

Matthew Chapter 22 Continued

Verses 23-29:

The Sadducees make the next attempt to discredit Jesus and are even more severely humiliated.

As the liberal party within first century Judaism, they rejected belief in the supernatural, especially angels and the resurrection of the dead (see Paul's encounter in Acts 23:8-10).

"Moses said" is a reference to (Deuteronomy 25:5), where the practice of levirate marriage called for an unmarried brother to take his brother's widow to be his own wife (Gen. 38:8).

The absurd hypothetical case that follows represents another theological dilemma, this time attempting to discredit the legitimacy of the resurrection, which the Sadducees rejected.

This extreme example must have been thought by them to be the ultimate proof of the foolishness of the doctrine of resurrection.

All seven brothers had been married to her, "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?"

Jesus replies, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures.

Jesus had contempt for the Sadducees because they made light of the Bible and the "power of God (i.e., His resurrection power, Phil. 3:10).

This is His strongest recorded rebuke of the Jewish party.

Matthew 22:23 "The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,"

There were about 6,000, legalistic sect of the Jews who were known for their rigid adherence to the ceremonial fine points of the law.

Their name means "separated one."

Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees was usually adversarial.

He rebuked them for using human tradition to nullify Scripture.

The Sadducees were known for their denial of things supernatural.

They denied the resurrection of the dead (22:23), and the existence of angels (Acts 23:8).

Unlike the Pharisees, they rejected human tradition and scorned legalism.

They accepted only the Pentateuch as authoritative.

They tended to be wealthy, aristocratic members of the priestly tribe, and in the days of Herod their sect controlled the temple, though they were fewer in number than the Pharisees.

Pharisees and Sadducees had little in common.

Pharisees were ritualists; Sadducees were rationalists.

Pharisees were legalists; Sadducees were liberals.

Pharisees were separatists; Sadducees were compromisers and political opportunists.

Yet they united together in their opposition to Christ (22:15-6, 23-24, 35).

John publicly addressed them as deadly snakes.

Matthew 22:24 "Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother."

“His brother shall marry his wife”:

This refers to the law of levirate marriage, found (in Deut. 25:5-10).

This was a provision to ensure that family lines were kept intact and widows were cared for.

The Levitical law said, if a married man died without a son, the brother of the deceased was to marry the widow; and the first child born from that union would actually belong, in name, to the one that was deceased.

The inheritance, if there was any would go to this child.

Any other children born of this union would go to the physical father.

In Acts we read:

Acts 23:8 "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both."

You see, these Sadducees were trying to prove that there was no resurrection.

They, like so many of our religious people of today, would not believe anything that they could not see with their physical eyes.

They missed the whole message of faith.

Anything that is fact is not faith.

If you are standing on Mt. Ararat looking at Noah's Ark, it would take no faith to believe there was a Noah's Ark.

These people had to have physical proof of something that was spirit.

Matthew 22:25 "Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:"

“There were with us seven brethren”:

It is probable that they stated a case as difficult as possible; and though no such case might have occurred, yet it was supposable, and in their view, it presented a real difficulty.

The difficulty arose from the fact, that they supposed that the same state of things must take place in the next world as here; that if there is such a world, husbands and wives must be there reunited.

And they professed not to be able to see how one woman could be the wife of seven men.

Matthew 22:26 "Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh."

“Likewise the second also”:

The eldest of the surviving brethren, having married his brother's wife, then died also without children, and left her to his next brother to marry her.

And then the third brother accordingly did marry her, and in process of time died likewise, leaving no issue behind him.

Thus they went on in unto the seventh: the fourth, fifth, and sixth, married her in turn, and so did the seventh; and all died in the same circumstances, having no children by her.

Matthew 22:27 And last of all the woman died also."

“And last of all the woman died also”:

A widow and childless, having never married another person but these seven brethren; and the case same the same for all of them, none having any child by her, upon which any peculiar claim to her could be formed.

Matthew 22:28 "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her."

"Therefore in the resurrection":

As asserted by the Pharisees and by Christ, supposing that there will be such a thing, though not granting it; for these men denied it.

The Ethiopic version reads it hypothetically, "if therefore the dead will be raised"; upon such a supposition, whose wife shall she be of the seven?

“For they all had her”:

Or were married to her.

By putting this question, they thought to have got some advantage against Christ, and in favor of their belief.

They hoped, either that he would give into their way of thinking, and relinquish the doctrine of the resurrection upon this, and join with them against the Pharisees, and so there would be no need of an answer to the question.

Or they judged, that if he returned an answer, it would be either that he did not know whose wife she should be, and then they would show him among the common people, as weak and ignorant.

Or should he say, that she would be the wife of one of them only, naming which of them, or of them all, or of none of them.

They fancied that such absurd consequences would follow on each of these, as would expose the doctrine of the resurrection to ridicule and contempt.

But they missed their aim, and were sadly disappointed by Christ's answer and reasoning which does follow.

