

Exodus 32:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

Analysis

The tablets are described as **מְשֻׁשֶּׁה אֱלֹהִים** (ma'aseh Elohim, the work of God)—wholly divine origin. The inscription **וְהַמִּקְתָּב מְכַתֵּב אֱלֹהִים** (vehamiktab miktab Elohim, and the writing was the writing of God) uses emphatic doubling. The word **חרות** (charut, engraved) comes from a root meaning 'to cut' or 'inscribe deeply.' The entire description emphasizes these were not human documents but direct divine revelation. The later Talmudic wordplay connects **חרות** (charut, engraved) with **חֶרֶת** (cherut, freedom)—true freedom comes from God's law inscribed on hearts (Jer 31:33).

Historical Context

No other ancient Near Eastern law code claimed direct divine authorship in this manner. The closest parallels (Hammurabi, etc.) claimed divine inspiration, but not that deity wrote the laws directly.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How should the divine origin of Scripture shape how you read and obey it?
2. What's the relationship between God's law and genuine freedom?

Interlinear Text

מִקְתָּם בְּ	מִקְתָּם בָּ	ה פָּה אֱלֹהִים	מִשְׁעֵן הַ	בְּלָקְחַת:
and the writing	and the writing	of God	the	tables
H4385	H4385	H1992	H1992	And the tables

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 31:18 (References God): And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Hebrews 8:10 (References God): For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

2 Corinthians 3:3 (References God): Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

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