

68. Jesus Answered the Sadducees

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how Jesus answered the questions of the Pharisees who came with the Herodians in such a way that neither group could condemn Jesus. We want to help our children learn to depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance as they answer the questions of those who would try to trap them. When the Sadducees heard that Jesus had answered the question of the Pharisees and Herodians, some of the Sadducees decided that they would try to trap Jesus with His words. That will be the focus of our topic today.

Luke 20:27-28 says, “Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to *Him* and asked Him, saying: ‘Teacher, Moses wrote to us *that* if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.’” The high priest and his family were Sadducees and so the Sadducees controlled the temple and the things that went on in the temple during the time of Jesus. The Sadducees were actually only a small group of people but because of controlling the temple they had great authority. They accepted only the Pentateuch. They did not believe in angels, miracles or the resurrection. As a result, we see that they tried to trap Jesus by asking a question about the resurrection.

Since the Sadducees only accepted the Pentateuch, they asked a question about what Moses had written in the Law. 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.’” In order to make sure that every man had a son to carry on his family, the Law said that if a man died without a son, the brother of that man was to marry the wife of the brother. Then, the first son of that couple was recognized as the son of the brother who had died without a son. The Sadducees used that instruction as the basis for their question.

We see that the Sadducees tried to trap Jesus with a question about marriage and the resurrection. Since the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, this was clearly a trick question to try and trap Jesus. The question of the Sadducees is given in Luke 20:29-33, where we read, “‘Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.’” The Sadducees said that there was a family with seven brothers. The first brother died and did not have any children. As a result, the second brother obeyed the instructions of the Law and married the woman and she became his wife. They were going to recognize the first son as the son of the brother that had died.

However, the second brother also died without having any children. The Sadducees said that the third, the fourth, the fifth and the sixth brothers each married this woman when the previous brother died without having any children. Finally, after the sixth brother died, the seventh brother also

married the woman. However, they did not have any children either and one day he also died. Then, after all seven brothers had died, the woman finally died. After telling this story to Jesus, the Sadducees finally asked Jesus their question. The Sadducees then asked, “Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.” Since the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, this question quickly showed that they were only trying to trap Jesus.

Matthew and Mark both record one statement that Jesus made before He gave the answer that is written here. Matthew 22:29 says, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.’” Here, we see the two mistakes that every person who is not a Christian will make when they try to trap Christians with questions about the Bible. First, a person who is not a Christian cannot really understand the Scripture. 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.” Then, Hebrews 4:12 adds, “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” A person who is not a Christian cannot understand that the Word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart of that person.

Second, a person who is not a Christian cannot understand the power of God. Several verses help us to understand the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” Here, we see that the message of the cross shows those who are Christians the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:24 adds, “But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Only those who are called experience the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2:5 says, “That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” Here, we see that our faith is in the power of God.

2 Corinthians 13:4 tells us, “For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.” Here we see two things. Jesus is alive by the power of God and we can look forward to living with Him by the power of God. Finally, 1 Peter 1:3-5 says, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Here, we see that we are kept by the power of God through faith and that has given us an eternal inheritance. The Sadducees could understand none of these things because they did not know the power of God.

Back in Luke 20:34-38, we read, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the *burning bush passage* that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord “the God of

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.” In these verses, we see several other things that the Sadducees could not understand.

In the present age, we do have marriage on this earth. Genesis 2:18 says, “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’” However, those who are raised from the dead to eternal life will be in the presence of the Lord for all eternity. We will never be alone again. As a result, there will be no need for marriage in eternity and we do not need to ever think about death because no one will die in eternity. Instead, this passage says that we will be equal to the angels in eternity. However, we will also have greater privileges than the angels because of the fact that we are the sons of God. Romans 8:16-17 says, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” We will also be joint heirs with Jesus because of the fact that we are the sons of the resurrection. Here, we see that Jesus clearly showed that the teachings and beliefs of the Sadducees denied the power of both the Word of God and of the power of God.

However, since the Sadducees recognized the Law, Jesus went on to teach about the resurrection from the book of Exodus. At the burning bush, Moses asked the Lord what he should say when he went to speak to the people of Israel in Egypt. Exodus 3:13-14 says, “Then Moses said to God, ‘Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you,” and they say to me, “What is His name?” what shall I say to them?’ And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’” God did not just exist in the past or He would have had to say “I WAS”. God will not just exist in the future or He would have had to say, “I WILL BE”. Instead, God is the “I AM” who always was and always will be. Although Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had experienced a physical death, they still had spiritual life and so He is still their God because God is the God of the living. In fact, all people will live for eternity. Paul told Felix in Acts 24:15, “I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of the just and *the* unjust.” The just will be raised to eternal life and the unjust will be raised to eternal judgment.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly come to an understanding of both the Scriptures and of the power of God. That will prepare them to patiently explain to those who are not yet Christians how such individuals can receive forgiveness of sins and receive eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to answer the questions of others with the Scriptures.