

## Truths about the Resurrection

Luke 20:27-40 (08-02-2020)

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The Bible is always under attack. Doctrine is rejected, misinterpreted, or ridiculed. In 1925 the ACLU in New York City located a teacher named John Scopes in Dayton, Tennessee to test the Butler Act that said it was unlawful to teach evolution in public schools. Though Scopes wasn't a science teacher, he filled in for a friend and taught evolution to the class. He was arrested and charged with teaching evolution. The trial, also called the "Monkey Trial," lasted eight hot days in July. It was the first trial to be covered by a national radio broadcast. Daily reports were even sent overseas through the newly laid transatlantic cable.

William Jennings Bryan was the prosecuting attorney. He was a devoted Christian who strongly held to the biblical teaching on creation. The defense attorney was a brilliant agnostic named Clarence Darrow who took the case in order to publicly ridicule biblical Christianity and prevent "bigots and ignoramuses" from controlling the educational system of the United States. To make a long but fascinating story short, Darrow maneuvered to get Bryan on the witness stand and proceeded to ridicule him for his faith in the Bible and its miracles. Bryan never got a chance to put Mr. Darrow on the witness stand. The jury found Mr. Scopes guilty as charged. But the outcome of the fiasco was to make Bible believing Christians look foolish. Several days after the trial, Mr. Bryan fell ill and died.

Ridicule is a favorite tactic of the enemies of the Bible. It happens in academia, and even in the church. It is exactly the tactic the Sadducees are going to use in the passage before us in Luke 20:27-40.

Remember last week the Pharisees and Herodians sent spies to try to get Jesus to incriminate Himself with the question about taxes. They failed miserably. Now the Sadducees step forward to ask a ridiculous question to try to make Jesus look like a buffoon, much like Darrow lampooned Bryan. It all had to do with the resurrection, which the Sadducees did not believe. Someone said that's why they are called Sad-U-See.

### **The Denial of Doctrine**

*Luke 20:27 Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection),*

This is the one and only time Luke refers to the Sadducees in his Gospel. The Sadducees were the aristocratic, wealthy, educated high priestly party who ran the temple. They held the majority in the Sanhedrin, Israel's ruling council. They loved their comfy lifestyle and were cozy with the Romans. They were rude, arrogant, and power-hungry. They loved ripping their philosophical opponents to shreds. They held to the authority of only the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. We learn in Acts 23:7-8 they didn't believe in angels, spirits, the resurrection, or a coming Messiah. And they were unconcerned with Jesus until they realized He might now be bringing unwanted attention from the Romans.

This passage shows us the importance of correct doctrine. Doctrine means truths clearly taught in the Scripture like the doctrine of God, creation, man, sin, Christ, redemption, justification by faith, immortality of the soul, the resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell, and many more, including the doctrine of Scriptures as inspired by God, without error, infallible, authoritative, and sufficient for life and godliness. We should know what we believe to be able to discern false teaching.

An article in the latest World Magazine highlighted a Bible "scholar" named Peter Enns. He was a professor at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia for 14 years. He wrote a book entitled *The Bible Tells Me So* which actually teaches the Bible is wrong in many ways, from creation to Adam and Eve to the flood, the conquest, and most other biblical history you think is true. Dr. Enns says it all never really happened the way the Bible tells it and the Bible is just full of myths and ancient legends.

Andree Seu Peterson, the author of the article, notes, "The funny thing about heresy is that no one who falls into it thinks himself a heretic but a lonely champion of enlightenment." She ends by saying, "Enns' book would be better retitled "Hath God Really Said?" (World Mag. 8/1/20). Westminster finally caught on to Mr. Enns and in 2008 he was compelled to leave, but not before he had infected many students with his heresies. Let's repeat it, doctrine is important and you need to know what you believe. Jesus never said, "Hey, it doesn't really matter what you believe, as long as you're sincere" or "Everyone's entitled to his own opinion." No, Jesus is going to tell these Sadducees they are wrong and then He's going to correct them. So here come the Sadducees to take a swing at Jesus

### **A Ridiculous Question**

*Luke 20:28-33 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 MARRY THE WIFE AND RAISE UP CHILDREN TO HIS BROTHER. 29 "Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless; 30 and the second 31 and the third married her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children. 32 "Finally the woman died also. 33 "In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her."*

They give him the respectful title of "Teacher," but I question their motives. So what is this all about? Briefly, they are referring to the levirate law in Deuteronomy 25. *Levir* is Latin for a husband's brother. If a man in Israel married and had no son to continue his name, then his brother was to marry his widow to produce a son. She cannot marry a stranger. So these Sadducees dream up this hypothetical and absurd scenario to stump Jesus and make Him look foolish to the people. Seven brothers marry this same sister-in-law. You'd think by the third or fourth, the rest of these brothers would leave town sensing something's weird with this woman. On the other hand, she must have been up to here by the time she got to husband #7. The kicker is that if a brother refuses to marry her, she's to take off his sandal and spit in his face. His house would be known as the house of him whose sandal is removed. It's all in Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

Their question is, with seven husbands in her marital history, whose wife will she be in heaven? Husband #1, #2, #3, #4, and so on. What is absurd is they don't even believe in the resurrection! They ask their question for the sole purpose of ridiculing Jesus in front of the crowd. This is their best theological shot and they feel confident it will be pretty damaging to Jesus. But fear not; our Lord has the answer.

### **Correcting the Doctrine**

Mark gives us a little more information here.

*Mark 12:24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God?"*

You have to love this. First, "You are mistaken." The word for mistaken is *planao*, meaning deceived or seduced. Scholars don't like being told they are wrong, and especially that they are being deceived. Jesus then gives them two reasons why they are wrong. "You don't understand two things, the Scriptures or the power of God." The Scripture, which is inspired by God and therefore inerrant and authoritative and sufficient – sola Scriptura, must be the number one authority. And then is God's power. You could probably list every heresy under not understanding these two points.

