

## **The Motley Crew Matthew Bible Study**

**December 22, 2010**

**Merry CHRISTmas (Because Christmas always starts with Christ)**

### **The Questions**

Read Matthew 22:34-40

1. Do you remember how many commandments the Pharisees had?
2. What kind of love is Jesus talking about here?
3. What if our neighbor doesn't like us or is mean to us?
4. Why does it all hang on these two commands?
5. What is the summary of all the commandments?

*All citations from the Holy Bible are from the New International Version, used with permission.*

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### Merry CHRISTmas (Because Christmas always starts with Christ)

#### Some Suggested Answers

We opened with prayer, and had fun with a 24-question Christmas Carol quiz. It has been scanned and placed on the web site; the answers are provided below.

#### Read Matthew 22:34-40 (NIV)

##### The Greatest Commandment

**34** Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. **35** One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

**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.' **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

See also Mark 12:28-34 (below)

1. Do you remember how many commandments the Pharisees had?

613. 248 were "positive" commandments and 365 were "negative" commandments. Such a number was almost impossible to completely remember. Barnes notes: "To keep so many laws, said the Jews, is an angel's work." And on this basis, the teacher of the law would try to trap Jesus.

The scribes declared that there were 248 affirmative precepts, as many as the members of the human body; and 365 negative precepts, as many as the days in the year, the total being 613, the number of letters in the Decalogue. But Jesus cuts through such pettifogging hair-splitting to the heart of the problem. *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Concise Edition, p. 46.

Now, how was the greatness of a commandment to be determined? Of what kind must it be? One method was to judge by the severity of the penalty attached. Thus some magnified the commandments regarding the sacrifices, others the Sabbath laws, and still others the law and regulations regarding circumcision. What would Jesus say? *Lenski*, p. 879.

*asked him a question, tempting him, and saying:* he put a difficult and knotty question to him, and thereby making a trial of his knowledge and understanding of the law; and laying a snare for him, to entrap him if he could, and expose him to the people, as a very ignorant man: and delivered it in the following form. *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

The design was to try him, or tempt him; to try, not so much his knowledge as his judgment. It was a question disputed among the critics in the law. Some would have the law of circumcision to be the great commandment, others the law of the sabbath, others the law of sacrifices, according as they severally stood affected, and spent their zeal; now they would try what Christ

said to this question, hoping to incense the people against him, if he should not answer according to the vulgar opinion; and if he should magnify one commandment, they would reflect on him as vilifying the rest.

[Matthew Henry's Whole Bible Commentary.](#)

Christ first quotes Deuteronomy 6:4 (“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”), and then Leviticus 19:18 (“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”). Again we see the Old Testament fulfilled in the New Testament.

## 2. What kind of love is Jesus talking about here?

Agape. The three words in Greek for “love” are agape (αγαπε from αγαπάω – love in a social or moral sense), as opposed to philo (φιλόσ from φιλέω – fraternal or brotherly love), or eros (ερος – erotic or sexual love). This agape is love of choice, a feeling with direction.

### Love [N] [B]

This word seems to require explanation only in the case of its use by our Lord in his interview with "Simon, the son of Jonas," after his resurrection ( [John 21:16](#) [John 21:17](#) ). When our Lord says, "Lovest thou me?" he uses the Greek word *agapas* ; and when Simon answers, he uses the Greek word *philo* , i.e., "I love." This is the usage in the first and second questions put by our Lord; but in the third our Lord uses Simon's word. The distinction between these two Greek words is thus fitly described by Trench:., "*Agapan* has more of judgment and deliberate choice; *philein* has more of attachment and peculiar personal affection. Thus the 'Lovest thou' (Gr. *agapas*) on the lips of the Lord seems to Peter at this moment too cold a word, as though his Lord were keeping him at a distance, or at least not inviting him to draw near, as in the passionate yearning of his heart he desired now to do. Therefore he puts by the word and substitutes his own stronger 'I love' (Gr. *philo*) in its room. A second time he does the same. And now he has conquered; for when the Lord demands a third time whether he loves him, he does it in the word which alone will satisfy Peter ('Lovest thou,' Gr. *phileis*), which alone claims from him that personal attachment and affection with which indeed he knows that his heart is full."

In [1 Corinthians 13](#) the apostle sets forth the excellency of love, as the word "charity" there is rendered in the Revised Version.

