

Matthew 22:23-33

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 7/8/2012

Whose wife will she be?

Prayer

Okay, let's bow together. Father, again, what a privilege it is to come together, to worship as Your body, to proclaim Your Sons's death, to give You the honor and glory and praise due Your name. What a privilege it is to gather and proclaim Your excellencies. And we thank You for this opportunity to continue to worship You in Spirit and in truth, and we pray that You would take Your Word now, that You would work it as You desire, that You would produce reverence and fear in our hearts, Lord God, for You. That You would convict us of sin, that You would correct us and train us, that we would be adequate for every good work. That You would prepare our hearts, that we would hear what You intended from this passage. And I know I cannot do it, but I trust You, Lord God; You are faithful. And Lord, I pray that each one of us recognizes we cannot understand apart from Your Spirit giving us insight. And I pray each one would humble ourselves before You and ask, "Lord God, teach me Your Word, teach me Your Statutes, teach me Your ways." I pray for that, Lord God, that we would be a responsive body of believers that truly yield to You and trust You and believe what You say. So we thank You now for Your Word, we thank You for this time, we commit it to You now in Jesus' name, amen.

Sermon

So for those of you here who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have probably come across at some time, someone, who has rejected Christ, someone who is totally against Christ, someone who is totally against God. And you have probably talked to some of those people at times where they have used questions to try to discredit God, some type of trick question to put you off guard, to affirm their arrogance and their unbelief, but also to reveal that they do not believe who Christ is. We see very clearly at times that some would come with smug arrogance in their questions, and I have heard questions like this: "Well what about those people in the jungles of Africa, who have never heard the gospel— how could they be saved if you say it is through Christ and the gospel?" You hear that tone, you hear those attitudes— not genuine questions from someone who really wants to know the truth, but people who are trying to discredit the reality of Christ. Now these questions are usually designed to discredit Christ, usually designed to discredit the reality of Him and His Word, and nothing has changed!

Back in the day of our Lord there were those who hated Christ. You see, the world hates Christ, and they had formulated questions based on their ignorance— and as we will see, their deceived ignorance— trying to discredit the Lord Jesus in front of the multitudes. And today we are going to see the Sadducees who propose a ridiculous question in the context of their views, and we will see very clearly this question they ask has to do with the resurrection and marriage. So today we are going to see Jesus' reproof of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection. So if you would turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 22. And we are moving along in the book of Matthew—what a wonderful

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study, and I hope you have been blessed by it—I have been very blessed as I have studied it; I am just amazed at God’s Word and the Lord. I want to give you just a brief context of the book of Matthew.

We see very clearly the Lord Jesus has come to His own, He has come to the Jews; God has taken on human flesh, the King of kings and Lord of lords has taken His stand on the earth, He has come; the people have seen a great light— those who were sitting in darkness— and the multitudes by and large have marveled concerning the truth that He has brought forth, and the miracles which affirm that truth, but yet they have not believed, they have not repented and trusted in Christ. We have seen the Lord Jesus give His condemnation to those who had seen so many miracles—woe to you Chorazin and Bethsaida—He says “If those who were in Sodom had seen the miracles that you have seen, they would have repented long ago. Matthew 11:23, “If the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.”

We have seen His condemnation of an evil and adulteress generation which would not repent. We have seen the Lord Jesus then turn away basically from the multitudes by and large, allowing them to have their eyes shut and their ears closed as He would speak to them in parables so that seeing they would not see, and hearing they would not hear. But yet we saw He would explain to his disciples those parables so that they might understand. We saw the leadership very clearly rejecting Christ, their hatred for Christ, their desiring over and over again—the religious leadership— to trip Him up, their desire to kill Him.

And three years has gone by; He has taught and preached the gospel, the way having been prepared by John the Baptist: “The King is at hand!” And we have come to the last week of His life. And remember we saw a few weeks ago the not-so-triumphant entry on Sunday of the Passion Week: the Lord Jesus entering into Jerusalem, coming down the Mount of Olives, seated on a colt, humble. We saw in Luke chapter 19, Jesus not rejoicing as a conquering general, but weeping over the rejection of Jerusalem that they had rejected him, that they had not recognized the day of visitation by the Living God, and that their discipline would come. We saw Jesus curse the fig tree, that fig tree that represented Israel, and the reality was that they looked very good on the outside but there was no fruit at all, they were dead!

