

Jesus Answered the Sadducees

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to focus on the condition of their hearts and their need to come to God by repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In this topic, we see that the Sadducees came to try and trap Jesus by what He said.

Jesus had answered the question of the Herodians and Pharisees earlier that day. In Matthew 22:23-28, we see that the Sadducees had a question regarding the resurrection that they thought Jesus could not answer. Those verses say, “The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: ‘Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.’” Here, we see an example of the fact that some who do not have a true faith think that they can prove the impossibility of a resurrection by a question.

God had given a command in the Old Testament that made it possible for every family line in Israel to be maintained. This law also provided a way in which widows could receive continuing care if the husband died at a young age. Deuteronomy 25:5-6 says, “‘If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family*; her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her. And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.’” Here, we see that the brother of a man who died was to marry the widow and the first-born son would be considered the child of the dead brother. In Israel, the first-born son was given a double inheritance so that he would have the money needed to care for his mother in her old age if she was a widow.

The Sadducees came with their question based on this law. The Sadducees taught that there is no resurrection so we see that the purpose of this question was to prove that a resurrection would cause an impossible problem because of this law. The Sadducees asked what would happen if the oldest of seven brothers died and had no children. Then, each of the six remaining brothers married the woman and each of them also died, after they had married the woman. Finally, after the death of the seventh brother, the woman also died. Then, they asked their question, “In the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.” Here, we see that the Sadducees were trying to trap Jesus with their question because they asked this question, even though they did not believe that there would be a resurrection. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” The Sadducees could not understand the Word of God

because they were without spiritual life.

We see that Jesus answered the question of the Sadducees by explaining why they were mistaken. Matthew 22:29-30 says, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.’” Jesus said that the first problem the Sadducees had was the fact that they did not know the Scriptures. The word translated “know” means *to pay attention to something or to know so that there is understanding*. The Jews had read the Old Testament Scriptures, especially the books written by Moses, for many generations. Acts 15:21 says, “For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

However, Isaiah had warned that most of the Jews would hear but would not understand. God told Isaiah, in Isaiah 6:9-10, “And He said, ‘Go, and tell this people: “keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.” Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.’” God said that most of Israel would not hear until their cities were destroyed. Jesus quoted from these verses after His disciples asked Him why He spoke to the people in parables. Jesus said, in Matthew 13:11-14, “He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled...’” Then, Jesus quoted the verses above from Isaiah.

Paul quoted the same verses when he talked to the Jews in Rome. Acts 28:24-25 says, “And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: ‘The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers.’” Then, Paul quoted these same words from Isaiah. After quoting these verses, Paul added in Acts 28:28-29, “‘Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!’ And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.” The Sadducees certainly did not understand the Scriptures, even though they heard them read every Sabbath.

Jesus said the second thing they did not know was the power of God. Job did know the power of God to raise the dead. He said in Job 19:25-27, “‘For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me!’” Job understood the power of God. He knew that God would raise him back to life so that he could see God in his flesh. Then, Jesus told the Sadducees that there will be no marriage in heaven. Instead, we will be like the angels. The Sadducees did not believe the Word of God. They did not believe in the resurrection. They did not believe in angels. As a result,

when Jesus mentioned that we will be like angels, He pointed out another thing that they did not believe.

Jesus went on to give the Sadducees an example of what Moses taught about the resurrection. Matthew 22:31-33 says, ““But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.’ And when the multitudes heard *this*, they were astonished at His teaching.” The reason why Jesus chose to share what Moses taught about the resurrection was due to the fact that the Sadducees only recognized the authority of the writings of Moses and did not give that same recognition to the other Old Testament writers. As a result, Jesus chose to quote the part of the Old Testament, that they believed, to show that Moses also believed in the resurrection.

God spoke to Moses at the burning bush, in Exodus 3:5-6, when God called to Moses out of the burning bush. Those verses say, “Then He said, ‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’ Moreover He said, ‘I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.” A key thing to notice about this statement is that God said “I *am*” the God of your father - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God did not say, “I was”. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had all died physically several hundred years earlier. However, the fact that God used the “I *am*” made it clear that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living at that very moment, although their physical bodies had died and been buried. In the New Testament, in 2 Corinthians 5:8, we read, “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” Due to the resurrection of Jesus, we see that the souls and spirits of all believers go immediately to be with the Lord.

Jesus used this statement, in Exodus, to make it clear to the Sadducees that Moses taught that God is the God of the living. Instead of believing, the Sadducees only hardened their hearts. This hardening of their hearts was shown by what they did just a few days later. Matthew 28:11-15 says, “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.” And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” Here, we see that the religious leaders, including the chief priests who were Sadducees, paid a large sum of money in their efforts to deny the resurrection. In contrast, the multitudes were astonished by the teaching of Jesus.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there are also many people today, like the Sadducees, who will deny all of the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus in their efforts to hide the unbelief and evil that fills their hearts. We want to help our children learn to explain the results of such unbelief. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain to others the need for repentance and faith.

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