

## (8) Pharisees Question Commandments (Mt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-34)

1. The humiliation of the Sadducees emboldened the Pharisees to form their largest group yet for an encounter with Jesus (Mt. 22:34).
  - a. One of this group was a lawyer viewed the group's question as a temptation (Mt. 22:35).
  - b. Another of this group (a scribe) identified the Lord as one who answered well (Mk. 12:28).
2. In a previous episode [LJ&PM8], a lawyer provided this two-fold answer, so the Lord's citation here is an interesting situation (Lk. 10:25-27).
  - a. Is this the same lawyer in both episodes?
  - b. How often did Jesus teach this message?
  - c. Did the lawyer in Luke blend Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18 in his own synthesis, or was he at that time actually quoting a prior teaching that Jesus had given?
3. Jewish background for this question.
  - a. The scribes had identified 613 separate commandments, 365 of which were negative and 248 of which were positive.
  - b. They divided them further into "heavy" and "light," i.e., more important and less important.
  - c. The Rabbis often attempted to sum up the whole Law in a single unifying command.
  - d. According to Hillel: "What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof."
4. Jesus is asked for the Greatest Commandment, and He answers with the greatest and the second greatest commandments.
  - a. Jesus' answer is identical to the answer provided by the lawyer as a means to work for eternal life (Lk. 10:25).
  - b. Jesus does not teach this as a works-based salvation, but rather as a dependent foundation of what the Law commands (Mt. 22:40).
5. Commandment #1 comes from the Jewish Shema (Deut. 6:4; Mk. 12:29,30).
  - a. Hear, O Israel! YHWH our Elohiym, YHWH one (echod). Arnold Fruchtenbaum has several excellent articles on the unity of a compound singularity rather than an absolute singularity.
  - b. You shall love YHWH your Elohiym with all your heart (לֵבָב לֵבָב #3824, καρδία kardia #2588), soul (נֶפֶשׁ nephesh #5315, ψυχή psuchē #5590), and might (מִצְדָּה m'ōd #3966, δύναμις dunamis #1411) [MT, LXX].
  - c. Heart, Soul, Mind (καρδία, ψυχή, διάνοια dianoia #1271) (Mt. 22:37). Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength (καρδία, ψυχή, διάνοια, ἰσχύς ischus #2479) (Mk. 12:30). Heart, Soul, Strength, Mind (καρδία, ψυχή, ἰσχύς, διάνοια) (Lk. 10:27).
  - d. The lawyer adds an additional term: understanding (σύνεσις sunesis #4907) (Mk. 12:33).
  - e. The variety of expressions indicates a multiplicity in spoken messages and a non-precisional apprehension of the principle.
6. Commandment #2 "is like" Commandment #1 (Mt. 22:39).
  - a. Loving your neighbor is like loving the Lord.
  - b. How is it like?
    - 1) Value or result?
    - 2) Target or object?
    - 3) Intensity of the love? Our love for our neighbor must be with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
7. The scribe in Mark's account accepts Jesus' teaching and relates it intelligently to other concepts of grace (Mk. 12:32-34; 1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 15:22; Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8 cf. Mt. 9:13; 12:7).
8. This event brought the Pharisees' hostile questions to an end (Mk. 12:34b).