These Sadducees had set up a hypothetical situation, first of all, to try to catch Jesus in error.

They really did not want an answer to their question.

They were just trying to prove by Jesus, that there could not possibly be a resurrection.

They remind me so much of people of our day who know the letter of the word, but do not comprehend it spiritually.

These Sadducees were trying to fit the laws of this physical earth into the heavenly.

Matthew 22:29 "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

“Jesus answered and said unto them”:

The Sadducees: as idle and impertinent as the case they put may seem to be and really was, our Lord thought fit to return an answer to them, thereby to expose their ignorance, and put them to silence and confusion.

“Ye do err”:

Not only in that they denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection, but that supposing that there would be a resurrection, things in that state would be just as they were in this.

For instance, that there would be the same natural relation of husband and wife, which their question supposes.

Jesus went right to the question these Sadducees had asked.

They were thoroughly convinced of this one thing.

Jesus' reprimand of them was twofold (you do not know and understand the Scriptures, and you under estimated God).

Matthew 22:30 "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

“As the angels of God in heaven”:

The Sadducees did not believe in angels, so we see here that Jesus was exposing another of their false beliefs.

Angels are deathless creatures who do not propagate and therefore have no need for marriage.

“In the resurrection”:

The saints will have those same characteristics.

Jesus explained that “in the resurrection” men do not “marry” but are asexual “as the angels.”

The infantile illustration of the Sadducees shows that they had no confidence in the power of a glorious resurrection to a new life.

They thought that a resurrection would be the same kind of life as on earth.

Jesus teaches neither that glorified men become angels, nor that all earthly family relationships are lost in heaven.

All resurrected believers will be in a state of perfect glorification and fellowship.

Angels are ministering spirits, not flesh and blood beings like here on this earth.

I am not saying we shall not have a body.

We shall have a heavenly body (changed in the twinkling of an eye).

Angels (spirit beings) do not marry.

Marriage is an earthly relationship and has no part in heaven.

It is a function of the earth to populate the earth.

Without death being in the picture, there is no need for birth.

Mankind will be an eternal being in heaven.

Verses 31-34:

Jesus further attacks the Sadducees' major belief in no resurrection at all, by quoting (Exodus 3:6), a statement from the only part of the Old Testament that the Sadducees unquestioningly accepted (the Pentateuch).

He related the eternal "I AM of God to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), to demonstrate that they were "of the living," or immortal (a fact unlikely to be denied by the Sadducees in a public dispute).

"God is not the God of the dead" does not mean that He has no relationship to those who have departed; it means that the departed are not really dead, and are thus still responsible to the living God (Heb. 10:31).

Thus the crowd is "astonished" and the Sadducees are "put ... to silence."

Matthew 22:31 "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,"

"Have ye not read":

This quotation is taken from (Exodus 3:6, Exodus 3:16); and as the five books of Moses were the only part of Scripture which the Sadducees acknowledged as Divine.

Our Lord, by confuting them from those books, proved the second part of his assertion, "Ye are ignorant of those very scriptures which ye profess to hold sacred."

Matthew 22:32 "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

“God is not the God of the dead”:

Jesus’ argument (taken from the Pentateuch), because the Sadducees recognized only Moses’ authority, was based on the emphatic present tense “I am” (of Exodus 3:6).

This subtle but effective argument utterly silenced the Sadducees (verse 34).

This does not mean that God is just God of this earth.

This means there is life after death, as we know it here on earth.

God called Himself "I AM" to Moses.

This was a special name showing His eternity.

Jesus is Lord of the dead (to this earth), and the living.

In fact, a person truly never dies.

We choose where we will spend this eternity either in heaven or hell, but we never die.

We have a new body suited for all of eternity.

A body that does not age and does not function exactly like our body of flesh and blood that we use here on earth.

Matthew 22:33 "And when the multitude heard [this], they were astonished at his doctrine."

This wise and full answer of Christ to the posing question of the Sadducees, with which perhaps they had puzzled many.

And never had met with their match before, were astonished at his doctrine; concerning the pure, perfect, and angelic state of the righteous in the world to come.

How strongly and he proved the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead, which were both denied by the Sadducees; and who were so confounded with his answer, proof, and reasoning, that Luke says:

"After that they durst not ask him any question at all": and the Scribes were so pleased therewith, that certain of them applauded him, saying, "master, thou hast well said".

Jesus at that time, had not risen from the grave, as an example of how we will also rise.

This was very confusing to people who could not accept anything that they could not see with their physical eyes.

The only thing that the Pharisees and the Sadducees could agree on was that they both were trying to discredit Jesus.

Matthew 22:34 "But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together."

"But when the Pharisees had heard":

Either with their own ears, (they being some of them present), or from the telling of others; from the Scribes, who expressed their approbation of Christ's answer to the Sadducees.

Or the Pharisees, with the Herodians, in a body had left him, and were gone to their respective places of abode.

Or to them that sent them, being baffled and confounded by him.

