

34But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. 35One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37And 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.”

41Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: 42“What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” They said to Him, “The son of David.” 43He said to them, “Then how does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying,

*44‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,
“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET”’?*

45“If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?” 46No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

If you've hung around evangelical circles for any time at all you've no doubt heard the often quoted quip that there are only 2 religions in the world.

The religion of human achievement. And the religion of divine accomplishment.

The human achievement one takes on every form and shape and color. But sooner or later you discover that the bottom line is that humans have to pick themselves up by their own bootstraps and strive to be better people.

You have to work your way back to God. Usually the so-called god is also by human design. Created in our own image. Not so high that he's

unreachable.

The religion of human achievement has a high view of man and a low view of god. They aren't that far apart. Righteousness is attainable. Or perhaps if you're wealthy you can purchase someone else's surplus overabundance of righteousness and get farther up the ladder to god that way.

The religion of divine accomplishment says; your righteousness is like a dirty garment. It smells like the diaper pail you didn't empty for two days. Filth. You get the picture.

But God, in His mercy and compassion sent His perfect Son to make a trade with you. He takes your filth and satisfies the Father's punishment for your sin, death, even death on a cross, and in turn, He gives you His perfect righteousness.

That is the religion of divine accomplishment. We added nothing. He supplied everything. The righteousness of God is imputed to us. Divine accomplishment.

The Jews, even though they were the caretakers of God's revelation, were steeped in a system of human achievement.

Why was that. How did they miss the mark by such a great amount? Where did they go wrong? I think perhaps the answer is in these verses

Here again we have Jesus, in the final days of His incarnation, in Jerusalem, and in conflict with the men who want Him dead.

This is Wednesday. Thursday He will continue the attack against these rulers, and then we'll have the last supper, the time in the garden, the arrest and mock trials, and early on Friday morning, they will crucify the Lord of Glory. God in human flesh.

This is a most interesting section. Its context is the other 2 attempts to discredit Him. The disciples of the Pharisees along with the Herodians try to get Him to choose sides, either with Rome, or against Rome.

He simply says, pay your debt to Rome. Pay your debt to God.

The fact that Rome was there in control in the first place was a judgement sent by God because of their idolatry. They did not reverence God. They got Rome in the bargain. Jesus says, now you can do both. Pay the tax. Honor and worship God.

Give Rome their days wage. All the rest belongs to God.

Like us, they didn't want to give anything to anybody.

The pharisee's silenced, the Saducees figure they'll give it a go. They come with their absurdity argument regarding resurrection which they do not believe in. He silences them. And that brings us to this final story.

After this encounter, they will not ask Him any more questions. But this final encounter is different. It has a different tone, or so it seems to me.

Certainly, Matthew is careful to tell us in vs. 35 that this is also a test. They still want to discredit Him. To cause dissension in the ranks.

We can only wonder at what they thought He might say in answer to their question. Did they think He would dismiss the Law? Undermine the law with grace? It isn't clear, but there are some clues.

34But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. 35One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him,

There-in lies our clue. The pharisee's have re-grouped. Their re-convening is directly related to the news that Jesus has done what they never could do. Shut up the Saducee's. His answer was amazing. The people were astonished at His teaching.

Our little clue is that in Matthew's gospel, this form of the word for law expert is only used this one time. This man was the expert among

experts.

We have those folks, don't we. You listen and read about some matter the church is discussing and you say, I wonder what Ravi Zacharias would say about this. Or John MacArthur. Or Al Mohler. Men who are particularly brilliant in their chosen fields, who also possess a sanity about them that makes you want to know what they would think about some point.

My mind immediately races to something Jesus said to Nicodemus. "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?" "the" teacher of Israel. Set apart from all the other teachers. We have these folks.

Not many mighty. Not many noble, we. But God gifts the church with teachers who really are exceptional. Experts.

One of the things that sets sharper than average folk apart from the rest of us, is their curiosity. Where 999 are satisfied, or bored, or lazy and don't ask the question, there is one that says, I want to know.

I hope I'm not mis-reading the passage but looking between the lines, I think perhaps I'm seeing that in this fellow. I'll leave it at that. We can't be dogmatic, but I don't think this guy is a pack dog going for the kill. I think he's above that and his curiosity would really like to know how this wiser-than-the-wise of teachers would come at this particular problem.

And so he asks; 36 "*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?*"

He had no doubt had this discussion myriad of times before. That's what Jewish lawyers did. They likely had it narrowed down to what they considered the weightiest of the first four commandments.

But I think the question goes beyond that. Our passage also notes that the silencing of the Sadducees who do not believe in life after death prompted the discussion.

He DOES believe in life after death. Then the obvious next question is what is required to have eternal life.

We recall another time in Luke's gospel where the near identical discussion occurs, also with a lawyer, but this time, this lawyer just cuts to the chase and says What must I do to inherit eternal life?

It's in Luke 10 just before the parable of the good samaritan. Same answer, same section. *25And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" 27And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 28And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."*

Do this, and you will live.

