

## *Jesus Answers the Sadducees*

*23On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him, 24asking, “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; 26so 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.”*

*29But 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.” 33When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.*

Many folks skip lightly over this section. It's a dumb question. Can God make a rock so large He can't lift it? Ha ha ha ha. *Reductio ad absurdum*. Win the argument by taking it to absurdity.

But there is oh so much more than that here. This section is of utmost importance. Why? Because the church has been split for the most part of 2 centuries between people who call themselves the church, but don't believe the Bible. Liberal christianity.

Beware. I'm not talking about politics. When we say liberal christianity I'm talking about a group of people who claim to be christians but have denied all the power of true christianity. They have abandoned real saving faith.

Liberalism began to arise in the 1800's along side of scientific discovery. Men finally emerged from the dark ages and the renaissance periods into modern learning.

Science and learning unleashed the industrial age. And modern emergent people could no longer accept a Bible full of miracles and other non-rational phenomena.

Spirits and angels and miracles had no place in a modern rational world full of learning and repeatable scientific discovery.

No one will believe those old wives tales any more. And so learned men, in the name of saving christianity and making it acceptable to a modern world, especially in Europe, set out to de-mythologize the Bible.

Get rid of the myths and the miracles. The spirits and the angels. Only what science can rationally prove will be allowed. No virgin birth. No miraculous Jesus. No resurrection from the dead. No water turned into wine. All of that was the invention of unlearned men from an ignorant time. A bunch of superstition derived from men who were goat herders and star gazers.

This would make christianity acceptable to modern men. Respectable for modern intelligent scientific rational thinkers.

But it effectively gutted christianity. 150 years later, we're watching the death throes of a gutted dead christianity. In Europe, there's a 97% chance that not only are you NOT a christian, you've never even met one. Churches are being boarded up, or repurposed. Christianity is dead. In Tonopah, 2 or 3 elderly ladies are holding forth the old tradition, and in 10 years . . . nothing.

What went wrong? Jesus is going to define that question in this passage this morning.

The Saducees are in striking parallel with liberal christianity. Truly, as Soloman said, there's nothing new under the sun.

So who are the Saducee's? We've seen Pharisees and Herodians. Now we have Saducee's as a group.

It turns out, the Saducees were the rich aristocracy of Israel. The high priest and his extended family were all Saducees. The men who ran the temple concessions were Saducee's. They were rich. And their theology was notable.

The saducee's were Biblical literalists. So are we. But here's the thing. They only believed that what Moses wrote was inspired scripture. The poetic books and the prophets were merely commenters on Moses. Those books had no further authority. Take them or leave them.

And so they had developed this narrow view of revelation that had nothing spiritual. Nothing other-worldly. No life after death. No resurrection from the dead. No eternal rewards or punishment. This is it. Go for all the gusto you can get. In a 10 commandments moral sort of way.

That sort of explains the temple bazaar sellers raking in profit in the temple.

They held that to only recognize Moses books, the pentateuch, was the pure religion. They prided themselves in being the keepers of the pure Judaism. And they would argue with the pharisees that you can't prove anything about angels and spirits and resurrections from Moses. It isn't there.

And the pharisees would try to form an argument within those constraints . . and failed miserably.

Think about it. If you dismiss all but the first five books, there's not much there to support angels and life after death.

Our minds go immediately to things like; Job saying *"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;...Job 19:25 ,26*

Or Daniel saying; *I "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a*

*time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2“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. 3“Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Dan. 12 and many other passages in the Psalms and the prophets.*

But that isn't playing by the rules the Saducee's set. Pure religion. Only Moses. Not all this other corruption.

Here are a couple of the verses the pharisee's came up with;

Numbers 18:28, says this: "Ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest." And the pharisees would argue, obviously Aaron is still alive if we have to give him the Lord's heave offering.

Weak, because the Saducees would just dismiss that and say the Aaronic priesthood *is* Aaron in that sense. Another verse they used was Deuteronomy 31:16.

Deuteronomy 31:16 says, "***This people shall rise up***, and they'd stop right there. Sounds good, but the rest of the verse is *and go a whoring*."

And there's Deuteronomy 32:39, "*I kill and I make alive*," but all that means is that God is the author of life and death. So their attempts to prove resurrection from Moses were a fail.

That's the background to the discussion these Saducee's will have with Jesus. "We make the pharisees look stupid all the time. We'll make Jesus look stupid too. Stupid people with their stupid old wives tales ideas."

