

JESUS' GREATEST COMMANDMENT

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The man was a teacher. He taught the Law of Moses. He was impressed to see Jesus answering the questions of hypocrites and heretics with wisdom:

"One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?'"



He felt it was his opportunity to ask Jesus, the Great Teacher, what was the most important commandment, how he can be saved, enter life and the Kingdom of God.

Now, we need to shed all our biases, everything we have been taught in Sunday schools, and all the teachings of mortal men. All who love Jesus should let him talk:

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"

A great answer to a great question: accept the Lord our God is One, love Him, and worship Him to the best of your ability.

Jesus was not finished. He had more to teach. Obviously Jesus was teaching the man everything he needed to get into the Kingdom of God. Jesus added:

"...The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The Great Teacher further clarified:

"There is **no** commandment greater than these."

The man who questioned Jesus repeated the commandments to make sure he got them right:

Mark 12:32 "Well said, teacher,' the man replied. 'You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him...'"

Jesus seeing the man had learned the greatest commandment correctly gave him the good news:

Mark 12:34 "When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.'"

There are some significant lessons in this story:

First, Jesus taught the man more than he asked, yet he did not say he is the son of God, or the Savior sent to redeem mankind of its sins. He did not say anything remotely similar to what people are instructed to repeat to be 'born again' in Christ, "You should individually receive me, accept me as the Son of God, your personal Lord and Savior who will die on the cross for your sins and will rise from the dead. Let the Holy Spirit fill you..."

Take what Jesus said and leave what people have added.

Second, salvation depends on this commandment. Jesus made it clear when another man approached Jesus to learn from him (Mark 10:17-29). The man fell on his knees and said to Jesus:

Mark 10:17-18 "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied: "Why do you call me good? No one is good — except God alone."

Third, Jesus confirmed there is no commandment greater than these. In case, someone might think the greatest commandment changed afterwards, Jesus told us:

Matthew 5:17-19 "For assuredly, I say to you, till the heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no mean pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Fourth, anyone who loves Jesus and wants to enter life must keep the greatest commandment of Jesus as he said:

John 14:15 "If you love me, keep my commandments."

Matthew 19:17 "If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

Fifth, a sincere Christian should accept what Jesus said without twisting his words or finding hidden meaning in them. Jesus taught exactly what Moses taught some 2,000 years before him:

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

Jesus, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, taught the same eternal truth ALL the prophets of God taught to their people: God is One, worship Him alone.

Deuteronomy 6:13 "Fear the Lord your God, serve Him only and take your oaths in His name."

Deuteronomy 5:7 "You shall have no other God besides Me."

Isaiah 43:11 "I even, I am your Lord and besides Me, there is no Savior."

Hosea 13:4 "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no savior except me."

Psalms 95:6-7 "O come, let us bow down and worship, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. For we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His voice and He is our God."

Jesus emphasized this teaching to Satan as well:

Matthew 4:10 "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."

Sixth, the Quran confirms the greatest commandment of Jesus. The Quran teaches us exactly that God sent all the prophets with the same teaching: to worship the One true God alone.

"...And your God is One God: there is no god but He..." (Quran 2:163)

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him..." (Quran 17:23)

"And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We revealed to him (saying): 'none has the right to be worshipped but I, so worship Me.'" (Quran 21:25)

Seventh, on the Day of Resurrection, the Quran tells us that God will ask Jesus:

"And [beware the Day] when God will say, 'O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as gods besides God?...''" (Quran 5:116)

Jesus will respond:

"He will say, 'Limitless are You in Your glory! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Verily, it is You alone who fully knows all the things that are beyond the reach of a created being's perception. I said not to them except what you commanded me – to worship God, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You alone had been their keeper:' for You are witness unto everything. If You should punish them – indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them – indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (Quran 5:116-118)

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