That just sends evangelicals into fits. Do this and you will live??! Somebody needs to teach Jesus the gospel. He's just loading these folks up with works righteousness.

Evangelicals get so exasperated that they devise all these ultra dispensational type answers. Jesus is still offering the kingdom to Israel. After Israel's rejection a new gospel comes, defined by Paul. Jesus gospel is different from Paul's gospel. blah blah blah

I don't think so. I think there is complete harmony between Jesus and Paul. Let's look at His answer to the lawyer's question; *Which is the supreme commandment?* The one I must do to attain eternal life?

Remember, that was Nicodemus question, also un-asked, which the Lord answered for him in John 3. *1Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless*

God is with him.” 3Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

I see many parallels. Perhaps we'll get to heaven and find out this man in Matthew 22 was that very same Nicodemus. Enough speculation. What does Jesus say;

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

37And 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.”

Simple, right? Do this, and you shall live. That's it! That's all that is required. Throw all the other 628 laws away, just do these 2, and you will have eternal life.

Here is where the jews and for that matter, the human race, errs.

Just focus every molecule of your being on glorifying God in every act continually and honoring your neighbor's comfort at least to the level you enjoy, and you'll be saved. That's all that is required.

There's only still one teeny tiny little problem. I'm bankrupt. I can no more meet this requirement for 10 consecutive minutes, let alone an entire lifetime, than fly to the moon in a rocketship I built from spare Model A parts that are in the back yard.

Adam, in his sin, has left me, and indeed the entire human race, in such a broken and depraved state, that this is hopeless.

The entire purpose of the law of God, given to the jews, is to shine a mirror back on me so that I can see just how broken I really am. I love the idea of compacting 600 plus laws into 2. But it doesn't help my situation. In fact it makes it worse.

Simply focus every molecule of my being on worshipping and enjoying God forever. That's all that is required. Focus every aspect of my being, my person, like a laser beam, on glorifying God, all the time, for my entire life time, and I'll be OK.

Do this, and you shall live.

Let me fill you in on a little secret about me. I've got the attention span of a 3 year old. My wife can corroborate what I'm saying. I mean it's really bad. That's why I'm standing here without a college education, doing this. I couldn't pay attention long enough to get a college education. It took me 40+ years to gather the information I stand here and share with you folks.

A minute at a time. Sometimes a little more.

We sing that song about forget about yourself, and concentrate on Him, and worship Him. Yeah, right. Whole minutes at a time, at best.

And Jesus says, all I need to do to have eternal life is concentrate every molecule of my being, like a laser, on worshipping God, at all times, and I'll be OK. *Do this and you shall live.*

I CAN'T DO THAT!!!

So what do I do then. I'm a bankrupt in the court of God. The law has shown me this much. I'm bankrupt. I owe a debt, a lifetime of falling short of the glory of God, and I've got no way to pay it.

The law of God is glorious. It shows me who I really am. But what now.

The law of God is designed to make me approach God like the tax collector in Luke 18:13

"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling

to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, '**God, be merciful to me, the sinner!**'

That's my only recourse. And Jesus says, that fellow went down to his house, justified.

It's all of God. None of me.

The jews had made the law an end in itself. They had failed to comprehend that the law of God is a mirror. And when we honestly look in that mirror, we see that we are wretched bankrupts standing before a Holy God, with nothing to offer but filth.

That's how judaism crossed over into a works righteousness religion instead of a divine accomplishment religion. And it remains so to this day.

But let's set that aside for a few moments and consider the scripture that Jesus quotes. From Deuteronomy 6 The Shema

4“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7“You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9“You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Orthodox jewish houses have a mezuzah. A little box by the front door, and inside the box are these words. The very orthodox have little boxes that they strap to their foreheads. Inside the box are these words. They have a little box strapped to their hand. Inside the box are these words. When they go to bed, they recite these words. When they get up, they recite these words.

That's all good stuff. Especially the part about teaching your children,

something we evangelicals have failed at. But none of it can actually change your heart. It's all outer. All the boxes and prayer shawls and chanting cannot make a dead stony heart into a heart that throbs with hunger for more of God.

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And your neighbor, as yourself.

Our world around us today wants to redefine love. Or define love, I suppose, the world wouldn't necessarily agree that they are re-defining love, but certainly the world's definition is fluid. It changes with the current trends. It blows in and out with the current winds of philosophy and so-called learning.

We throw the word around, but the world isn't very good at concrete definitions.

Jesus said; *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.* Jn. 14:15

Why? And how does that define love. Well, it turns out that love isn't necessarily a squishy human emotion. If I love you, my first thought and action towards you, is for your highest possible flourishing.

That's why we spank our babies when they disobey and chase the ball into the street. There's cars out there. And they will squish you. You mustn't chase the ball into the street. I want my babies to flourish.

That's why I study 7 to 9 hours each week so I can stand in this pulpit and hopefully teach the Word of God without error. I want you to flourish.

Real love wants the object of it's love to flourish and in sometimes open defiance to a world that does not understand, real love is linked to obedience of the commands of this book. That is where human flourishing is rooted.

