

**Matthew 22:34-40**  
**The Principles of Salvation Part 1 ~ The Promise of Love**  
also Ezekiel 36:25-27

Now we have study guides for today that we will be making reference to. In fact, for the next couple of weeks we will be using the study guide as a reference.

We left off last time at Matthew 22:33. Today we are going to begin a study in Matthew chapter 22 verses 34 through 40. That is page 6 of your study guide.

Remember that Matthew is divided up into five sections. We are in the third section of Matthew chapters 5 through 25 studying in the final week of our Lord's public ministry. Beginning in chapter 21 was when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. And since chapter 21 we have been studying the Lord's dialogue with individual people who have come up against Him during this final week before He was crucified.

So page 6, today's message is The Promise of Love. The Promise of Love. Let us read Matthew 22:34-40. **But when the Pharisees heard that He silenced the Sadducees, they were gathered together there. And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Verse 37, Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God in your whole heart, and in your whole soul, and in your whole mind." Notice the literal translation there. "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' In these two commandments the whole Law and the Prophets are hanging."**

So we start in Matthew 22:34, The Circumstances Surrounding the Situation. **But when the Pharisees heard that he silenced the Sadducees.** In verses 23 through 33 the Sadducees, a sect or faction of the Jews, came up against Jesus to try to question Him and to try to trap Him. But Jesus put down their trap and foiled their attempts to come up against Him. And so this text tells us that when the Pharisees heard that the Sadducees were silenced - the Pharisees were another sect, another faction of Judaism. And the word *Pharisee* means *separatist*. They were religious legalists, keeping the rules of the law. So when the Pharisees heard that the Sadducees were silenced, they came and they brought to Jesus a representative.

Now the Pharisees, they believe in the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees did not. The Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul, that is eternal life. They believed in future judgment. And fourthly, they believed in supernatural beings such as angels. The Sadducees did not. So we have a group coming up against Jesus who are fundamentalists, legalists, separated in keeping the Law of Moses.

And verse 35 tells us that, **And one of them, a lawyer.** This would not be a civil lawyer like you and I know lawyer to be. This is a person who is a specialist in the Law of Moses. They are also called scribes in the Bible. So this lawyer which represented the Pharisees **asked Him, testing Him and saying** - so he was not really looking for answers. He was testing Jesus to try to put Him on the spot and to try to trap Him with one of His answers.

He said in verse 36, the lawyer asked Him, "**Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?**" Now, there were some 613 commands in the Law, the old covenant. And the lawyer asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment in the Law?" So obviously setting Jesus up for a debate, trying to trap Him.

Next, the technical points that we are focusing on this morning in verses 37 through 40. In verses 37 and 39 they describe future action. Let's read it. Verse 37, the answer to the lawyer's question is, "**You shall love the Lord your God in your whole heart, in your whole soul, and in your whole mind.**" Notice how it is worded literally: *you shall love*. It is not a command. You will love. It is a future active indicative verb, which means it is fact. It is going to happen. It is a promise. **You shall love**, which is a quote from Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 5. Jesus said, "**This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'**" A quote from Leviticus 19:18. Again using a future tense verb of fact, of promise, to show a command. **You shall love your neighbor as yourself. In these two commandments the whole Law and the Prophets are hanging.**

So the technical point about this text, which of course most people read over, since it is not really an interest for people, but it is clearly an important point for us to note. In verses 36, 38, and 40 they are called *commands*. The teacher said, "What is the great commandment?" In verse 38 Jesus said, "This is the first and great commandment." In verse 40, "And these two commandments the whole law and the prophets are hanging." Jesus called them *commandments*, the lawyer called it a *commandment*, but it is not in command form. In the original language it is not in the imperative mood for a command. It is in the future, future active indicative. The future action is commanded to be done as facts: *you will love*, period. He is not asking a question and He is not challenging people to love. He is not asking people to love. He says, "You will love. You will love the Lord your God, and you will love your neighbor as yourself."

It is important to keep the original - the original translation and meaning because this text is an expression of the three principles of salvation mentioned in the New Covenant made by God as recorded in Ezekiel 36:25-27. It is an expression of the three facts concerning salvation that are found in in the New Covenant. Now, in our Bibles we have the Old Testament and the New Testament. It represents the Old Covenant that God made with Israel and the New Covenant that God made with Israel and the Gentiles. And Jesus said this New Covenant is what God is making with people versus the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant you cannot be saved by keeping the law, you cannot be saved by works, you can only be saved by the grace of God through the New Covenant that He has made.

