

The Greatest Commandment

The Sadducees who were a small and yet wealthy group of priests who were in charge of the Jewish temple asked Jesus many questions. They wanted to trick him with their questioning. Well, the Sadducees did not believe in life after death. Jesus told them that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was the God of the living and not the dead. They were astonished at his teaching. This silenced the Sadducees and so the Pharisees stepped up. They asked which was the greatest commandment in the Law. Jesus was not going to pick one of the Ten Commandments and make it the greatest. He instead told them that you must “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul and also to love your neighbor as yourself. He said that all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. They could not say anything against this. He was correct. Remember the old covenant is found in the old testament. There is great history and great messages, but once Christ’s Church was established in Acts chapter 2, we no longer were bound by Jewish law. We were bound by the love of Jesus Christ. Think about it. All of the Ten Commandments can be summed up in the two Jesus gave the Pharisees.

Question?

- a) Why were the Pharisees and Sadducees trying to trick Jesus?
- b) Did Jesus give answers that they could pick apart or answers that they could not argue with?
- c) Name the two great commandments Jesus shared.

Scripture: Matthew 22:36-40 New International Version (NIV)

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: ““Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’^[a] ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b] ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Next Steps: Look up the word love on the internet. Type in the following: “How many times is the word love used in the bible?” Answer: Depends on the translation. Anywhere from 514 to 810 times. The NIV has 618 times while the New Living Translation has 810. The key is that God is love.