

Three Different Stories About the Ten Commandments in the Bible

One thing Judaism and Christianity both value is **The Ten Commandments**. But did you know there are three stories about the *Ten Commandments* in the Bible -- *and they have important differences*? Today, I am going to focus on the commandment related to **Day Seven**.

The three stories are found in Exodus 20:8-11, Exodus 34:21, and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Based on our work, we believe the order below reflects the order in which they originally appeared.

*Six days you shall work, but on the **Seventh Day** you shall rest;
in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.
(Exodus 34:21)*

The meanings reflected in this version appear to be very straight forward. Notice how the second story expands the commandment.

*Remember the Shabbat Day, to keep it holy.
Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
but the **Seventh Day** is the Shabbat of Yahweh your God.
In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter,
nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle,
nor your stranger who is within your gates.
For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea,
and all that is in them, and rested the **Seventh Day**. Therefore,
Yahweh blessed the Shabbat Day and hallowed it.
(Exodus 20:8-11)*

- In front of the opening words of the *first story*, we find the words “Remember the **Shabbat Day**, to keep it holy” in the *second story*.
- After the word “Seventh Day” in the first story, we find, “the Shabbat of Yahweh your God” in the second story.
- The second story adds a list of people and animals that are not to work. **Be sure to note that “your wife” is not listed.**
- The second story adds a reason that “Yahweh blessed the *Shabbat* and hallowed it.

*For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea,
and all that is in them, and rested the **Seventh Day**.*

Now let's consider the *third story*.

*Observe the Shabbat Day, to keep it holy,
as Yahweh your God commanded you.
Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
but the **Seventh Day** is the Shabbat of Yahweh your God.
In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter,
nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox,
nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger
who is within your gates, that your male servant and your
female servant may rest as well as you.
And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt,
and Yahweh your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand
and by an outstretched arm; therefore Yahweh your God commanded
you to keep the Shabbat Day.
(Deuteronomy 5:12-15)*

When we compare the second and third stories, we find these differences.

- The second story opens with “**Remember** the Shabbat Day,” while the third opens with “**Observe** the Shabbat Day.”
- The third story adds – “Yahweh your God commanded you.”
- The third story gives a different reason they are to remember the Shabbat Day – “you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm.”
- After that reason, this story repeats -- “Yahweh your God commanded you.”

In our opinion the three stories represent three different time periods in which the words were written.

- *The first story reflects the period at the beginning of the Exodus journey when Moses received the two stone tablets.*
- *The second story reflects the end of the Exodus journey before the Israelites entered the Promised Land.*
- *The third story reflects the period after the Northern Tribes of Israel had been defeated by the Assyrians, but while the First Temple is still standing in Jerusalem.*

Keep in mind those are **opinions** based on our studies, but the differences in the stories are **FACTS**. They are points that we will explore and discuss in future emails. Thank you for reading this educational email. Please share and discuss it with others.

Shalom,
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