They'd stumped the pharisees with this question many times and it would be just as fun to stump Jesus. So, they launch in;

*23On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came*

*to Jesus and questioned Him, 24 asking, "Teacher, Moses said,*

They begin with the usual flattering reference to "teacher", a respectable title, but they have zero respect for this teacher.

Notice also, the second thing out of their mouth is Moses. Moses said. That's their rule. Moses has to have said it. Jesus will address this too.

*'IF A MAN DIES HAVING NO CHILDREN, HIS BROTHER AS NEXT OF KIN SHALL MARRY HIS WIFE, AND RAISE UP CHILDREN FOR HIS BROTHER.'*

\ This is the levirate law. It's from Deuteronomy 25. 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"*It shall be that the firstborn whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

This practice is found in other ancient cultures also. Not just Israel. It was important in clan settings so that a family that didn't produce a male offspring before the husband died, would not be bereft of their inheritance.

The Saducee's have no interest in that law per se. They just view it as an opportunity to create an absurdity.

They tell their story in the first person as if this actually happened last week, just down the block.

25*"Now there were seven brothers with us;*

Tina used to love to watch that movie. Seven wives for seven brothers. This is one wife for seven brothers. It actually might be a big hit in Hollywood these days.

25*"Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and*

*died, and having no children left his wife to his brother;*

One of the things I learned as I studied this was that this law was only if your brother's wife was homely. If she was pretty and you actually wanted to have her, then that was considered incest. But back to the story. So the first brother dies with no issue and the wife is left to the next brother to perform his duty.

*26so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh.*

OK. Now we know there's something up. Maybe three, but if you were the 4rth brother you'd be heading to the coast looking for a boat to Tarshish. Three dead brothers and now it's your turn? I don't think so.

*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.”*

They're all sitting around giggling like 2nd graders that just told a potty joke. Extricate yourself from *that*, Jesus.

There's so much to learn here.

How often have you run into people who say something like "***doctrine divides, but Jesus unites***". We need to forget about doctrine. Unity trumps doctrine at almost any cost.

So the modern church has walked away from doctrine in the name of so-called unity.

I had this sense about our friends in Goldfield long before Ray Behrens left. They argued since Goldfield was small, the church needed to be inclusive for anyone of any religion. If you're a budhist you need not be offended by some christian doctrine. Set all that aside in the name of inclusiveness. The First Church of Hodge Podge.

Folks, Satan's job number one is to introduce error into the church. Like the TV commercial. That's who he is. That's what he does. And the church has been combatting error from the time that Jesus wrote the

seven letters in 96 AD until today.

It's a never ending battle. Satan never gets tired of it. I mean he started out with a different plan. Kill all the christians. Wipe out the church. But that just made them stronger. Then he discovered, *error*.

Don't waste time killing the christians. Make them sick. Error makes the church sick. It robs it of it's power. Worst case, it makes it so sick, it dies.

And Satan doesn't care if you fall off the left side of the horse, or the right. He just wants you to fall off. And so error is taylored to the recipient.

There are a couple of kinds. Some error doesn't utlimately kill you, it just distracts you down dead end streets so nothing gets done. Like the whole charismatic phenomenon. Or a thousand books about end times prophecy. Big billboards that tell you the day. A million dollars wasted.

Other errors are lethal. Errors that tamper with God's design for salvation. Grace plus works. Grace is OK as far as it goes, but there's work you have to add to have salvation. That is lethal error.

Jude says we must "*Earnestly contend for the once for all delivered to the saints faith*". I don't know how you interpret earnestly contend, but to me it means, fight. Fight for the truth, vigorously. Fight against error.

The church has been holding councils and synods to discuss heresy from the time Jesus wrote the seven letters up until today. Things like the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy where men gathered to drive in a stake in the ground and say this is the benchmark in 1978. This is where we stand.

And a current one, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. A synod of believers fighting the battle on that front. What is the biblical definition of men and women. What are their roles.

Complementarianism, or Egalitarianism.

These are examples of the church's ongoing battle with error. It never ends. Liberal christianity has almost died of natural causes and Satan re-introduces all of the ideas all over again in the name of Emergent Church.

The main one that's playing these days, as we speak, is the Lukewarm church. The market driven church. The church that can cool it's jets enough to become attractive to a wider audience. The worldly church. The Rock and Roll church.

WWJD? What would Jesus Do? Well, in this passage, He takes a rather direct approach in how He confronts error. If you're uncomfortable with people who are confrontive about error, look closely at Jesus example.