We saw Him come into the temple and cleanse the temple of the wickedness, the den of robbers, those who had turned His place into a house of merchandise; the wicked leadership that were trying to make money out of serving the Lord and worshipping the Lord. As He turned over the tables and cast out those buying and selling, and He would not even let people cut through the temple. And we saw the Lord Jesus then in this area, the Court of the Gentiles, this place that should have been a house of prayer for the nations— we saw Him very clearly teaching and preaching, and healing those people who were lame, and we saw Him receiving worship as the Son of David, “Hosanna!” Lord, save now.

And then we saw the Pharisees and the Sadducees, we saw the leadership of the temple gather up enough guts to come confront Jesus: “By what authority do You do these things?” And the Lord Jesus turns it back on them, and asks them a question: “By what did John do His baptism, what was it, of man or of God?” We saw very clearly that if they would have answered that question, we would have seen

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very clearly that either they would have rejected the Lord's authority in John, or they would have had to accept it, so they answer, "We do not know."

And at that point very clearly we see Jesus coming to tell parables concerning these wicked leaders, that He is identifying them. And He shares three specific parables: three parables of condemnation upon the religious leadership. We saw very clearly in this portion in Matthew 21 that they understood He was speaking of them. Look back a little bit in Matthew 21:45.

⁴⁵ And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ And when they sought to seize Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him to be a prophet [Matthew 21:45-46].

They understood, very clearly, that He was speaking about them. They understood that those parables were condemning them, that God was taking away the kingdom from them, that He was moving it to a nation that would bear fruit; He would move it to the gentiles. And we saw very clearly, after giving these three parables of condemnation, that the leaders step up their efforts to condemn the Lord Jesus, to try to destroy Him. And this is where we come to our passage today— it is probably Tuesday of that Passion Week. And we see today the second of three questions given from different groups in the temple, each question designed to entrap and discredit Him.

And we saw last week that the Pharisees sent their minions (along with the Herodians) to try to entrap Him— where we saw that very famous passage where they said, "Is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar?" or the poll tax? And the Lord Jesus with His perfect wisdom, exposes their guile and their wickedness, and shows them the coin and says, "Whose inscription and likeness is this on there?" they say, "Caesar's," and He says, "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." And we saw that God has authority over all human government, and He gives it over even to wicked men to accomplish His purposes, even through their wickedness.

And we come to the second question today, where we will see very clearly the Sadducees coming to stump Jesus; they are going to ask Him a question about the resurrection, a question which I believe they think will fully stump Jesus and discredit Him before the multitudes. So the scene is set, they are in the temple, the Lord Jesus is teaching and preaching, the leadership has confronted Him and He has turned the tables on them— He has given three parables condemning them, and now they are coming back with three questions to entrap Him. And this seems to be the finale of their questions concerning what they want to do in entrapping Jesus. So with that in mind, please turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew 22, and we are going to look at verse 23 to start with. Verse 23:

²³ On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Him and questioned Him, ²⁴ saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up an offspring to his brother.' ²⁵ "Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother; ²⁶ so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ "And last of all, the woman died. ²⁸ "In the resurrection therefore whose

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wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her." ²⁹ But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God. ³⁰ "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob '? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." ³³ And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together. [Matthew 22:23-34]

Our passage begins with the phrase, "On that day some Sadducees..." again it is believed—some say it would be Wednesday, I believe that it is Tuesday—that it is Tuesday of the Passion Week. The Lord Jesus is in the temple; He had cleansed it the previous day, and we see very clearly He is teaching and preaching, and they have confronted Him concerning His authority and He has responded with their condemnation; and it is on that day, the same day, that those Pharisees sent their disciples to question Jesus about paying poll tax to Caesar. It is also on that day that we see some Sadducees who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and questioned Him.

And now I want to give you a little background on the Sadducees. And without understanding who they are and their connection with the temple, we would probably misunderstand the intent of this passage. Now historically, the Sadducees most likely came from the priestly line of Zadok— that is what it said, that their name derives itself from that. And it is possible, and it is thought that these Sadducees were most likely priests, now we cannot say that for sure, but what we can say for sure was they were highly identified with the temple leadership. We see them in unity with the temple leadership in Acts chapter 4, turn there for a second in Acts chapter 4, verse 1. Acts chapter 4: **¹And as they were speaking to the people, (this is Peter and John) the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees, came upon them, [Acts 4:1].**

You see they were really put together, "the priests and the captain of the temple *guard*, and the Sadducees" and if you go up a little farther to chapter 5 verses 16-18 that the high priest associates were actually called the Sadducees. Acts chapter 5:16

¹⁶ And also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits; and they were all being healed. ¹⁷ But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (notice what it says) (that is the sect of the Sadducees)... [Acts 5:16-18].