These dictionary topics are from  
M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition,  
published by Thomas Nelson, 1897. Public Domain, copy freely.

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[N] indicates this entry was also found in Nave's Topical Bible

[B] indicates this entry was also found in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary

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### Bibliography Information

Easton, Matthew George. "Entry for Love". "Easton's Bible Dictionary".

### 3. What if our neighbor doesn't like us or is mean to us?

That can make it harder, but this is Jesus' command to us. We love God by loving others as we love God. Because this is so hard for us to do, we must call on God through Jesus to make this happen in our lives, everyday (even when we're on the freeway!).

Likewise, what if I don't like my neighbor? "Old Fred is a jerk. He's always been a jerk. He was a jerk in grade school, and never grew out of it. I wouldn't walk across the street to spit on his grave!" This can be used as an excuse not to love our neighbor, since we can argue that we don't really care whether Fred loves us or not. The solution is in John 13:34-35, where Jesus makes love for one another not dependent on how we would have our neighbor love us, but by a new, much more stringent standard that takes the "me" out of the love equation:

**34** "A new command I give you: Love one another. *As I have loved you, so you must love one another.* **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."  
[emphasis added]

To the extent that we love others as He loved us, we will approach that perfection that Jesus wants in us. Matt. 5:48. But, again, because we can't do this on our own ... or certainly that seems to be a lesson from history ... we must call on God through Jesus to make this change in our hearts and in our lives.

The Pharisees looked down on everybody else. Jesus marries these two commandments into a single new commandment of love, upon which all the law and prophets hang.

### 4. Why does it all hang on these two commands?

Dr. Lenski describes this quite well in his *Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (pp. 882-883):

Because of their nature and their quality as indicated "in these two commandments the whole law (Torah, Pentateuch) hangs and the prophets" (all the other books of the Old Testament). These two are the nail from which all else written in the Old Testament hangs suspended. Take away this nail, and everything else would fall in a heap. It would lose its true meaning, significance, and purpose. ... And these two commandments, as do no others, show the true need of the gospel; for, however well they may outwardly perform deeds of the law, by nature men lack the love demanded by these commandments, are thus altogether guilty before God, and can be saved and restored only by means of the gospel.

### 5. What is the summary of all the commandments?

Love, of the kind that God has for us, and of the kind that we must show to each other. We recalled from a couple of weeks ago that we can't clean a fish before we catch it, and that if we could bring another to church, the best way is to have a barbeque first (i.e., establish the personal relationship first, then bring the spiritual gift).

"Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." Romans 13:10

We closed with prayer.

Post Script from Doug.

At the bottom of my third page of notes was written “Acts 20,” but I couldn't remember why I made that notation. In scanning through that chapter, I came upon the passage that was being talked about:

**Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas**

7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. 9 Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. 10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!” 11 Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. 12 The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted. Acts 20:7-12.

Unfortunately, I still can't remember *why* that passage was noteworthy.

**Parallel Verses In Matthew Chapter 22**

[Harmony of the Gospels @ Blue Letter Bible](#)

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Parable of the great supper	22:1-14		14:15-24	
Parable of the wedding-garment	22:1-14		14:16-24	
The tribute money	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26	
The Sadducees confuted	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40	
The great commandment	22:34-40	12:28-34		
David's Son and David's Lord	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44	

<p><b>The Greatest Commandment</b>  <b>Matthew 22</b>  <b>34</b>Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.<b>35</b>One of them, an</p>	<p><b>The Greatest Commandment</b>  <b>Mark 12</b>  <b>28</b>One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them</p>
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expert in the law, tested him with this question:

**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.' **38**This is the first and greatest commandment. **39**And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' **40**All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

**29**"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' **31** The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

**32**"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. **33**To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

**34**When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

#### Also John 13:34-35:

**34** "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

### Suggested Answers to the Christmas Carol Quiz:

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|--|--|
| 1. Jingle Bells                        | 11. Deck the Halls   |
| 2. Walking in a Winter Wonderland      | 12. I Saw Three Ships  |
| 3. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town       | 13. O Holy (k)night  |
| 4. Joy to the Word                     | 14. The First no-L   |
| 5. Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer     | 15. Away (weigh) in a Manger   |
| 6. O Come, All Ye Faithful             | 16. The Twelve Days of Christmas (there were 12 days with the number "25") |
| 7. (I'm Dreaming of a) White Christmas | 17. I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus  |
| 8. O Christmas Tree                    | 18. All I Want For Christmas   |
| 9. What Child Is This?                 | 19. Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire (The Christmas Song)                |
| 10. We Three Kings of Orient Are       |  |