Vs. 40“*On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.*”

I don't need to comment any more on that besides reading what the apostle Paul said about this statement in Romans 13.

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

We can flip that coin over and say; *therefore the fulfillment of the law is love.* It works both ways. The world will call us haters. We are compelled and commanded to love them . . . anyways.

Another group of questioners; silenced.

You will recall, several weeks ago, that what began this section of confrontation and teaching was these same rulers in Israel asking Jesus; *By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority.*

That was our launching pad way back in chapter 21 vs. 33.

He answered by not answering them. The question about John the baptist. Then He tells them 3 judgemental parables. The 2 sons. The wicked vineyard growers. And the Kings wedding feast invitation in honor of His son.

Then come 3 waves of attacks trying to discredit Him. The one about paying taxes to Rome. The one about the resurrection, and this final one about the Law of God.

I picture the scene. The rulers of Israel are for once . . . silent. Speechless. And Jesus finally asks them a question which will answer their original question. *By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority.*

It's time to answer that question. And He does that by engaging them in a question.

41Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: 42“What do you think about the Christ,

This is the question of questions, isn't it. Heaven and hell hang in the balance over this question.

1Tim 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Acts 4:12 Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Jn. 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

The jews had erred in that they had a misconception of what messiah would look like and accomplish when He came.

The jewish version is; He's a man, not God. He's a warrior, not a lover. He will restore sovereignty and prominence to Israel, politically and militarily, not fight against the religious elite ruling classes.

Most of those are half truths. But the other scriptures that present a suffering messiah, they ignored. They only wanted the conqueror messiah. They had no interest in redeemer messiah because, they didn't need one.

So here they sit with their messiah, and they are seething with murder and hatred for Him. Every hour he lives is costing them money! He has to go. *By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority*

42“What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?”

Easy question, right. Every Jewish child knows the answer to this. It's all over the Old Testament. The promise given to King David of a son who would rule on his throne . . . forever. The messiah. The Christ.

Up until the temple was destroyed in 70 AD the Jews kept careful genealogical records. They believed this promise. They knew the messiah would be born in that lineage. Son of David.

That's why Matthew and Luke both give detailed genealogies of Christ. One of them ends at Joseph and one of them ends at Mary. Both were in the direct line of kings.

Don't think the Jews didn't check that out for themselves. If they could have proved by genealogy that Jesus had no messianic birthright claim that would have been their best and easiest way to dis-qualify Him.

They said to Him, "The son of David."

Incomplete answer. Yes, Son of David, but more than that.

I've been called a Bible fathead, and that's OK. I get excited about this book. It's a bottomless gold mine. It never runs out.

Jesus has just given them a hermeneutics lesson. The Book is inspired by God. Verbal plenary inspiration. Every word is important. Here He takes those truths and applies those very ideas to the scripture He will take them to. The words are God-breathed.

43 He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying,

44 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,

He's quoting Psalm 110:1. Higher criticism says David didn't write it. Jesus says he DID. I choose to believe Jesus over smart men who are dead.

Not only does He say David wrote it, He says it is direct revelation

given under the inspiration of God. In the Spirit. Wake up Saducee's. Moses didn't write this. It's inspired. Like the rest of the Psalms and Prophets.

Then He breaks it down into words. Verbal plenary inspiration. 44
'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,

Yahweh said to Adonai. Both words are used in the Old Testament scriptures to speak of deity. Scholars today can argue about this, but the Jews sitting there that day did not. They knew exactly what Jesus was saying. Whoever David is speaking about, the Messiah, is addressed in terms used when speaking of God.

“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

To sit at God's right hand is to be co-equal with God. Adonai, a name equivalent with deity. Right hand, a position co-equal with deity.

UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET”’?

This is terminology we still use. We want our team to crush the opposition, don't we. Our enemies will be crushed.

This is a not so thinly veiled reference to the men sitting there listening to Him. They want to crush Him, and will within hours. But ultimately, God will crush them, if they don't bow down before His chosen Lord.

Every enemy will be vanquished before Messiah. Satan and the demons, Antichrist and the false prophet, the raging nations, every evil man woman and child that hates the Messiah will ultimately be crushed beneath His feet. Yahweh will do this for Adonai. We think it is coming on this world very soon.

Now then He takes the argument to the plenary level. The very words. The order and syntax of the words, mean things. Listen to the master. The author.

45*“If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?”*

Son of David is correct, geneologically. But it's woefully inadequate. This passage is not talking about a mere man. Even a super man. This passage is using terms describing deity. The Son of David is also Son of God.

This might go over our heads 20 century's later. We might read this and think "that's sort of obscure". Oh well, move on to something important. It did not go over their heads. They got the message perfectly.

Son of David, Son of God.

46No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.

Fast forward to the primitive church. The apostles moving forward in the book of Acts.

They seemed to be able without the completed New Testament to present the gospel by using the old testament. And we see this passage used over and over as the early church made their case.

This is one of the most important proof texts in all of the Bible that proves that Jesus is both Lord, Messiah, and Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father.

Are you His friend? Or are you His enemy?