You see the high priest and the priestly leadership— their associates were the Sadducees— the Sadducees were closely linked with the running of the temple. And it is said that the Sadducees were most likely in charge of all the buying and selling in the temple, that they had the most to lose with Jesus coming in because it was their money making venture, and we will talk about that in a little bit. They

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were highly involved and we need to see that, and Jesus has taken over their den, their den used for wickedness, and He has now righteously and rightfully proclaimed to them the truth concerning Himself.

Now remember we saw in Matthew chapter 3, the Pharisees and the Sadducees came out to be baptized by John, and John gave them that warning, “Who warned you to escape the wrath to come?” and he talked about the axe at the root of the tree that judgment was coming, that their wicked, hypocrisy would not be taken away by their outward, symbolic repentance— it would need to be true repentance as we see John would preach. We saw in Matthew chapter 16 that Jesus condemns both the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees: He says, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees!” The Pharisees had their teaching, the Sadducees had their teaching, both of it was leaven-ous, it was corrupt; it was evil. And we are to be aware of it, or they were, and we are to beware of false teaching. Now the Sadducees were the liberals of the day. They were those who did not believe in resurrection; they were those who did not believe in miracles; they did not believe in angels; they did not believe in a Spirit. Notice that in Acts chapter 23 we see this very thing when Paul is before the council. Acts 23:6 . Now Paul is before the council and he is being wise as a serpent and as innocent as a dove we see in this passage.

⁶But perceiving (that is Paul perceiving) that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!" ⁷ And as he said this, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. [Acts 23:6-8]

Sadducees did not believe in the afterlife, they did not believe in the supernatural, they were naturalistic; they were religious in this life alone. And we see very clearly they were those in charge of the temple; they were those who were greedy; they were those who were making money, extorting the people for the sake of following the Lord of Scripture. So with that in mind, they were primarily functioning as the leadership of the temple, and therefore they did not have much of a problem with Jesus up to this point. You do not see a lot of interaction with the Sadducees in the last three years with Jesus— you see the Pharisees coming, you see them sending their disciples, you see them attacking Jesus— you do not see that with the Sadducees. But now you see Jesus is on what they would see as their turf, and now they are desiring to destroy Him; He has taken away their wicked business in a sense. And it is also said that these Sadducees were pro-Rome because Rome allowed them to operate the temple and Rome wanted them, basically, to just keep the peace with no problems you see, so Jesus was also a threat in that sense also.

So with that in mind, notice verse 23 we see their guile revealed, back in Matthew 22:23: ²³ “On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection)...” Now that is the old joke, that is why they are so sad, you see—they do not believe in resurrection—but you know that joke already... ²³ “On that day some Sadducees” (and notice, Matthew, inspired by the Holy Spirit, puts this in here for us; he wants us to see this right away) “...who say there is no resurrection) came to Him and questioned Him,”

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And folks, as we have read already in the passage, the question is about resurrection. It is designed to discredit Jesus; it is not a genuine question. “What about those in the boonies that did not hear the gospel, how do they get saved? What about those in Africa, who have never heard the gospel?” See, there is a difference. It is not a genuine question here—they do not believe in resurrection. They do not want to know the answer, they already believe they know the answer because they do not believe in resurrection. So notice this question is designed to trap, verse 23 again:

²³ On that day *some* Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Him and questioned Him,

²⁴ saying, ‘Teacher, Moses said, “If a man dies, having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up an offspring to his brother.” ²⁵ ‘Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother; ²⁶ so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ ‘And last of all, the woman died. ²⁸ In the resurrection therefore whose wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her.’”

