

The First and Second Commandments

(Matthew 22:34-40)

Introduction:

1. The Lord has blessed us by allowing us to begin another year.
2. Last Sunday was the first Lord's Day of 2016, and today is the second.
3. Perhaps this is a good time for us to reflect upon "the first and second commandments" that Jesus talked about in these verses.
4. Let us begin our study by examining . . .

Discussion:

I. MATTHEW 22:34-40

A. According to vs.34-35, the Pharisees were involved in this discussion.

1. We learn from vs.15 that these people were plotting against the Lord.
2. In vs.16-22 Jesus answered the question about paying tribute to Caesar.
3. Jesus then answered the question about the resurrection (vs.23-33).
4. Afterward, the Pharisees "*were gathered together.*"
5. One of the Pharisees asked Jesus a question.
 - a. He was "*a lawyer*" [an authority on the Law of Moses].
 - b. This man's purpose for asking his question was to "tempt" [test] Jesus.

B. (vs.36) The question: "*Master, which is the great commandment in the law?*"

1. The Pharisees had a problem with exalting commandments they liked and overlooking others they did not like (Matthew 23:23).
2. It seems that this question was designed to:
 - a. test the Lord's knowledge of the law
 - b. entrap Jesus by getting Him to place special emphasis on a particular commandment so it could be used against Him.

C. (vs.37-40) Jesus answered this question.

1. The Lord's answer:
 - a. demonstrated His knowledge of Scripture as well as His wisdom
 - b. "summed up" all the law and the prophets in 2 commandments.
2. (vs.37) Jesus began by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5.
 - a. God is to be loved with "all the heart" [sincerely, truly, without pretense], "all the soul" [the feelings, affections, desires], and "all the mind" [the understanding].
 - b. To illustrate the importance of this commandment, it sums up all of our responsibilities toward God (Deuteronomy 5:7-15).
 - c. The first commandment is to love God with all the heart, soul, and mind.

3. (vs.39) Jesus continued by quoting Leviticus 19:18.
 - a. In addition to loving God, others are to be loved as self.
 - b. Jesus explained what this involves in Matthew 7:12.
 - c. To illustrate the importance of this commandment, it sums up all of our responsibilities toward our fellow man (Deuteronomy 5:16-21).
 - d. The second commandment involves loving our neighbors as ourselves.

II. APPLICATION

- A. We have seen that the Law of Moses taught the Israelites to love God and their neighbors.
- B. The New Testament teaches us to love God, as well.
 1. We should certainly want to love God.
 - a. (1 John 4:19) *"We love Him, because He first loved us."*
 - b. God has demonstrated His love to us (1 John 4:9-10).
 2. God wants us to show our love to Him (1 John 5:3).
- C. The New Testament also teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Romans 13:8-10).

Conclusion:

1. In addition to teaching us to love God, Jesus set the proper example Himself (John 14:31).
2. Jesus also wants us to love Him as He loved the Father (John 15:10).
3. As we go through 2016, let us:
 - a. love the Father and Christ with all of our heart, soul, and mind
 - b. treat people the way we want to be treated.