

# THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

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

LESSON 121 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### Deuteronomy 6:1-25

<sup>1</sup> 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:

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

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

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

<sup>7</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>10</sup> And it shall be, when the LORD

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### NOTES:

#### **Our First Love**

God wants His children to love Him. He wants them to love Him more than they love anything else. He has given us all the blessings of life to enjoy, and all He asks is our love; and if we love Him we will keep His commandments.

The Bible tells us about the commandments of God, and speaks of one of them as the great commandment. One of the scribes, who knew all about the Ten Commandments, came to Jesus and asked Him which was the great commandment. Jesus told him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). That is not an unreasonable commandment. Let us consider first how much God loved us.

#### **Fellowship Broken**

In the beginning of time God placed Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden and gave them everything to make them happy. Because they sinned they could not stay there; and because they sinned they brought sin and unhappiness upon all the future generations who lived upon earth. God showed His love to His chosen people for many generations, even when they sinned against Him; and He had a plan wherein He would one day send His only Son, the Son whom He loved and whom the angels of Heaven adored, to the world to live among sinful men and die the cruel death of the cross.

**"One day when Heaven was filled with His praises,  
One day when sin was as black as could be,  
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin —  
Dwelt amongst men, my Redeemer is He!"**

There was no other way by which man could escape punishment for his sins: Jesus must come and die in our stead. God loved us enough to send His Son to suffer such death; and the Son loved us enough to be willing to go. Now do you think God is unreasonable to ask us to love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind?

#### **Love for Israel**

God had chosen the Children of Israel to be His particular people, not because they were a great nation who would make a name for themselves among the people of the earth by their excellent deeds, but because He loved their fathers. He had seen the heart of Abraham who believed God, and He had promised that through Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

God had watched that family grow through Isaac, then Jacob, then the twelve patriarchs who became the twelve tribes of Israel. His love had preserved them through the famine that had gripped the world, and had fed them in Egypt when their countrymen were dying from hunger. Their descendants had

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

<sup>11</sup> 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;

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

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

<sup>14</sup> Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you;

<sup>15</sup> (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.

<sup>16</sup> Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.

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

<sup>18</sup> 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 swore unto thy fathers,

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

<sup>20</sup> 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?

almost forgotten God, but when the hardships of Egypt became bitter, they remembered and cried to God for deliverance. The Lord looked down in love upon their misery, and caused them to triumph gloriously over the Egyptians

Then God watched the march of the Israelites through the wilderness, and loved them so much that He would not let their clothes wear out; He gave them food in that barren land, and brought water from a rock for them to drink. And what did God want for pay in return for all His love to them? "What doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13).

### Commandments for Children

The commandments were to be taught to the children. Even the little ones can love God with all their hearts. Jesus called some small children to Him, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). The Israelites were to talk about God's blessings when they sat in their homes, not only in their house of worship; and they were to think of the Lord the last thing when they went to bed at night, and the first thing when they got up in the morning; and when they walked along the road they were to talk about God. When we do that, we enjoy the presence of God and communion with Him.

The Israelites were to wear frontlets on their foreheads as a reminder to them of their duty to God. And they were to write the commandments and put them upon their houses so they would never forget God.

### Kept in Love

The commandments of God were not hard to keep by those who really loved Him. When the Children of Israel first heard them when God spoke from Mount Sinai, they promised to keep them all; but because there was sin in their hearts they became afraid and drew back from that wholehearted love that He wanted. God said at that time, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29). He knew that if they did things against the commandments He had given they would get into serious trouble. He loved them so much He wanted to spare them. He wanted them and their children to be happy, and the only way anyone can be really happy is to do what God tells him to do.

Many people who are in sin today think they are happy. They say they have everything they need, and that they do not need God. Still they are not satisfied. Almost everyone wants more money, and will work very hard to get it. The more they get the more they want, and they are never happy with the amount they have. And they are afraid of sickness and death. They will buy large insurance policies to "secure" themselves from the things that are likely to come to everyone, and yet they do not feel secure. When illness comes, money cannot buy the health of a loved one. Death leaves as great a loneliness in the family of the insured as the uninsured. People fear the future; they fear old age. They worry about what will be next week, next month, or next year. They always hope the future will be brighter than the present, and then they are disappointed.

When we fear God we need fear nothing else. When we are the "sheep of his pasture," He takes good care of us. Jesus

<sup>21</sup> 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:

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

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

<sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> 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**

<sup>18</sup> 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**

<sup>28</sup> 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?

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

<sup>30</sup> 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.

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

told His disciples, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (Matthew 6:31). Jesus wanted His people to have enough to eat and enough to wear, but He did not want them to worry about it. He told them that His heavenly Father took care of the little birds, and He loved His children more than the birds and would certainly take care of them. Jesus told them right then what they were supposed to do to please Him: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

When we seek first the Kingdom of God we are His children and feel His care. Then when sickness comes to us we can pray and trust our heavenly Father to heal us. When sorrow comes into our homes we pray for Him for comfort, and His love fills that vacant place in our hearts.

### **Obedience**

How much does it mean to love God? Many people say they do, but do they really? There were many people in the time of Christ who enjoyed the miracles He wrought, and they called Him Lord. But one day Jesus stopped them and asked, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). The Apostle John admonishes us, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18). To love God means more than singing hymns of praise to Him, committing His Word to memory, or even telling Him in our prayers that we love Him. We must prove it by the life we live.

### **Love versus Works**

The Psalmist says, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments" (Psalm 119:6). Do you notice that he says, "all thy commandments"? Perhaps a person does live uprightly before his neighbors: he never takes anything that does not belong to him, never tells a lie, never hates anyone nor says anything mean about him, gives to the poor and tries to help those in need. There are not very many people who are that good, but still such a person can fail to be a Christian. God's Word says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." We must be born again to have such love in our hearts.

Perhaps that good person we spoke of was so busy looking after the needs of the poor that he did not have time to serve God. The Apostle Paul tells us, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:3). God is not going to be satisfied with our ideas of the characteristics of a Christian; He has given us the perfect pattern, and unless we fit into it, we shall not go to Heaven. "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (I John 2:5).

If we keep the first commandment we have no difficulty keeping the others. The love of God in our hearts takes out all inclination to break any of the others.

Let us consider the second commandment. Jesus said it was like unto the first. If we love God as we should we will also love our brother. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20) ..Someone may even say he is a Christian but not be able to get along with his brothers and sisters. John says of him: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light,

<sup>32</sup> 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:

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> 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*.

and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (I John 2:9, 10). This was not a new commandment, for we read in Leviticus 19:18: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus told His disciples, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

When Jesus was speaking to the scribe, of the great commandment, and the second which was like unto it, the scribe answered, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is 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). Jesus told him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

Consider the confession of the scribe: he agreed to the standard Jesus held up for a Christian, which is much more than most people believe today. And still he was outside the Kingdom! Think how much it takes to get into the Kingdom of God. Not all who say, "Lord, Lord" shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, "but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

### QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the first commandment?
- 2 What will we do if we love God supremely?
- 3 How were the Israelites to teach the commandments to their children?
- 4 How does the world know if we are Christ's disciples?
- 5 What must we do to enter Heaven?