Again it is a trick question. It is a trap question. And it is historically said that these Sadducees were rude— Josephus talks about them— he says that they were ill-mannered, that they were rude, and they were heartless. And you can imagine them, like they show in those little kid videos: [in whiny, sniveling voice] “What do you think..?” You can see them coming up— they are rude; they are arrogant. And I believe fully that they think they are going to stump Jesus. That they think this question— they have probably used it before, they have probably used it over and over again— there is no answer to it. They think, “Okay, let’s ask Him the marriage question.” You see? And now on the level of reality this question is actually absurd, as we will see. It is probably impossible that that many brothers would die, right? It is probably impossible that someone would keep marrying this woman after all the brothers dying, right? Okay. But ultimately we see this question is based on the Word; look at verse 24:

²⁴ saying, ‘Teacher, Moses said, “If a man dies, having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up an offspring to his brother.’” You see this is basically a loose-quotation of the principle that is brought forth in Deuteronomy. We see this also questioned kind of differently from a different viewpoint from the book of Luke, and I will read this for you, Luke 20:28: ²⁸ ***and they questioned Him, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he is childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up offspring to his brother [Luke 20:28].***

Now remember, they are saying, “Moses wrote this—” that is who they attribute this to by the way— yes, Moses did write Deuteronomy, but in a moment we will see who God attributes this truth to. If you want to turn really quickly to Deuteronomy 25, we see this principle it was a gracious provision by a gracious God. Deuteronomy 25 and it is verse 5. Now Moses is giving the law, second law, *deutero*

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nomos, he is giving it as the second generation who are about to enter the land; he is repeating it and expanding on it, inspired by the Spirit. Verse 5:

⁵ "When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. ⁶ "And it shall be that the first-born whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out from Israel. [Deuteronomy 25:5-6]

God had given a gracious provision, because they were going into the land; they were getting an inheritance based on their names. And if the brother had died, that inheritance would be cut off, their name would be cut off, you see, if the husband had died, and God had graciously given this provision for someone in the family to marry. And He says, verse 7:

⁷ "But if the man does not desire to take his brother's wife, (it was not mandatory, by the way) then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' ⁸ "Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him. And if he persists and says, 'I do not desire to take her,' ⁹ then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face; and she shall declare, 'Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' ¹⁰ "And in Israel his name shall be called, 'The house of him whose sandal is removed.' [Deuteronomy 25:7-10]

So you *could* deny it, right? But there was a little stigma that went with that, a little spit too, right? Okay. But the point is that there was stigma to it, okay? And so we have this idea of what is called Levirate marriage, the law of levirate marriage. That word levirate is a Latin word that means “husband’s brother” basically, and so that is where this comes from. And this is a gracious provision; it is the exact same provision under which Boaz married Ruth. It is the same portion; it is the same thing as we see in Scripture.

And so they come here with a dishonest question designed to stump Jesus, to make Him look like the fool that they believe He is. And they are going to try to stump Him with this question about resurrection using an absurd example concerning the resurrection, and we read this here: there is one brother who is married and he dies, and the other one marries her and he dies, and the other one is married and he dies, and the other one is married and he dies... and you see almost the smirk on these Sadducees, probably, that they think that they have got Jesus— they are trying to entrap him. And then we have last of all the woman died, verse 27. They are all dead— seven husbands dead and one wife

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dead, and here is the question, verse 28: “²⁸ ‘In the resurrection therefore whose wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her.’”

And you can just, again, imagine, *we got Him*. Just like before, *we got Him; He cannot answer this question*. That is probably— I am not saying that is what happened— but I am saying you certainly could imagine that within the motives that we see of the Sadducees that we see here in Scripture. And so what happens that we see here in this passage? Well we can learn much from our Lord’s response, verse 29: “²⁹ But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God. ³⁰ ‘For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ ‘But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?” He is not the God of the dead but of the living.’”

Now some of you might now be saying, “This passage is not that relevant to me; it is about resurrection.” And indeed many churches focus on what is relevant to you today. But this passage is extremely relevant to us— it is extremely important because it points out some major realities that we need to understand as believers, and we need to be reminded of. You see first and foremost because it deals with the fact and nature of the resurrection. You see man’s problem is sin, right? In Genesis we see very clearly that because of sin we have physical death. And because of sin we have separation from God. And because of sin there is the second death, eternal death, separation from God forever in punishment. And when we contemplate the reality of death, resurrection is very important. Resurrection is very important.

You see first of all, besides the fact that we will be raised, true believers; there is the reality that resurrection gives us great hope and comfort, 1 Thessalonians 4. Secondly, the truth of the resurrection is crucial to our forgiveness of sin, for if we are not raised, then Christ is not raised, and if Christ is not raised then we are still in our sins— 1 Corinthians chapter 15: ¹⁶ ***For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;*** ¹⁷ ***and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins [1Co 15:16-17].***

That is very important to us, isn’t it? It is very important. Our passage also gives us insight into the heavenly life— specifically how relationships will be in heaven. Will we be married, will there be relations in heaven? You know there are the cults and the false religions that believe that: the Muslims believe that if they are martyred for their faith, that they are going to have 72 virgins and have relations in heaven, right? Well this passage will prove that that is totally wrong and totally evil. The Mormons have a doctrine that is hidden, but well known, after they are baptized very clearly, that they desire to have multiple wives in heaven, to have multiple relations, so that they may populate their own earth and be their own heavenly father, we see that too. Both of these prove to be a satanic lie in light of this passage. And lastly we will see our Lord affirm the reality of Scripture as God’s Word, God’s Word, directly to us, directly to us. So it is very important.