*29But Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.*

You are wrong. You have a low view of God which has caused you to have a low view of scripture. You mis-interpret scripture because you mis-understand God. And vice versa. It's a vicious circle.

Low view of God. Low view of scripture. = Error  
Low view of scripture. Low view of God. = Error

A low view of God and scripture produces christian liberalism (or in this case, the jewish equivalent.) We don't believe the Book. The Book has no real authority. Therefore we don't believe in a God who has any power.

What surprises me is, what do you do with the first verse in the book? If He can speak universes into existence with His Word, why would you limit Him on the little stuff. Like resurrection from the dead.

The church has set the Bible aside. It's the very reason I got exasperated with the folks I love dearly up the hill at the other church. I was



challenging them to get serious about this Book and they intentionally went in the other direction. Readers Digest condensed version.

This world surrounding us does NOT want to hear this book. And we're desperate to get them in the door some how. So we deny the Book it's power. We take a non serious approach. We read a few verses and talk about everything but what it says.

The end result is a toothless old god who left town the day after creation and hasn't been back since. Mumble some magic words and shazaam, you're a christian. Don't worry about it after that.

This is the error of the Saducees and the error of the lukewarm church. Dismiss the book so you can live how you want. And in the bargain you've dismissed God also. What then is Jesus approach to this error?

He doesn't sugar coat it folks. My wife will tell you that one of the places I have the most trouble is here. I come at error like a bull dog and get you in my jaws and shake you until you're dead. She thinks I could lighten up just a little. Obviously there's a balance. I need to shake you until you're dead, with love.

Luckily for me and everybody, I'm not very brave. I get in trouble most, at the keyboard.

He simply says, **you are wrong**. Heretics. *gr. planao*. We get our word planet. You are a wandering star. A planet that has left it's course. A train that has left the track.

We see this all over the old testament. These Saducees would be familiar with the concept. It brings to mind the commissioning of Joshua which repeats Deut. 5.

Josh. 1:7 *"Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.*

To planao, to err, is to wander from the path. These men have turned off of the road. They're wandering aimlessly. Error. They believe themselves to be the protectors of the true faith of Moses. Jesus says, you're a train wreck.

Then, the only person in the room with first hand experience simply tells them; vs. 30 *"For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."*

There (heaven) is not like here. No more marriage. Nothing close to what we know here. Jesus has been there, seen that. We cannot even imagine. But here is one of the few glimpses. No pro-creation activity. No wife. No spirit babies. None of the flights of fancy that the Mormons have invented. No celestial marriage. They say they believe in Jesus. Hello?

If we needed to know more, He'd tell us. Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we shall see face to face.

Now then, Jesus is going to give us a rather spectacular Bible study lesson. He is going to give us an example of His hermeneutics. Herman who? Hermeneutics is the study of how we interpret the Bible.

You go visiting and the first thing out of everyone's mouth is; *"that's your interpretation"*. Maybe. Believe me, I can get it wrong. But there are rules we follow in order to try to get it right.

It means something. If I was dead, it still means something. It's not just a string of meaningless words. Clattering symbols. The words mean things. We want to learn how to correctly discover what this book means by what it says.

A term us Bible fatheads throw around a lot is ***verbal plenary inspiration*** of Scripture by God. What that means is that we believe every word was put there by God. Every word is important. Every word inspired. Every word God breathed.

And that's a key place where the liberals go wrong. They say, yes, we've got to keep something or the discussion is over, obviously, but we only believe the idea of God is in the scripture. You read this stuff and the idea of God floats above the verbiage somehow. It's how it strikes you. There's no hard and fast rules.

Therefore, men have authority over the book. The book doesn't have authority over men. That's how you end up with entire old line denominations who believe LGBT people can be christians and women and LGBT whatevers can stand in front of the church and preach.

Because the words that seem to preclude that, don't have any authority. Those doctrines are not hard to find, or understand, they simply don't mean anything. You see, when you dismiss inspiration, you send it flying out the window, authority goes with it.

God didn't say it. Men said it, and men are prone to error, and we know better now, and those two gender based ideas, (and a whole bunch more) were errors that ignorant men that don't know what we know, made.

So, yeah, the words are there and they seem to say something, but they have no authority over us. Gays can be christians. Women and LGBT folk who are confused about what they are . . . can preach in the church.

