



# CAPITOL COMMISSION

## A Lawyer asks Jesus for the Greatest Law

MAY 19-21, 2010

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**Matthew 22:34-40** *“But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. (36) One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, (36) “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” (37) And He said to him, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ (38) This is the great and foremost commandment. (39) The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ (40) On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”*

“IF PEOPLE LOVED PERFECTLY THERE WOULD BE NO NEED FOR LAW, BECAUSE THE PERSON WHO LOVES OTHERS WILL NEVER DO THEM HARM.”

JOHN MACARTHUR

Where the Pharisees happy with Christ for silencing the Sadducees? Is there hierarchy within the laws of God? Is there a singular saying from which all essential teachings flow? Why does Jesus choose a passage that is written on their very person, the doorposts of their houses and repeated by them twice a day? Does Jesus allow the Judicial Law and Spiritual Law to be separated? Are these leaders who are so religious anywhere close to doing what was most essential?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > MAY 26-28: MATTHEW 22:41-46 *JESUS ASKS THE LEADERS THE ULTIMATE QUESTION*
- > JUNE 2-4: MATTHEW 23:1-12 *THE CHARACTER OF LEADERS WITHOUT CHRIST*
- > JUNE 9-11: MATTHEW 23:13-33 *SEVEN CURSES OF CHRIST UPON UNREPENTANT LEADERS*

Love is the most beautiful attribute of God and we most clearly reflect His image as we share our love with others. Love is the most celebrated thing in the world with thousands of cards, greater thousands of songs, and an infinite diversity of expression. It is Tuesday of

the Passion Week and the moon would be completely full in two more days when Jesus would be crucified.<sup>1</sup> He had already answered the political question of the Pharisees and the absurd question of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection. They must have known that Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany, near Jerusalem the previous week, after he had been dead for three days. They had just asked the one who is *“The Resurrection and the Life”* (Jn. 11:25) about the resurrection. These higher critics of Scripture were answered by Christ so that they were completely *“silenced,”* a word meaning to *“muzzle,”* or *“forcefully restrict the opening of the mouth.”* They had been *“verbally incapacitated”*<sup>2</sup> by Jesus and the Pharisees must have been pleased, but their pleasure was far outweighed by their inability to trap Jesus Christ.

“HE HAD, IN ONE DAY, BAFFLED THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE, PHARISEES AND THEIR DISCIPLES, HERODIANS AND SADDUCEES. IF HE CONTINUED TO PREVAIL, ALL THE PEOPLE WOULD BE WON OVER TO HIS SIDE. SO ONCE MORE THEY MET IN CONSULTATION: *THEY WERE GATHERED TOGETHER.* THEY MUST THINK OF SOME FRESH DEVICE, SOME NEW PLAN FOR HIS OVERTHROW.”

CHARLES SPURGEON

### I. THE PHARISEES GATHER MT. 22:34

The word for *“gathered”* regarding the Pharisees is a passive and God is relating here that they are being driven almost by another force in their blind persistence to trap Christ. Their hostile huddle results in one last attempt to catch Jesus in a verbal error, or at least a supposed error so that they can denounce Him in front of the people. With the various schools of

<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 1, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 221-222. And Herman H. Goldstine, *New and full moons*, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973; reprint, 1994), 86 (page citation is to the reprint edition).

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 16-23*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 336.

### BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG & 11:30 AM – WOODBRIDGE – WILL RESUME AGAIN ON JUNE 2, 2010  
THURSDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY –BK AT RT. 10&KRAUSE, NOON – WYTESTONE PLAZA AT 8<sup>TH</sup> & MAIN – 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GOLDEN CORRAL AT NORVIEW & MILITARY HWY – NEAR NORFOLK AIRPORT

# Virginia

## A Lawyer asks Jesus for the Greatest Law

thought debating over the minutia of the law, they expected that they might be able to entangle Him in one of their debates over what was “weighty” or “light” regarding their 613 designated commands of the Law. So they commission probably their most expert lawyer to enter into dialogue with Jesus to engage Him with the most difficult question they had debated for years.

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“HOWEVER, THE QUESTIONER DID NOT REALIZE THAT HE WHO STOOD BEFORE HIM IN THAT HOUR WAS JEHOVAH HIMSELF, THE GIVER OF THE LAW.”  
ARNO GAEBELEIN

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### II. THE LAWYER QUESTIONS MT. 22:35-36

This lawyer would have been one of those who had the ability to “*sit in Moses’ seat*” (Mt. 23:2) and represent the ultimate authority of Judaism. One rabbi taught that because Moses was exalted as “*faithful in all My household*” (Numbers 12:7), then God had placed him above the angels. Since Jesus’ teaching was of such contrast to theirs due to their thousands of additions encrusting the Law with their human interpretations, they were convinced that His teaching was contrary to Moses. To contradict Moses was to contradict God and be convicted of heresy. Their intent was to catch Him saying anything that would undermine Moses or his law so they could accuse Him and turn the people against Him. So, “*a lawyer asked Him a question, testing Him, Teacher, which is the greatest commandment of the law?*”

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“JESUS WAS LOVE INCARNATE; HE ALONE LOVED GOD THE FATHER WITH ALL HIS HEART AND WITH ALL HIS SOUL AND WITH ALL HIS MIND, AND HE LOVES US ALSO. BUT THEY, LIKE ALL SINNERS, WERE DOING EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO ELIMINATE JESUS’ PRESENCE FROM THEIR LIVES.”  
JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

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### III. THE LORD ANSWERS MT. 22:37-40

Jesus continually repeated His answer, which was the first passage they had memorized as a child, were repeating twice a day, was in their wooden mezuzah attached to their doorpost and in the phylactery on their forehead and arm, “**YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.**’ *This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’* On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” They considered these truths necessary for salvation (Luke 10:25-27), but they had never associated them with the judicial law. They had mentally divided the secular from the sacred, but here Jesus teaches that the same foundational truth which motivates the life of salvation underpins the laws of good government! This is why murder, rape, incest, adultery, lying, cheating, stealing, etc. are wrong. All crime demonstrates an arrogant selfishness and a lack of love for God and others! Adam and Eve were the first to commit crime against God and one another in disobeying God; and their son, Cain, soon followed in murdering his brother. This is why it is a foundational crime against our children to teach them the lie of evolution instead these two essential commands in the classroom. Instead of these Pharisees trapping Jesus in His words, He shines the truth of the whole Bible on their wicked, murderous hearts. In this most powerful summation of truth, we are not only taught to love God with our whole heart, the fullness of our will, and the entire strength of our intellect, but we must obey the golden rule (Mt. 7:12) and love our neighbor as ourselves. The two are inseparable. “*If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar . . . he who loves God must love his brother also*” (I John 4:20-21).

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THE DOOR OF ALL TRUTH OPENS ON THESE TWO HINGES!

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#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Is love for God and others the foundation of your personal and legislative decisions?
- 2) Are there those you refuse to love and pray for, because you hate them (Mt. 5:43-48, I Tim. 2:1-4)?
- 3) How do you demonstrate your love for God and others in your home and with your spouse or those closest to you?