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So back to our passage, verse 29: ²⁹ But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God.’ Now, it sounds kind of soft right now, if I say, ‘You are mistaken.’ The way this is in the Greek language, this is not soft at all— the word translated ‘mistaken’ is *planao*, it means to go astray, to wander. It speaks of actively leading someone astray, or actively or passively being led astray; it is most often translated deceived. It is most often translated deceived. He is saying, basically, ‘You are deceived.’ That is different than saying in our English language, ‘You are mistaken,’ right? ‘You are deceived; you have been led astray.’ And we will see in a moment, they have allowed themselves to be deceived. We see this same exact form translated with a negative in 1 Corinthians 6:9: ‘...Do not be deceived...’ right? 1 Corinthians 15:33: ‘Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.’ Galatians 6:7: ‘Do not be deceived...’ James 1:16: *Do not be deceived...* This idea that it speaks of deception— deception. And it is a characteristic of those who are unsaved. Titus 3:3: ³ For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, (*planao*) deceived...”

Jesus is reproofing them publically. And He says they are deceived, and then He explains how they are deceived. ‘You are deceived,’ literally, ‘You are deceived, not understanding the Scriptures or the power of God.’ Here is how they are deceived: they do not understand the Scriptures and do not understand the power of God. They have not understood it in the past and that continues into the present. They do not understand; they are self-deceived. They are self-deceived because of their ignorance of Scripture and their ignorance of the power of God. And this is an incredible condemnation for the religious leaders of Israel; Jesus is reproofing the leaders who should know the Word of God, who should understand the power of God, and He says, ‘You don’t know the Word of God and you do not understand the power of God— you are deceived.’ You are deceived. Jesus has ripped off the hypocritical masses, these Sadducees, and shown them what they really are. They have caused themselves to wander from the truth.

And if you look at people who are deceived, by the way, their deception has the root in their ignorance of the Word of God and the power of God. Those who are deceived are ignorant of the Word of God, they are not knowing of the Word of God—they may know it but they are ignorant of the truth behind it. When you look at every person who was deceived, we will see it has its roots in the ignorance of the Word of God, willful or not. Willful or not. There are some who are willfully deceived by their own desires; and there are some who are not. And for those of us who are believers, turn to Ephesians chapter 4. If we are not built up in the Word of God, we will be deceived; we will be tossed to and fro. If you are not in the Word of God you are in danger of deceiving yourself, if you do not know. And I find it amazing, I ask some people, ‘How long have you been a Christian?’ They say: ‘26 years.’ But yet they do not know the Word of God! They often go to terrible churches, and they are deceived. They are deceived. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11:

¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, (here is why—) ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (That is what pastors are

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for: building up the body of Christ; equipping the saints; maturity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God; so that, he says,) ¹⁴ ***As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; [Ephesians 4:11-14].***

You see, God's Word protects us from being deceived. If you are ignorant of God's Word you are going to be deceived; and these Sadducees were deceived, self deceived, because they were ignorant of the Word of God. And we see it in a lot of different applications. There might be some who have certain theologies that are wrong; it is because they are ignorant of the Word of God. Take, for example, reformed theology's eschatology concerning amillennialists, that there is no Israel— well they are ignorant of the Word of God! Paul says in Romans 11, "I do not want you to be uninformed or ignorant..." and then he explains the truth: that there is a partial hardening until the fullness of the gentiles, and thus all Israel will be saved. You see, if you are ignorant of the Word of God, you can be deceived; someone can come along and deceive you. And they were voluntarily self-deceived. Ignorance of the Word puts you in a position to be self-deceived. And like I said, if you are in a bad church, not being fed the Word of God, you are placing yourself in a position to be at risk. First of all, you are being disobedient, because God's Word is clear what the church should be like. We need to be fed the Word of God; we need to be in the Word of God.

