

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #257

Tuesday of Passion Week... Day of Testing and Teaching

The Sadducees Question Jesus About the Resurrection

LK 20.27-39 (Parallel Texts: MT 22.23-33; MK 20.18-27)

27 ^{MT}That same day ^Lsome of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.

28 “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. (Duet. 25.5)

29 Now there were seven brothers ^{MT}among us. ^LThe first one married a woman and died childless. 30 The second and 31 then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. 32 Finally, the woman died too.

33 Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since ^{MT}all of ^Lthe seven were married to her?”

34 Jesus replied, ^{MT}*“You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures, or the power of God.*

^L*“The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come, and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, 36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection.*

37 “But ^{MT}*about the resurrection of the dead--have you never read what God said to you? In the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he says of the Lord: ‘^{MT}I AM ^Lthe God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’*

38 *“He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive. ^MYou are badly mistaken!”*

39 ^{MT}When the crowd heard this they were astonished at his teaching. ^LSome of the teachers of the law responded, “Well said, teacher!”

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Temple Courts in Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus’ Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	C. Tuesday: Day of Testing and Teaching
Title	7. The Sadducees Question Jesus About the Resurrection

COMMENT:

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The second of three consecutive questions that Jesus answered on "Testing Tuesday" was the most difficult kind: a hypothetical one. Imaginary scenarios give the questioner every advantage in creating an impossible conundrum.

Jesus had just routed the Pharisees and Herodians with his answer to their question about paying tribute to Caesar. The Sadducees must have rejoiced to see their much more popular and numerous political/religious rivals trounced. Now it was their turn to give Jesus their best shot.

The question hinged upon a stipulation of the Law that directed an unmarried brother of man who married and died childless to marry the widow, and create children in the same family line as his deceased brother. In the the hypothetical scenario, seven consecutive brothers married the same woman and all died childless.

Since the Sadducees did not believe that the Old Testament contained the promise of a physical resurrection, they sought to use this bizarre situation to show that the resurrection would be incompatible with life on this earth. Whose wife would the woman be in heaven?

Jesus answer was another example of virtually omniscient wisdom demolishing the craftiest human wiles. The Lord first identified the twin source of the Sadducees' problem. They did not properly understand the Scriptures, and therefore they were ignorant of the power of God. These double disasters made it impossible for the Sadducees to see and know the truth about the reality of the resurrection, and eternal life.

Jesus explained that marriage is an earthly, temporal institution. It will not exist eternally in heaven. Only Jesus will be eternally united to his bride, the Church. The revelation that marriage is not eternal--but limited to this life--made the Sadducee's question irrelevant.

Jesus then went on to prove from a Scripture that the Sadducees believed and accepted as truth, that the resurrection and subsequent eternal life is a fact. God said he was currently *"the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,"* who were all physically dead. In the thinking of the Sadducees, this meant they no longer existed in any form. The Sadducees were materialists, who believed that life was only physical/biological, and did not include a spiritual, enduring nature. Life ended forever at death.

Jesus pointed out that God was speaking to Moses in the present tense--claiming to be the current God of an Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who were presently alive in his presence. Eternal life had to be a reality for God to be able to speak those words.

No one had heard this explanation before--the crowds and the experts in the Law were both astonished when Jesus spoke it--but no one could deny the logical and Biblical consistency of Jesus' interpretation. The Sadducees could not argue further with Jesus in any way concerning his answer. They had to admit he was right when he concluded: "You are badly mistaken."

For a second time, Jesus had fielded a trick question in the Temple Courts, and effortlessly returned it in the full light of truth, to the shame and consternation of his enemies. The desire to continue to attack him was withering in them like the cursed fig tree. One final, feeble third question would be offered to Jesus. That will be our reading for tomorrow.

APPLICATION:

Jesus constantly taught that he will give each of us an eternal existence. WE make the choice of whether it will be in heaven, or hell. This fact made it imperative that people live in this age, on this earth, in these physical bodies, with the values and priorities of the eternal age to come in view.

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Life on this earth is nothing compared to eternity in the age to come. The only wise thing to do is to use this temporary life in our present bodies to prepare for eternity in the presence of God in heaven. The most foolish thing any person can do on earth is to use this life to guarantee themselves eternal life in hell. Sadly, this is what most people do.

We must all be careful to avoid the fatal errors of misunderstanding the Scriptures, and the power of God. Far too many people in our modern world have joined the ancient Sadducees in being "badly mistaken" in these two crucial matters. The quality of our life in this world, and in eternity depend upon repenting, and embracing the truth of the Scriptures as the power of God to save us.

What can you do today to deepen your understanding of the Scriptures more than yesterday?

How can you incorporate this into your daily way of life?