

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 6:1-25; Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:28-34

LESSON 121 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "There is one God; and there s none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:32, 33).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 6:1-25

¹ Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it:

² That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

⁶ And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

⁷ And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

⁸ And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

⁹ And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

¹⁰ And it shall be, when the LORD

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Exhortation of Moses to Israel to Keep God's Commandments

1. Fear God and keep His commandments that it may be well with thee, Deuteronomy 6:1-3
2. Love God with heart, soul, and might, Deuteronomy 6:4, 5
3. Teach the commandments to your children; talk of the commandments, and keep them ever before you, Deuteronomy 6:6-9;

Proverbs 22:6

⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

4. Do not forget God during prosperity, Deuteronomy 6:10-12;

Deuteronomy 32:15

¹⁵ But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

5. Do not tempt the Lord or seek other gods, Deuteronomy 6:13-16;

Matthew 4:7

⁷ Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Matthew 4:10

¹⁰ Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

6. Keep the commandments diligently, and the Lord will cast out your enemies, Deuteronomy 6:17-19;

Joshua 10:42

⁴² And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

Joshua 11:23

²³ So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

Joshua 23:11-13

¹¹ Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

¹² Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

¹³ Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

7. Explain to the children the reason for serving the Lord, Deuteronomy 6:20-25;

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

II The Great Commandments

1. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," Mark 12:28-30;

thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

¹¹ And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

¹² *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

¹³ Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

¹⁴ Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

¹⁵ (For the LORD thy God *is* a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

¹⁶ Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah.

¹⁷ Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

¹⁸ And thou shalt do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers,

¹⁹ To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.

²⁰ *And* when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What *mean* the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?

Deuteronomy 6:4, 5

2. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," Mark 12:31-34;

Leviticus 19:18

¹⁸ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

³⁵ By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Romans 13:8-10

⁸ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

⁹ For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

¹⁰ Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

NOTES:

The Great Commandments

The Ten Commandments written by the finger of God on tables of stone are the heart of the Old Testament law. However, in the Old Testament there are two commandments that include all these ten commandments, for if these two are kept, none of the ten will be broken. Jesus pointed these out to a scribe who asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" In other words, which is the most important commandment? The Lord's answer was, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31). If a man loves God he will keep the first four commandments. If he loves his neighbour he will keep the last six commandments.

The Law Fulfilled by Love

The basic element in these two commandments is love. In contrasting love with faith and hope, Paul said that the greatest of these is love. In olden days many were trying to work their way into Heaven by endeavouring to keep the Law; but then as now, the only way to truly obey the law and to please God is to have His love within the heart. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." In any one of the Ten Commandments you will see that love will fulfill it. For instance, in the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," the love of God will impel one not to offend God by worshiping idols. If a man loves God he will reverence His name and not take it in vain. So it is with the other commandments; love will impel a person to keep them.

²¹ Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand:

²² And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:

²³ And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers.

²⁴ And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day.

²⁵ And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

Leviticus 19:18

¹⁸ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

Mark 12:28-34

²⁸ And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

²⁹ And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

³⁰ And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

³¹ And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Love Imparted

David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). John tells us that "every one that loveth is born of God" (I John 4:7). Love is planted in the heart by the new birth. A man may have been filled with hatred before; but when the new birth takes place, hatred goes out. He loves everybody. Then God has ordained a way whereby that love may be perfected by a deeper experience, a second work of grace. Divine love comes in when a man is born again. It is so much deeper when one experiences sanctification that it has been called "the perfecting of love in the heart," or "perfect love." Paul analyzes divine love in I Corinthians 13, and shows that it consists of patience, kindness, generosity, humility, unselfishness, even temperament, guiltlessness, and sincerity.

Diligence in Training a Child

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." It is written in the Word of God: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Religious training in early childhood is very important. By the Spirit of God calling to his mind the instructions of younger days, many a person has been prevented from going into deep sin. It is a shame on parents that oftentimes a young child comes to Sunday School without knowing the lesson, saying that his parents did not have time to teach him the lesson from the Word of God. The instruction to Israel was that the Law of God was to be talked about "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Isaiah stated, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10). In order to make a success of training a child in the way he should go, we must be continually at it. The Jews were instructed to have the commandments written on the posts of their houses and on their gates, that the Law of God might be ever before them. They were to bind copies of the Word upon their hands and wear them as ornaments between their eyes. It might be easy to forget or neglect to read the Bible and pray; but it is of infinite importance to the Christian life.

The Danger of Prosperity

The Lord knew the dangers that Israel would face when they came into the Promised Land and prosperity would be theirs. God was giving them these good things, yet their thoughts could be engrossed in houses and vineyards and olive trees to the extent that they would forget God. Israel did that, as Moses stated, "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked" (Deuteronomy 32:15). It has been said that the Church flourishes on adversity. Oftentimes this has proved to be a fact. Christ's message to the church in Smyrna was, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)" (Revelation 2:9). In contrast, His message to the church of the Laodiceans was, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that

³² And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

³³ And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

³⁴ And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). When times are hard people lean upon God; but when things are going well, the tendency is to forget Him. If we love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and might, in prosperity and in reverses, and observe the new commandment that Jesus gave, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you," our pathway to Heaven will be clear.

It is also true that if a man loves his neighbour he will not steal from him, bear false witness against him, nor do anything to harm him. Again we see that "love is the fulfilling of the law." Paul sets this forth in his Epistle to the Romans: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8-10).

Obedience

"Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them." Stress is placed upon obedience. "Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it." The Law provided for sacrifices, but the prophet told King Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice." A knowledge of the Law did nothing for Israel unless they were obedient. King Saul knew the commandment of the Lord, but was disobedient; and he lost his salvation. The Lord, through Moses, did not leave Israel in the dark concerning how to be able to obey the commandments of God. They were enjoined to love God with "all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." He goes further to say, "These words ... shall be in thine heart." No man can truly love God and keep His commandments unless the love of God is first planted in his heart.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who tells us which commandment is greatest?
- 2 What commandment is like it and second in importance?
- 3 In what way is the new commandment that Jesus gave like this second commandment
- 4 How does love fulfill the Law
- 5 Name the places where the Israelites were to have the Law written.
- 6 State the times when the Israelites were to talk of the Law.
- 7 At what time were the Israelites to be especially careful lest they forget the Lord
- 8 What happened at Massah
- 9 What answer was to be given the son who inquired the reason for all the commandments
- 10 What might happen if the anger of the Lord is kindled against the people?