So back to our passage here, Jesus will now at this point explain what He means by this. You are self-deceived; you are deceived, not knowing, not understanding the Scriptures or the power of God. Now He is going to explain this in reverse order. He is going to then talk about the power of God, and then He is going to talk about the Scriptures concerning the resurrection. Verse 29,

²⁹ But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken," literally deceived "not understanding" not knowing, they are ignorant "the Scriptures, or the power of God." Now He is going to explain the first thing about the power of God. ³⁰ "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels..." And then He will explain in the next portion about the Word of God.

³¹ "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read?" Have you not read? He is going to talk about the power of God and then the Word of God. He is going to correct them— notice first of all, concerning the power of God— He reveals in the resurrection there will be no marriage. Verse 30: ³⁰ "For in the resurrection" He is explaining "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels..." Luke writes it this way:

³⁴ ***And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, ³⁵ but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; ³⁶ for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, (Luke 20:36) and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. [Luke 20:34-36]***

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Now at this point, many of you who have good marriages might be troubled, and many of you who have bad marriages might be happy. There is going to be neither marrying nor giving in marriage in heaven; and this can be kind of troubling, right? He is saying there is not marriage in the resurrection. But we need to remember, that is all He is saying, except for an illustration concerning the angels. But I think it need not be troubling if we understand the extent and limit of what Jesus is saying. He is talking about the power of God. He says, "You are mistaken; you are deceived; you do not understand the Scriptures; you do not understand the power of God." Obviously, they do not believe that God is powerful enough to raise the dead, first of all, to change someone from death to life. That is certainly the reality there, but He says, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels." We see in the resurrection, for those who have obtained it, for those who have been saved—as we will see in this resurrection, for those who are in Christ, the first fruits, those raised from the dead, there is not going to be any marriage.

And before we get discouraged or elated we need to recognize that what God has prepared for us in eternity is much better than this. He just says that there is not going to be marriage. And I do not understand that, all I do is take it at face value. We have marriage here; we are not going to have marriage in heaven. That is what He is saying. That is what He is saying. He is going to say in contrast—but are like the angels in heaven. He is not saying you will be angels—that is not what He is saying—He is saying *like* the angels. We will have a relationship with one another like the angels relate to one another. You are not going to be married; you are not going to have that type of relationship, but in contrast, we will be like the angels. I still do not understand that, but I know it is good. I know it is good.

You see the Sadducees were wrong on their premise from the beginning. And we do not want to read into this—that it is not going to be as good. Marriage is a wonderful thing. And we do not want to read into this, that somehow Heaven is not going to be as good. We need to recognize we are going to be close to the people we know in Heaven; we are going to be close to our loved ones; we are going to be close. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, speaking of after the Lord has taken up believers. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, turn there, verse 17. They were concerned about those who had passed away, those who had fallen asleep. What is going to happen to them? They are gone; they missed the Lord's coming; what is going to go on? And he summarizes that, verse 17: ***17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (we are going to be together) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:17]***

We are going to be together; we are going to be with the Lord. Forever. You see, I do not understand—there will not be marriage, but we will have relationships in heaven. It will not be like the marriage relationship, it will be like in the sense, he says, like the angels in that sense. And I do not understand it, but I know it is good. I know it is good. Some of you might say, "Well, if I cannot be married to my wife in heaven, then I do not want to go to heaven." Well I would say maybe you have a good marriage or a nice wife, but I would also say that you too are ignorant of the Scriptures and the power of God. You see, God is good. Trust the Lord. He is the author of marriage; He has ordained that for earth. And He is also the One who has also ordained our heavenly relationships which are a mystery to us. Our relationships will be good. We do not understand how they will be, but we know we will not be

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married. We are going to be like— not we are going to be, angels— but we are going to be like angels in how we have relationships. Take it by faith; trust the Lord; it is good. We will see in a moment that Heaven is good; it is not bad. There will be no more crying, no more tears, no more sorrow. There will be no more yearning for relationships that we had on earth, we will have the perfect relationships in the context of the Lord with those who have been redeemed.

Okay. So the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection; they were deceived about the power of God. But we see that those who are saved will be changed and raised. Now notice at this point, Jesus addresses their ignorance of the Scriptures. Verse 31, ³¹ ‘But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.’”