That's where you wind up when you jettison verbal plenary inspiration. God put every word there, and every one of them means something. And since God said it, we must obey it! All of that goes away. And good riddance. Those narrow legalistic folks are no fun to be around and all they do is argue with each other about their stupid words.

So, which camp was Jesus in? Is He in the words-mean-things-and-God-said-every-one-of-them-and-therefore-they-have-authority-over-men-camp? Or is he in the anything goes camp? Those are important questions.

And they're about to get a whole lot more important if this country elects the candidate I think they're going to elect. The non-crazy one. The methodist. Because she *is* in the anything goes camp and will

immediately punish the (God put every word there, and every one of them means something. And since God said it, we must obey it!) camp. That will be her first order of business. You can mark my words. I'll happily be wrong.

So we need to decide right now, while their's still no real cost, which camp we're in, because I think it's going to get expensive to hold these views in the future.

So, again, which camp is Jesus in? Let's look closely at how Jesus uses hermeneutics to interpret scripture. We'll never get a better hermeneutics lesson than this one. Jesus goes after error like a bull dog, but then He lovingly teaches them why they're wrong, and how they got there.

*31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read*

OK, lovingly. That's important and I take note. I'm weak here. But DO note, please, the biting sarcasm. It gives me hope.

Have - you - not - read? Oh! trust me when I tell you, He's pushing their buttons. These were the literalist experts in the law of Moses. These are the purists! Have you not read??!! Are you kidding me?? Do you have any idea who you're talking to Jesus?? Who has no letters after His name, who is not part of the Sanhedrin, the 70 elders, the priesthood (although He is). Some hick from Galilee dares to ask *Have You Not Read???!!!*

Every time He says that, and He says it a LOT, these folks get a darker shade of red. Their heart rate increases. Their surface temperature goes up! Jesus just pushes that button.

You'd know the answer to this if you ever read your Bibles. This isn't rocket science. Oh! they hated that. He says that to us too. Please do not dis-include yourselves from this sarcasm. We desperately need to know what our Book says. Especially now.

*31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what*

*was spoken to you by God:*

OK, stop right there. This is point one in our hermeneutics lesson. 32 *'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'?*

Jesus made a small mistake here. God didn't say that. Their hero, Moses said that. Moses wrote that. But Jesus says; What Moses wrote; IS THE WORD OF GOD. Jesus believes in the inspiration of scripture. *have you not read what was spoken to you by God:* Written down by Moses.

The argument for authority rests in inspiration. Who wrote the book. Well Moses did. But Jesus here gives the authorship, and the resulting authority, to God.

If Moses wrote it, maybe I'm off the hook. Moses was just another goat herd with bad teeth. *have you not read what was spoken to you by God:*

Jesus supports inspiration of scripture. Here, and in a whole lot of other places. But this is a strong argument for the authority of this Book. This is God's book.

OK, that's inspiration, God breathed, but we still haven't addressed "verbal plenary" have we. Just wait. We're getting there.

Hermeneutics lesson no. 2

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."*

OK, you english teachers. You scholars. Because I really am not.

His argument here teeters on the verb tense of a single word.

I AM. The word translated AM is a Verb - present indicative active - 1st person singular. I AM right now, not back then when they lived on

the earth, I currently, right now AM *THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB*'

Jesus turns their absurd argument into a logical argument with a single tense of a single word. *He is not the God of the dead but of the living.*

Argument over. You can go color.

*33When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.*

There's nothing more to say. What the pharisee's couldn't do, Jesus does with the authority of someone who wrote the book.

*33When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.*

I don't expect you to be astonished with my teaching. But I do expect you to hold your Bibles with a new respect.

Every word you hold in your hands is inspired right down to the tenses of the singular words. Therefore, this book has all authority over us. It defines us.

Days are over, the time has passed, for lackadaisical, careless, lazy christians. It's never been easier than now to study every single word. If you don't know how to do that, where to find that for free, online, email me. I'll show you.

Days are coming when our faith and resolve will be tested, and we will need to have a grasp on what this book says, and why it is authoritative.

Jesus believed in the verbal plenary inspiration of this book we hold. Right down to the tenses of the verbs.

Conclusion: This book trumps the United States Government. This book trumps SCOTUS and POTUS. Where there is disagreement between the Supreme Court of the United States or the President of the United States on issues that are clearly addressed and defined in this book; It wins. They lose. Argument over. God's Words trump mens.

Or womens. Or people who don't know what they are. This Book is the final authority on every matter that it clearly teaches.