So what is that New Covenant? If you are in the study guide, you turn to Page 7, you have Ezekiel 36:25-27 or you can read it in your Bible.

In Ezekiel 36:25 is the first principle of salvation, The Purification of our Sins. Let's read it. **And I will sprinkle upon you clean waters, and you will be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you.** This is God speaking through the prophet, but He is using language that Ezekiel is familiar with, because Ezekiel was not only a prophet, but he was a priest. And as a priest he is using symbolic language from the instructions given to Moses in Exodus 30:19-20 and Numbers 19:17-19.

The New Testament tells us that this purification is based upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ. In Luke 22:20, Jesus at the Passover meal, as He is instituting communion to the disciples, He passed the bread. **And likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."**

In Ephesians chapter 1 verse 7 it says, **In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.** Redemption is through His shed blood. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for sins, so that people could be proclaimed to be and pronounced purified, cleansed.

This pronouncement of purification for sins is upon those who belong to Christ in the New Covenant. And God says, **I will sprinkle you with clean waters, and you will be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you.** The great work of God in a person's life is to cleanse them of their sins, and it comes through receiving Christ.

The second principle of salvation is verse 26, The Proclamation of Salvation. Let's read it. **And I will give to you a new heart, and a new spirit I will give within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give to you a heart of flesh.** Again using symbolic language as a metaphor for the transformation process that takes place when God saves a person. And it describes the new birth. God says, "I am going to change your heart. I am going to transform you. I am going to make you a new creation." And he says this new birth or transformation takes place at salvation, when God changes our heart from a stony heart - which is metaphorical language for a heart that is insensitive - to a heart of flesh, to a heart that is sensitive. And He is going to replace that heart with this heart of flesh.

And He says, "I am going to put My Spirit within you." That is the key to everything in the Bible if you want to understand the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. God, not man - man is not responsible for getting God's Spirit, God is responsible for placing His spirit within each of His people. He put a new spirit in their heart. This emphasizes the fact that God does the work. He changes and saves a person's soul.

We will study this more next week. Next week we are going to do an in-depth study on what it means to be born again, what it means to be saved. Like I say, it will be an in-depth study, focused just on that, on Ezekiel 36:26.

Now the third principle of salvation, verse 27 of Ezekiel 36, The Performance of the Christian Life. This brings us full circle to The Promise of Love in Matthew 22:34-40. First of all it repeats, **And I will give My Spirit within you.** Notice verse 27, **And I will give My Spirit within you,** repeating that of verse 26. **And I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and you will have done them.** Literal translation. God says that He is going to put His Spirit within you and that He is going to cause a person to perform the things of God. The work of God will be done by God's Spirit not by man.

Love is not a fruit of man, nor is it produced by an effort of man. A type of love is, a human love is; but the spiritual love that comes from God is produced by God's Spirit. Love is a

fruit of the Spirit the New Testament tells us. God's work is not produced by human effort; strictly by the Spirit of God, who has been given to a person.

Notice again in our text in Matthew 22:34-40, the Scripture says, "You will love," remember that? It is the Spirit of God in a person that produces the love. *You will love*, that is a promise. And it is presented as a command because when God commands us to love, He is giving us His Spirit to produce the command and to fulfill the command. It is not a human effort to produce.

Turn back to Page 6 in your study guide, **But when the Pharisees heard that He silenced the Sadducees, they were gathered together there. And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, what is the great commandment in the Law?" And the Lord said, "You shall love the Lord your God in your whole heart, and in your whole soul, and in your whole mind.' This is the first and great commandment. The second is like unto it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' In these two commandments the whole Law and the Prophets are hanging."** So they are future tense verbs of promise that will happen, not might happen, that will happen under the guiding command of God as God commands His Spirit to produce this love in the life of the believer.

The basics of salvation, the three fundamentals of salvation from Ezekiel chapter 36 is important because the entire New Testament, the entire New Covenant is based on the fact that God gives us His Spirit. A person is born again when they receive Christ, and they receive His Spirit. And then His Spirit is the One that carries out the plan of God. It is not human effort. And we spend most of our young Christian lives trying to keep all of God's commands only to find out we fail, because we cannot keep them. It is something that God's Spirit does. And as we center our focus on learning of Christ and surrender to Christ; we grow in Him, and we learn to trust Him more. That He will fulfill His plan, He will fulfill His will, which is why when we pray, we pray for the Lord's will to be done. He has a plan. He has a will. And it is us putting our faith and trust in Him.

Alright, let's close with prayer.