



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Bureaucrats Question the Resurrection

MAY 12-14, 2010

David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / 804-796-9411 / www.capitolcom.org

Matthew 22:23-33 *“On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him, (24) asking, ‘Teacher, Moses said, “IF A MAN DIES HAVING NO CHILDREN, HIS BROTHER AS NEXT OF KIN SHALL MARRY HIS WIFE, AND RAISE UP CHILDREN FOR HIS BROTHER.” (25) Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother; (26) so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. (27) Last of all, the woman died. (28) In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her.’ (29) But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor 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 what was spoken to you by God: (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) When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.”*

“THIS IS THE ROOT OF ALMOST ALL ERROR,
IGNORANCE OF THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD.”
CHARLES SPURGEON

How was a Sadducee distinguished from a Pharisee? Is the question presented by these leaders with a motive to learn or to scorn? Was there any reason why the Sadducees would be antagonistic against Christ? How does this passage give another proof of Christ’s deity?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > MAY 19-21: MATTHEW 22:34-40 **LEADERS ASK JESUS FOR THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT**
- > MAY 26-28: MATTHEW 22:41-46 **JESUS ASKS THE LEADERS THE ULTIMATE QUESTION**
- > JUNE 2-4: MATTHEW 23:1-12 **THE CHARACTER OF LEADERS WITHOUT CHRIST**

Throughout all history mankind has anticipated the afterlife. The concept is woven into the fiber of the heart that there must be a more meaningful existence after death. James Dwight Dana, the Yale professor whose writings are still used as textbooks today, said that he “could not believe that God would create man and then desert him at the grave.”¹ The Egyptian Pyramids are royal tombs with provisions for the afterlife. All men feel that pull toward eternity and the Jews of Christ’s day were no exception. King David had written long ago, “*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever*” (Ps. 23:6). Daniel states it the clearest, “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*” (12:2).

“THE BODY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, PRINTER, (LIKE THE COVER OF AN OLD BOOK, ITS CONTENTS WORN OUT, AND STRIPT OF ITS LETTERING AND GUILDING) LIES HERE, FOOD FOR WORMS! YET THE WORK SHALL NOT BE LOST, FOR IT WILL, AS HE BELIEVED, APPEAR ONCE MORE IN A NEW AND MORE BEAUTIFUL EDITION, CORRECTED AND AMENDED BY ITS AUTHOR!”
EPITAPH ON BENJAMIN FRANKLIN’S TOMBSTONE

I. THE BUREAUCRATIC BELIEFS MT. 22:23

The Sadducees were the elite aristocrats of Israel and had authority over the Temple, the priesthood and they had the majority control of the Sanhedrin (the legislative body of Israel). Their wealth had primarily been obtained from the lucrative money changing and sacrifice sales in the temple courtyard. Obviously they felt severely threatened when Jesus cleansed the Temple of their extortion. They sided with Rome politically for their own advantage and were especially despised by the people. But their defection to the

¹ John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 16-23*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 326.

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – DENNY’S ON RT. 1
THURSDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY –RT. 10, IRONBRIDGE SPORTS PK, NOON – WYTESTONE PLAZA AT 8TH & MAIN 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GOLDEN CORRAL AT NORVIEW & MILITARY HWY – NEAR NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

What You Believe Directly Effects Your Actions!

Romans bought them permission to have the only police force in Israel in the form of the Temple Guard. Religiously, they were generally more liberal, yet extremely rigid in two areas. Their judgments against the people were more vicious than anyone else and they pridefully taught that only the first five books of Moses were Scripture. Such led them to extremes in Levitical purity while boasting as the preservers of the true faith. They denied the existence of angels or the resurrection so they could treat others any way they pleased without eternal consequence. But suddenly their accountability to God had been engaged by Christ. So with scorn they approach Him with Scripture intended to trap Him.

“THE DEVIL QUOTED SCRIPTURE IN ORDER TO TEMPT JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS (SEE 4:6), BUT HE STOPPED QUOTING AT THE CRUCIAL POINT IN THE TEXT! TO KNOW THE SCRIPTURES AND THE POWER OF GOD IS TO INTERPRET THE DETAILS IN THE LIGHT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSE AND THRUST OF GOD IN THE WORLD.” CHARLES PRICE

II. THE BUREAUCRATIC BLINDNESS MT. 22:24-28

They address Jesus with flattery as “*teacher*” to set Him up for their “impossible” question. They refer to the law found in Deuteronomy 25:5-6 stating that “*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.*” There are two examples of such in Genesis 38:8-10 and Ruth 4:1-10. The story of Ruth not only depicts the preservation of her husband’s lineage, but also God’s preservation of the lineage of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The Sadducees then paint a scenario making the teaching of the Pharisees regarding an exact physical continuance in the resurrection seem absurd. “*Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother; so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. Last of all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife*

of the seven will she be? For they all had married her.” Legally, how could that many marriage relationships in heaven possibly be reconciled? Or if heaven would not be “heaven” for some in this scenario, then heaven or the resurrection did not exist. This scenario does pose great difficulty for the Muslim who believes that he will be given multiple virgins as wives in heaven but it reveals a blindness to the truth about the resurrection.

“THE SADDUCEES HAD SUCCEEDED ONLY IN PUTTING THEIR OWN IGNORANCE ON DISPLAY FOR EVERYONE IN THE TEMPLE TO SEE AND HEAR. ‘YOU ARE DEAD WRONG,’ JESUS SAID, IN EFFECT, ‘AND HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.’” JOHN MACARTHUR

III. THE BRILLIANCE OF THE KING MT. 22:29-33

Jesus shames them with three areas of failure: 1) they “*are mistaken*,” 2) they don’t understand the Scriptures, 3) they don’t understand the power of God. The second is the cause of the other two. They only saw the Scriptures as an authority to disprove, rather than seeking to understand and obey it. Jesus’ deity is again proven as He states that which only God could have known about heaven, “*They neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven.*” He answers their question with the familiar Scripture Moses had written, emphasizing the emphatic present tense, “*I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*” (Exodus 6:3). “*He is not the God of the dead but of the living.*” The Sadducees belief would require that the patriarchs not exist because they are dead. How can God be God of one who does not exist? They are alive!

“HE BROUGHT THEM BACK TO THE SCRIPTURES, WHICH HE CONSIDERED TO BE INSPIRED, INFALLIBLE, AUTHORTATIVE AND THE ONE SAFE GUIDE IN MATTERS OF FAITH AND MORALS.” JOHN PHILLIPS

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you deny or seek to disprove the passages that you wish were not in Scripture?
- 2) Is your life characterized by a clear reflection of belief in the resurrection?
- 3) Are you investing in eternity by your study of the Scriptures?