each of them because they had been made holy. They were not burned by the fire. They had been baptized (**immersed**) **in the oil of the Holy Spirit** ... filling them to overflowing. And when they spoke ... God's words flowed out of them in the languages of the nations. The church had been born ... it was ready to fulfill the commission that Jesus had given it.

At the heart of the Great Commission is the task of making disciples ... not just converts to a religion. It requires that instruction be given ... since the term

disciple means ... "one who learns." A disciple is disciplined or taught to the point where he becomes like his teacher. Disciple making was Jesus' full time occupation from the day He entered ministry at His baptism until He ascended into heaven. During His 3½ years of ministry, Jesus modeled the process of making disciples and then commanded all those who had followed Him to do likewise.

This process involves five steps. They are:

1. **Wait** until you are clothed with power from on high.
2. **Go** into all the world.
3. **Preach** repentance for the forgiveness of sins in Jesus name.
4. **Baptize** (Immerse) all those who have believed the message in the name of Jesus.
5. **Teach** those who have been baptized to do everything that Jesus had commanded.

The disciples did exactly what Jesus told them to do.

1) They waited for the promise of power ... the Holy Spirit.

2) And after being filled with the Holy Spirit they immediately began to go ... first to those in Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria, and finally to the remotest ends of the earth.

3) On that day, Peter preached a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus.

4) On that day, three thousand people believed the message and were baptized (immersed) in the name of Jesus.

5) Then those who had believed the message and were baptized in the name of Jesus continually devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching.

What were the apostles teaching? Of course, they were doing what Jesus had commissioned them to do ... teaching people everything that He had commanded them to do and teach.

There are approximately 270 commands that Jesus gives each one of us who are His disciples. These instructions were written down throughout the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Remember ... Jesus said, "*If you love Me you will keep my commandments.*"

Shortly after the day of Pentecost, Peter preached his second message about Jesus to the gathered multitude. In the middle of it He quoted what Moses said about the Christ saying, *'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'*

Benediction

Yawuwah bless you, and keep you; Yahuwah make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; Yahuwah lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.'

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