

The Greatest Commandment
Matthew #145
Matthew 22:34-40

The question Jesus is asked was a topic of frequent debate among the rabbis. What kinds of answers were given and debated?

Some thought that the commandment to circumcise male Jewish infants was the most important commandment.

The rabbis pointed out that circumcision was:

- 1) The means of establishing thirteen covenants
- 2) Overrode the very strict prohibition of the Sabbath
- 3) Was required even of the righteous Moses
- 4) Overrode the prohibitions against cutting off leprous diseased flesh
- 5) Was required for Abraham to be whole and complete even though he had already kept all other commandments
- 6) Was the very reason for which God created the world:

The Purpose of Creation in Jewish Thought was:

- To Manifest God's Glory
- To Provide a Space for Free Will
- To Establish a Relationship

Summarizing, the covenant of circumcision is a vital aspect of Jewish identity and spirituality, emphasizing the importance of obedience to God, while the creation of the world is viewed as a means for humanity to engage with the divine and fulfill their purpose in life.

Often, concerning the second greatest commandment, it was argued that observing the Sabbath filled that spot.

You shall love the Lord your God – the love that people must have for God is not a mere emotion or feeling of affection. Loving God is an absolute devotion without reservation.