20. It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
21. Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow
22. Silent (k)night

23. O Little Town (Runner up: Do You See What I See?)
24. Silver Bells

## For Additional Study

### Online Resources

[Book of Concord in PDF Format](http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/TrigBOC.pdf), The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod  
<<http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/TrigBOC.pdf>> (2MB file)

These texts are in the public domain and may be copied and distributed freely. The source of these translations is *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

A number of important Lutheran texts can be found in the Belief and Practice section of the website of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=112>

John S. C. Abbott and Jacob Abbott, *Illustrated New Testament*  
<http://www.studylight.org/com/ain/>

Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*  
<http://www.studylight.org/com/bnn/>

Harold F. Buls  
<http://www.pericope.org/buls-notes/index.html> and  
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/wittenberg-bul.html>

Adapted from *Exegetical Notes, Series A, Festival Season Sundays, Gospel Texts*, by Harold H. Buls, Concordia Theological Seminary Press: Ft Wayne IN, 1980

The Adam Clarke Commentary  
<http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/>

Burton Coffman, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*  
<http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/>

John Darby, *Synopsis of the Bible*  
<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/darby/matthew1.htm>

*The Greek Interlinear Bible*,  
[http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Greek\\_Index.htm](http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Greek_Index.htm)  
Based on NA26/27. A word-by-word translation of the Greek New Testament.

David Guzik, *Commentaries on the Bible*  
<http://www.studylight.org/com/guz/>

*The Geneva Study Bible*  
<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/geneva/matthew1.htm>

John Gill, *Exposition of the Bible*  
<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/gill/matthew1.htm>

Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Complete)

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/mh/matthew1.htm>

Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Concise)

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/mhc/matthew1.htm>

Jamieson, Faussett and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/jfb/matthew1.htm>

B.W. Johnson, *People's New Testament*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/johnson/matthew1.htm>

John Lightfoot, *Bible Commentary*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/light/matthew1.htm>

Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/mlg/>

J. W. McGarvey, *Original Commentary on Acts*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/oca/>

J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel* (also known as "Harmony Of the Four Gospels")

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/four/matthew1.htm>

Alexander Maclaren's commentaries on the books of the Bible (various titles)

<http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/m#a2330>

The NET Bible. <<http://bible.org/netbible/>> A completely new translation of the Bible with 60,932 translators' notes. It was completed by more than 25 scholars – experts in the original biblical languages – who worked directly from the best currently available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. Excellent notes, citing both the Greek and Hebrew, as needed. Greek and Hebrew fonts available without cost.

A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/rwp/>

C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Notes* (1917 Edition)

<http://www.studylight.org/com/srn/>

Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/tod/>

R.A. Torrey, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*

<http://www.studylight.org/com/tsk/>

W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*

<http://www.antioch.com.sg/bible/vines/>

John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*

<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/matthew/wesley/matthew1.htm>

Other Additional Resources:

<http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/SPLC/Motley%20Crew%20Research%20Resources.html>

## Other Resources

Barker, Kenneth L., ed., *TNIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006)

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Davies, Benjamin, ed., *Baker's Pocket Harmony of the Gospels* (Baker Book House, 1975). Formerly printed as *Harmony of the Four Gospels*.

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Green, Jay P., ed., *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Vol. IV. Second Edition. (Hendrickson Publishers, 1985)

Halley, Henry H., *Halley's Bible Handbook*. New Revised Edition (24<sup>th</sup> Edition). (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965)

Hickie, W.J., *Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977). This is a reprint of an older edition, originally published by Macmillan, August. 1893. A contemporary review described this as "A handy little volume, compiled on sound principles from trustworthy authorities." The 1911 edition is available online and for download at

[http://openlibrary.org/b/OL17866849M/Greek-English\\_lexicon\\_to\\_the\\_New\\_Testament](http://openlibrary.org/b/OL17866849M/Greek-English_lexicon_to_the_New_Testament)

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Nicoll, W. Robertson, *The Greek Expositor's Testament*. Vol. 1. Five Volumes. (New York: George H. Doran Co., ca. 1910). Excellent notes on the Greek text and summaries of commentators. Available at Google Books ( [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com) ) and the Internet Archive ( [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) - easier to find here than at Google Books).

*NIV Archeological Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005)

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