Jesus specifically addresses resurrection from the dead and their ignorance of the Scriptures concerning the resurrection of the dead. He says, “Have you not read?” It is a condemnation. “You are the leaders; have you not read?” And He gives one a very important, very popular passage concerning Moses’ introduction to YAWEH, where he is asking the Lord what His name is: and we see who He is, He is YAWEH; He is the I AM; He is the LORD. This comes from Exodus chapter 3, verse 6. And He is attributing this very Scripture as the very Word of God. Notice what He says, “Have you not read that which was spoken to you by God?” He is attributing Exodus chapter 3 verse 6— what they would say Moses would have said— He is saying, “Haven’t you read what God said to you?” God speaks to nonbelievers— they are nonbelievers by the way— God speaks through His Word, He spoke to them. “Haven’t you read what God spoke to *you*.” We have an incredible passage here concerning the inspiration of the Word of God. Incredible proof that it is God who speaks through His Word; it is not the word of men. 2 Timothy 3:16:

¹⁶ All Scripture (graphie, written Word— Jesus says, “you are ignorant of the written Word, Scriptures,”) is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. [2 Timothy 3:16-17]

2 Peter 1:20:

²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture (written Word) is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. [2 Peter 1:20-21]

“Have you not read, that which was spoken to you by God?” And maybe some of you have not read that which was spoken to you by God, because you do not know the Word. Have you not read? You are deceived; you are ignorant of the Scriptures. Have you not read? And He quotes a very familiar passage: ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’ He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

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Remember when Moses is speaking to the Lord there, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead. And He is speaking of them as the living. I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is not the God of the dead but of the living. It is the absolute reproof of these Sadducees' view that there is no resurrection, that there is no afterlife. Obviously God is saying He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when they have passed away— they are alive. They are alive! Total contradiction to their theology which did not believe in life after death, and Jesus uses the Word to contradict their ignorance and deception. And folks, what we see in Scripture is that when we die, our body goes in the grave. If you know Jesus Christ, by the way, your body goes in the grave, and your spirit goes to be with the Lord—Absent from the body, present with the Lord, 2 Corinthians 5. And we know, 1 Thessalonians 4, that when He comes, if we are dead, we will be with Him, our spirits and our bodies will be raised first, and then those who are alive and remain will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, because of the power of God. Because of the power of God.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15, and we see a discourse on resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:35:

³⁵ But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" (It is apparent that this question is not a genuine question because of the way Paul answers this. It could be seen in the same light as the questions of these Sadducees: [In a sarcastic tone] "Well how are the dead raised? How could that happen?") **³⁵"How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶ You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; ³⁷ and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. ³⁸ But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. ³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. ⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. ⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.** (You see, we have so much to look forward to if Christ is for this life only for you, we are of all men to be pitied, right? He says) ***If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* ⁴⁵ So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam** (that is speaking of Christ) ***became a life-giving spirit.* ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man** (again, that is speaking of Christ) ***is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. ⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a***

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mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (We will have that same death and then death and sin is done, the resurrection and raised in newness of life!) ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. [1 Corinthians 15:35-58]

And turn to Philippians for a second, Philippians chapter 3, where we see the power of God exerted on the life of the true believer as we will see. Philippians 3:17

¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. ²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. [Philippians 3:17-21]

Christ through His power will change us. We *will* be resurrected; we *will* be changed for eternity. We *will* be glorified. True believers *will* have a resurrected body like the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is God in human flesh forever in a resurrected body. He is the first fruits of our resurrection. We know after He rose from the dead, before His glorification, He appeared and He disappeared; He went through walls and He ate breakfast; He still bore the scars of His crucifixion; He was touched by Thomas. Now again we are not God, but yet God became like us, and by the exertion of His power, physically speaking, not in divinity, but physically we will become like Him— we will be glorified like Him. True believers will be raised. And I hope you hope in that, the hope of the culmination of our salvation— that this life is not it—that your physical ailments are simply a temporary struggle— you should be looking forward to what God is going to do. This is perishable; we are dying; but we will be raised. And it is the power of God which will do it. Jesus says to them “You are ignorant of the Scriptures and of the power of God.” You have missed it completely.

