

Title: The Old and New Commandment of Love

Date: July 16, 2025

I. Introduction & Context

This lesson, part of an ongoing series on 1 John, explores love as the second "moral or spiritual test of your salvation," following obedience. Though listed second, love is described as "the supreme test because love is the greatest commandment." The passage 1 John 2:7–11 is organized into three sections:

- Love as an old commandment
- Love as a new commandment
- A warning dealing with love as a way of life

The speaker, identified as "Brother Steve," is referred to by Brother Gene" in the opening prayer as "the apostle of love" due to his tender teaching style and consistent emphasis on affection—particularly toward fellow believers. This contrasts with John's earlier portrayal in Scripture as a "son of thunder," revealing the transforming work of God in his life.

II. Love as an Old Commandment (1 John 2:7)

"Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning." — 1 John 2:7 NKJV

- Not Chronologically New:

The Greek word *kainos* (καινός)[1] is interpreted as describing quality, not chronology. John is not introducing something novel, unlike modern philosophers who constantly invent new ideas. Unlike human philosophies, God's word remains morally anchored and timeless.

- Rooted in the Old Testament Law:

Leviticus 19:18 – "You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."
Shema (Deuteronomy 6) – Though not quoted in full, the Shema's emphasis on loving God connects to this commandment.

Romans 13:8–10 – “He who loves another has fulfilled the law... love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

Decalogue – The Ten Commandments are divided into two categories: love for God and love for others. Loving one’s neighbor prevents breaking the latter group.

- Jesus’ Teaching (Matthew 22:37–40):

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind... You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- Apostolic Doctrine and Cost of Discipleship:

The "beginning" refers to the beginning of salvation, which included a call to obedience and to love others. This contrasts with some modern evangelical teachings that downplay obedience in favor of repeated emphasis on grace.

III. Love as a New Commandment (1 John 2:8)

"Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining." — 1 John 2:8 NKJV

- New in Quality, Not in Time:

The term *kainos* again emphasizes freshness and renewed essence—not time. The commandment is “new” because of the perfect way it is manifested in Jesus Christ.

- Manifested in Christ:

Though the command to love existed in the Old Testament, its complete fulfillment is seen in the life and death of Jesus.

- Transformation and Empowerment:

Through faith in Christ, believers are empowered to love others and live obediently. These attributes should naturally flow from the life of a believer.

IV. Love as a Way of Life and Its Implications

- Absence of Love in Society:

The speaker laments a cultural breakdown of love, citing violence and the absence of fathers in homes.

- Love Fulfills the Law:

“Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” (Romans 13:10)

V. Conclusion and Prayer

The message ends with a prayer thanking God for Jesus as the “perfect example of how to love each other,” and a plea for transformation into Christ’s likeness. Prayers were also offered for loved ones, the nation, and the peace of Jerusalem.

Key Quotes

- “Love is really the supreme test because love is the greatest commandment.”
- “He who loves his brother abides in the light.” — 1 John 2:10
- “Philosophy is always coming up with something new... but God hasn’t come up with anything new since His Word was written.”
- “If you’ve really been changed... two things are going to be true: you’ll obey God, and you’ll love other Christians.”
- “Never had it ever been clearly manifested as it was seen in the perfect loving life of Jesus Christ who died on the cross because He loved you.”

Greek Word Used

1. kainos (καινός)

- Phonetic: kai-NOSS

- Meaning: "New" in terms of quality or freshness, not chronological time. In this context, it highlights the renewed essence of love as seen in Christ.