

COMMENTARY - MARK - McKenna.

David L. McKenna. Mark. The Communicator's Commentary (Waco, TX. Word Books, Publisher,1982),

Mark 12: 28-44

A scribe of the Pharisees would find it difficult to make their laws simple and meaningful: 613 statutes comprise the oral law with 365 prohibitions to coincide with the number of days in the year and 248 commandments to equal the reputed number of generations of man. .. Scribes were challenged to develop a single, simple, working principle that would encompass all of the other statutes. When the scribal expert asked Jesus, "*Which is the first commandment of all*" (v. 28), he must have had this challenge in mind. Jesus confirms the foundational truth in Deut. 6:4-5 - "You shall love your God with all your heart" ¹

Jesus then applies the principle by matching it with the commandment in Lev. 19:18 "... You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus has summed up the Law, the prophets and the Gospel so that he can say, "*There is no other commandment greater than these*" (v. 31). ²

Marks emphasis is on "oneness" of God. To declare that our God is one God denies the deity of Baal.

Oneness continues to be Jesus' theme as He identifies love as the dynamic in man's relationship to God. Ordinarily, one expects that power, not love, will rule the relationship between a sovereign God and submissive humanity. For pretender gods, this is the case. But for the God of Gods, self-giving love is the only explanation for the Creation, the Covenant, and the Christ. "Oneness" with God, then, presupposes a two-way relationship in which love engages heart, soul, mind, and strength to worship and obey God. No facet of human personality - affection, intellect, or will - is left untouched or untransformed by love for God. We are at "one" with Him and with ourselves when the commandment is freely and delightfully operative. ³

A dimension of "oneness" is missing if the love relationship is limited to communion between God and man. To make "oneness" complete, the same self-giving love must flow in person-to-person relationship. "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (v. 37) is the point of proof that God is one God and that a person's heart, soul, mind and strength are transformed by love. Because the commandments to love God and to love your neighbor are separated in Old Testament Scriptures, the Pharisees had an excuse to lower the priority of the second commandment. Jesus takes away their excuse by fusing into one simple and

¹ David L. McKenna. Mark. The Communicator's Commentary (Waco, TX. Word Books, Publisher,1982), 252

² David L. McKenna. Mark. The Communicator's Commentary (Waco, TX. Word Books, Publisher,1982), 253.

³ David L. McKenna. Mark. The Communicator's Commentary (Waco, TX. Word Books, Publisher,1982), 253.

inseparable commandment what they believe about God, how they related to Him, and how they treat their neighbor.⁴

Admitting the truth of Jesus' words, he summarizes the answer and relates it to the fatal issue which puts Jesus at odds with the Pharisees. By confessing that the love commandment "*is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices* (v. 33), he walks away from his colleagues, but steps up to the threshold of the Kingdom of God.⁵

⁴ David L. McKenna. Mark. The Communicator's Commentary (Waco, TX. Word Books, Publisher,1982), 253-254.

⁵ David L. McKenna. Mark. The Communicator's Commentary (Waco, TX. Word Books, Publisher,1982), 254.