Now I need to share with you, that those of you who do not know Christ, there will be a resurrection. But it will not be like what I have spoken of. You see, Daniel writes, "**And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.** [Daniel 12:2] We see a resurrection of those who die, who have rejected Christ in Revelation

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chapter 20. You see, you could walk out of here today and die, and by the way, children do die too. You need to know Christ. He will forgive you of your sins if you trust in Him, and you will live forever with Him. But if you were to die today, not knowing Christ, you would go into Hades and torment, having rejected Christ, being in your sins, and then there would be a judgment where your body is brought up and your soul in Hades is brought together, and then you will be thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11, let's just turn there really quickly. There is a resurrection for those who do not know Christ, but it is not what Jesus is speaking of here. God is speaking to you now through His Word, as He was with the Sadducees; God was speaking to them through the Scriptures. Revelation 20:11

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead (that is the bodies) which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead (that is the bodies and then the souls) which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. [Revelation 20:11-1]

And we see that anyone's name who is not written in the Lamb's book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire we see. You see if you reject Christ, if you reject Christ, you will die in your sins. And you will be raised to eternal contempt. You will be raised, and you will be punished forever. The choice is yours. God is speaking to you through His Word. You see, Jesus died for our sins. And if you believe in Jesus Christ you will live forever, if you trust in Him as Lord. The Sadducees missed it completely. They were deceived and ignorant of the power of God. You see, God has the power to throw you into hell. ²⁸ ***"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. [Matthew 10:28]***

The good news is Jesus Christ died for our sins and He rose from the dead. 2 Timothy 1:10: ***...our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, [2 Timothy 1:10].*** You can be saved today by trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will live forever with Him. Now, you will not be married in heaven, but it will be much better. We will be like the angels, the holy elect angels; it will be perfect.

And lastly we will see here now their response, back to our passage in Matthew, verse 33 in Matthew 22: ³³ ***"And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching."*** This is a terribly sad statement. They were astonished, they were like, "Wow!" They marveled at it. But they did not repent. These same multitudes would say in less than 3 days, "crucify Him!" You see, they marveled at it, but yet they were unwilling to repent, and once Jesus did not fit their paradigm, when he was not the Jesus that they liked, then it was "crucify Him." And notice it says, verse 34:

³⁴ ***"But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together."*** This is incredibly sad too. What grieves me the most is these Sadducees should have said,

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“We are wrong. We misunderstood Your Word; we did not believe it. We have sinned against You. We were ignorant of Your Word; we were ignorant of Your power through His resurrection. We were wrong. We were wrong. We sinned against You; please forgive us.” But they were silent.

What will your response be? I began talking about those who ask divisive questions, to pull away people from the reality of their unbelief, to justify their wickedness. Maybe you are like that; maybe you are one of those people who says, “Well what about those people who have never heard the gospel?” Today Jesus has reproved you. You are deceived and ignorant of the Word and God has spoken directly to you. And friend, if you do not believe, you have no hope. You are without God in the world. You are separate. And I declare there will be a resurrection from the dead, either to everlasting life, or to everlasting contempt. What will it be? God gives you the free, gracious offer without cost. Brother and sister, there is a lot in this passage that can apply to us.

First of all, Jesus used His Word to confront error of those testing Him. And we should do the same thing when the Lord wants us to speak to those who are confronting us. Sometimes He wants us to be quiet; we need to pray for wisdom and discernment and not cast our pearls before swine, but here Jesus used His Word. Secondly, God speaks through His Word to us! His Word is powerful— read it, study it, believe it, obey it. And lastly, and most importantly, Jesus has conquered death. He has conquered death. Sin brought death, Jesus has conquered sin, He has conquered.

Let’s close; let’s turn together to Revelation chapter 21.

¹And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, ⁴ and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. [Revelation 21:1-7]

We overcome through faith in Jesus Christ. We overcome the world and death and sin when we trust in Jesus who overcame sin and death. If you cry out, “Lord Jesus, I am sinful; I need to be saved!” He will save you; you will inherit these things. But if you do not, you are still in your sin. But He says in verse 8,

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⁸ "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [Revelation 21:8]

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" [John 11:25-26]

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your Word. I am so thankful it is not up to me to present it, Lord, it is up to You. That You are faithful, that Your Word is powerful, that it is spoken to us from You. Father I pray for anyone here who does not believe in the truth concerning Christ. That they would take seriously what You have said to them today in Your Word. That there is a second death, that there is punishment for sins. But yet there is a Savior, Your Son Jesus. And He rose from the dead on the third day, and because of His resurrection we will rise. Father I pray for those of us who are saved, may we get our hearts and minds off the temporal here. May we set our minds on the things above. May you just reprove us about where our hearts have been, and where our minds have been thinking. May we think of the things of You, may we look forward to what You have promised, may we live as heavenly citizens, Lord God, seeking the things above. May we not be those who are ignorant of Your Word, Lord God, and if we are, may we repent of that and then may we believe Your power. May we not be ignorant of your power. Lord, thank you for Your Word. Amen.

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