

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS—PARENT PAGE 10

OVERVIEW

Today's story, Matthew 22:35-40, jumps ahead into the time of the New Testament, the time that the Lord was living in this world.

We find Jesus teaching in the temple. Once again, people had forgotten the path to heaven. The world had languished in spiritual darkness for many years. Selfish, prideful and hypocritical behavior had replaced loving obedience to the Lord and kindness to others. The wise words of Jesus were received with joy and amazement by people whose hearts were open to His teachings.

The Jewish leaders at that time were jealous of Jesus. They were fearful that He would take away their influence and ability to dominate the uneducated masses. They tried to publicly embarrass the Lord by asking Him trick questions. Our story for today is an example of this. A lawyer asked which commandment was the most important one. He had hoped to ensnare the Lord into contradicting Himself, but the Lord answered the question with the Two Great Commandments. He followed by stating, "**On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.**" (Matthew 22:40) This definitive statement about the importance of the entire Word silenced anyone who wanted to trap the Lord with questions. The truth is that both of these commandments lay forgotten in the Old Testament.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5)

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18)

WHAT WE AS PARENTS LEARN FROM THE STORY

- ☞ The Two Great Commandments are a summary of the whole of the Word.
- ☞ We can teach them to our children by establishing patterns of behavior for the family that show respect to the Lord and the neighbor.

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND AND ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- Deuteronomy 6:1-7 and Leviticus 19:18
- Newchurchvineyard.org - July 2002
- *Arcana Coelestia* 36 and 8393, *Heaven and Hell* 19, *Heavenly Doctrine* 9, *True Christian Religion* 287

REFERENCES FROM THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINE:

ARCANA COELESTIA 36 AND HEAVEN AND HELL 19

Arcana Coelestia 36: Faith is not only a knowledge and acknowledgment of all things that the doctrine of faith comprises, but especially is it an obedience to all things that the doctrine of faith teaches. The primary point that it teaches, and that which people should obey, is love to the Lord, and love toward the neighbor, for if a person is not in this, he is not in faith. This the Lord teaches so plainly as to leave no doubt concerning it, in Mark:



The foremost of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the foremost commandment; and the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; there is none other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:29-31) In Matthew, the Lord calls the former of these the "first and great commandment" and says that "on these commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-41) The "Law and the Prophets" are the universal doctrine of faith, and the whole Word.

Heaven and Hell 19: That love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor include in themselves all Divine truths can be confirmed by what the Lord Himself declared of these two loves, saying—"Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second, like unto it is, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40). The "Law" and the "Prophets" are the whole Word, thus all Divine Truth.