

March 7, 2010

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT & THE GREAT KING
MATTHEW 22.34-46

The leadership in Israel once again put Jesus to the test, trying to entangle him so as to lead to his own demise. But once again Jesus turns the tables on them, exposing them for who they are as well as revealing the fact that he is great David's greater Son to whom they owe their unmixed allegiance.

The last of a series of three tests. Jesus' question of them seems to be a part of the scene (cf. "gathered together" vv 34, 41).

3. TO WHOM BELONGS OUR LOVE AND LOYALTY? (34-46)

Which is the greatest commandment? (34-40): "silenced" the Sadducees - refers to "muzzling" of an animal. They were incapacitated.

"gather together" - cf. Ps 2.2. Word used in Greek OT (Septuagint). Pharisees = enemies. Jesus is YHWH's anointed.

Also a verbal form of "synagogue." Their synagogues have become synagogues/gatherings of Satan (Rev 2.9; 3.9). Set up by Moses (Lev 23.3) so that they could submit and listen to the word of YHWH. Now they are using them to conspire against him.

Lawyer = expert in the Law of God.

Test again reminds us that they have taken up the vocation of the devil (cp. 4.1f.). Want him to renounce his loyalty to his Father somehow like the first Adam.

Nature of the test is not so clear. They could be trying to get Jesus to deny some aspect of the law. May want to set him at odds with one group or another similar to the tax question.

Ultimately it seems to me that they are testing him to see if he is loyal to the God of their fathers (as they understand him). Is Jesus orthodox (i.e. does he worship and believe correctly)? Is he loyal to YHWH God?

If he denies a certain aspect of the Law or focuses on one point over against another, they will try to accuse him of blasphemy. You see, some people assume the worst about answers that you give.

Jesus' answer from Dt. 6.5 and Lev 19.18. Love God and love your neighbor.

Dt 6.4ff (the *shema*) quoted by every orthodox Jews in morning and evening prayers. Context should be taken into account.

"Hear" = call to obey. Commandments were not given to debate but to obey. Goes to the motivation of the question. Do they want to obey the Law or use it to ensnare Jesus, thus disobeying the commandment itself?

Triad—hearts, souls, and minds/reasoning—reflects the totality of man. Love God with everything that you are.

This is a *commandment*. Love can be commanded. Much deeper than an emotional response to God. Covenant commitment/fidelity. Emotions are there but are not primary.

Love is the giving of yourself to another seeking what is good for the beloved. Loving God is giving your total self to him, seeking his glory. This is what God himself does for us.

Love *acts* a certain way (cf. 1Cor 13). This involves our attitudes (and thus our emotions), but it is a fundamental loyalty, a covenant commitment to the other person.

Heart - center of who you are. Whoever/Whatever has your heart has you. Cf. Prov 4.23; Mt 6.21. We are to be captivated by God.

Soul - not the invisible substance that fills the shell of our flesh. Man in his totality is a "living soul" (Gen 2.7). "Soul" emphasizes man as an animated/living person. (cf. Gen 12.5; 46.15, 18, 22, 25, 26, 27; Ex 1.5; 12.4; *et al.*).

Loving God with all of our souls means that we live and breathe love for God. All of our living and breathing is dictated by our love for God.

Mind - "reasoning." Fidelity to God is to control the way we think. See the world as God sees the world.

Loving God with all of our minds/reasoning means that our reasoning is *grounded in* love for God and has the *goal of* glorifying God.

Loving God in this way means that every fiber of your being, every thought, everything you put your hand to, and everything you judge in the world with your eyes is to be done through the template of your fidelity to God.

"Second is like it" - not 2nd in priority only in number. "Like it" = of equal importance.

Loving God means loving everything that bears his image. Can't say you love God and not love your brother (1Jn 4.20).

"as yourself" - take care of him as you would yourself. Committed to preserving your life. Be committed to his life.

"On these two commandments hang/depend all the Law and the Prophets" - a summary of all of Scripture's demands.

Law and Prophets look for fulfillment. cf. Mt 5.20. Jesus fulfills these by giving himself totally to his Father and for his neighbors.

Pharisees will disobey both commandments in response to Jesus. He is the revelation of YHWH and their neighbor. They will put him to death.

Whose Son is the Christ? (41-46): "Christ" is not the surname of Jesus but a title. "Messiah," "Anointed one"

Whose son is he? Son of David is right (2Sam 7; Ps 89; *et al.*).

"In the Spirit" = inspired; the very words of God.

David's son would be lesser than him. Why would he call him Lord?

David sits on the throne of YHWH in Israel (cf. 1Chr 29.23). Who can be higher than David except YHWH himself? David's son can only be called "Lord" by David if he is YHWH himself.

New category for the Pharisees. Mt has already told us who he is; cf. 1.23

Just a difficult question? No. Jesus entered Jerusalem enthroned as son of David (cf. 21.1ff.). This is what they were upset about.

Now Jesus says that *the* Son of David = YHWH himself. Connects previous question with this one and is all joined in Jesus.

The Son of David is Jesus. The Son of David, as alluded to by David himself, will be YHWH in the flesh. Command is to love YHWH their God (Dt 6.4ff.). Here he is! Will they love him?

Their response to him determines *their* orthodoxy. Do they worship the God of their fathers? Do they obey the Law and the Prophets?

The whole test-scene began questioning whether or not Jesus was orthodox in his loyalty to YHWH. It has turned to expose that they are the ones who are not orthodox b/c they are gathering together and taking counsel together against YHWH and his anointed/Messiah/Christ.

1. *The Word of God is not primarily something over which we are to argue, but it is a directive to be obeyed.*

2. *Do we love God?*

3. *Do we love our neighbors?*