Jesus is ready to teach them what they don't believe.

*Luke 20:34-36 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 they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."*

Now we're going to learn how the doctrine of marriage relates to the resurrection. First, you will not be married in heaven. In our world in this age marriage is normal. Men and women (mark the two genders) have been marrying ever since God brought Eve to Adam. But that will change in heaven. "But I want to be with my wife forever." "Wait, my marriage was made in heaven!" No, you never were married forever, only until "death due you part." If your spouse dies, you are free to remarry whomever you wish, only in the Lord (1Corinthians 7:39). Your new spouse must be a Christian.

So marriage is only for this age, and for one good reason. When people get married, they often have babies. While marriage is for more than propagating the race (someone has to know where the mustard is), a major reason for marriage is to be fruitful and multiply. We are thankful that many of you are faithfully doing that. But propagating is not needed in heaven. Why? Once you get your new glorified body you will never die again, so you don't need to keep having babies to replace yourselves. Verse 36 says, "They cannot die anymore." You are immortal in your resurrection body. You will be equal to angels in that sense – immortal. Angels don't die and neither will we.

Notice how Jesus squeezes in "considered worthy to attain that age." He's challenging these Sadducees about their faith or lack of it. If they don't believe in the resurrection, they won't be there with all God's people. Oh yes, there will be a resurrection of lost people, but not a resurrection to glory and not as sons of God or sons of the resurrection. Your earthly body isn't saved yet. Your body is dying and will return to dust. In this age on earth, you aren't fully sons of God or the resurrection yet. Your spirit is adopted when you are born again, but your body won't be adopted until the resurrection. Then you will be in your full resurrected humanity, body and soul. This is what Paul means in Romans.

*Romans 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.*

So Jesus corrects these fellows about what the body will be like in the resurrection.

#### **Correction about Man's Immortality and Future Resurrection**

*Luke 20:37-40 But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB. 38 "Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him." 39 Some of the scribes answered and said, 'Teacher, You have spoken well. For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.*

Now Jesus goes deeper into the Word to show these so-called scholars, who held to the authority of the first five books, that their own Scriptures teach the resurrection. We're going to simplify this.

First, the dead are raised. That's what Jesus says. Many religions and philosophies reject the idea of the resurrection of the body. They are hoping and praying that their body will not be raised. I worked night shift at a Super 8 motel in Warsaw while in seminary. As I was trying to witness to one gentleman about Christ, he told me he wanted to be cremated so God couldn't get a hold of him. He had no clue of God's power. Cremation won't keep God from resurrecting anyone. Some believe in reincarnation which teaches that your soul enters another bodily form, higher or lower, depending on how much good or bad karma you accumulated. But many hope when they die, they will be just deleted. This is the hope of a fool.

Second, Moses teaches the resurrection in Exodus 3:5. Jesus very neatly shows how this verse teaches both the immortality of the soul and therefore the resurrection of the body. Moses calls the Lord "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." What does this mean? For Moses to say this means these three people are still alive in their spirits. If they didn't exist anymore, then God would be the God of three non-existent, dead people. It is impossible to be God of something that doesn't exist.

Since He is God of these three men who are still living in their spirit, the time will come when God will bring their bodies and souls back together. God created man from dust and breathed into his nostrils and man became a living soul. **A man is not a full and true human being until he is body and soul.** Our spirit goes to Jesus when we die. This is our hope when we face death. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." But the separation of body and soul is only temporary. Heaven is filled with spirits waiting to be joined to their bodies. At the rapture the church age saints will be joined to their body. The dead in Christ will rise first and we who are alive and remain will be caught up in our bodies to meet the Lord in the air. That's our glorified bodies!

What will we look like? I don't think we will care. There'll be no vanity, jealousy, or envy in Heaven. We'll all have new bodies just like Christ's glorious body (Phil. 3:21). We will get a new edition that will never wear out, age, get sick, or suffer. In 1 Corinthians 15 some of the Corinthians were denying the resurrection and Paul responded, "Wait a minute, if Christ rose from the dead, so will we." Someone pipes up, "What kind of body will we have?" Paul's response is a bit stronger in verse 36, "You fool!" You can be assured your resurrection body will be glorious. You can count on it. Paul has great words about our coming resurrection.

*1 Corinthians 15:50-54 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 mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will 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 will 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.*

Back to Luke 20:39. Listen to the scribes, who did believe in the resurrection, "Teacher, you have spoken well" or "that was an excellent answer." "You sure did show those Sadducees who think they are so great." I can imagine you may have heard a round of applause coming from the crowd gathered round.

Verse 40 is one of those moments to be relished. The Sadducees knew Jesus had taken their ridiculous question and turned it right around on them. Mark ends his account with Jesus saying, "You are greatly mistaken." The Sadducees had met their match and they knew it. They learned sound doctrine about the resurrection that day.

## **SO WHAT?**

What do we learn from all this?

#1 Marriage is for this age, not for the next age. So love your spouse now! This is the only opportunity you have.

#2 There will be a resurrection. You knew that, but do you really believe it? God will resurrect every human being that ever lived. Job believed in the resurrection. Job 19:25-27, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God, whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another." Are you ready? Have you come to Christ so that you will be considered worthy to attain that age? Remember, you will live somewhere forever.

#3 We all live to God. When you die, you as believers go on living before God. Imagine all the saved loved ones going back generations. You'll be with them in that in-between time.

#4 Will we recognize each other in heaven? Absolutely. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still distinct persons with God in their spirits. They are there this very day. And when we die, we will join them. When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!