But now hearing that he had put the Sadducees to silence, or stopped their mouths, they having nothing to reply, which itself was not disagreeable.

For they were as opposite as could be to them in the doctrine of the resurrection, and in other things, and were their sworn and avowed enemies.

Yet it sadly greatly concerned them, that Christ should be too hard for, and get the victory over all sects among them.

Wherefore, considering that should he go on with success in this manner, his credit with the people would increase yet more and more.

And therefore, though they had been so shamefully defeated in two late attempts, yet they were gathered together in great hurry upon this occasion.

Verses 35-40:

"A lawyer," an expert expounder of the Old Testament Law and equivalent to a Doctor of Theology today, asks Him, "which is the great commandment in the law?"

The phrase "tempting him", implies that he is trying to draw Jesus into an argument regarding the Pharisees' extensive interpretations of over 600 laws.

Instead, Christ summarizes the two tables of the law.

1. Responsibility to God;
2. Responsibility to man, by paraphrasing (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18), "love the Lord thy God" and "love thy neighbor as thyself."

The phrase “with all thy heart,” indicates the total being of a man in Hebrew thought and is part of the “Shema,” the Jewish confession of faith consisting of (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21); and (Numbers 15:37-41).

As the greatest commandment, it was of supreme importance and priority.

No Pharisee could fault such an answer.

Matthew 22:35 "Then one of them, [which was] a lawyer, asked [him a question], tempting him, and saying,"

“Lawyer”:

This was a scribe whose specialty was interpreting the law.

It seems that one group gave up, and another came.

In this particular case, the cross examination was done by a very learned fellow of the law.

This was no ordinary man.

He had studied the Scriptures in their best schools.

Surely he would be able to trip Jesus up.

It seemed there were so many laws, that perhaps this lawyer learned in the law, would be able to trip Jesus up.

Maybe the lawyer, himself, really did not want to know.

Matthew 22:36 "Master, which [is] the great commandment in the law?"

“Which is the greatest commandment in the law”:

The rabbis had determined that there were 613 commandments contained in the Pentateuch, one for each letter of the Ten Commandments.

Of the 613 commandments, 248 were seen as affirmative and 365 as negative.

Those laws were also divided into heavy and light categories, with the heavy laws being more binding than the light ones.

The scribes and rabbis however, had been unable to agree on which ones were heavy and which were light.

This orientation to the law led the Pharisees to think Jesus had devised His own theory.

So the Pharisees asked this particular question to get Jesus to incriminate Himself by revealing His unorthodox and unilateral beliefs.

Matthew 22:37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

“Heart ... soul ... mind”: (Mark 12:30), adds “strength.”

The quote is from (Deut. 6:5), part of the Shema (Hebrew for “hear”; Deut. 6:4).

That verse says “heart ... soul ... strength.”

Some LXX manuscripts added “mind.”

The use of the various terms is not meant to delineate distinct human faculties, but to underscore the completeness of the kind of love that is called for.

Matthew 22:38 "This is the first and great commandment."

This one Scripture tells so much.

If we could truly do this one, if we could truly give all our love to God, make the desires of our hearts be His will for us, keep our minds stayed upon Him rather than on things of the world.

So then we would have our relationship with Him pleasing unto Him.

We would then follow all of His instructions about all of the other things, because we would be seeking to please Him.

This is the great commandment.

If God is first in our lives, we have our lives in order.

Matthew 22:39 "And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

“Love thy neighbor as thyself”:

This is a quotation from (Lev. 19:18).

Contrary to some contemporary interpretations, it is not a mandate for self-love.

Rather it contains in different words the very same idea as the golden rule.

It prompts believers to measure their love for others by what they wish for themselves.

Matthew 22:40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

“The law and the prophets”:

I.e., the whole Old Testament.

Thus Jesus subsumes man’s whole moral duty under two categories: love for God, and love for one’s neighbors.

These same two categories differentiate the first 4 commandments of the Decalogue from the final 6.

This Scripture rounds the first out.

We would do no murder, steal, lie, bear false witness, or covet if we loved our neighbor as our self, rounds out the final six.

If we truly love God and want to please Him, we will love our neighbor; because He commands us to do just that.

Just as Jesus said, these two cover all the commandments.

Take notice here, that it is natural for us to love ourselves as well.

Verses 41-46:

Jesus then counter questions the Pharisees: “What think ye of Christ?

Whose son is he?”

By asking them who is the Messiah, He gave them a clear opportunity to acknowledge Him.

The question is similar to that which was asked of the disciples earlier in 16:15, where they gave the correct answer.

The Pharisees’ response, “the son of David,” was the common teaching of the scribes who accepted the Davidic lineage of the Messiah (Mark 12:35).

Jesus then calls their attention to (Psalm 110), which they already recognized as messianic.

This psalm, whose Davidic authorship Jesus affirms, was given “in spirit,” that is, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit; in it David refers to the Messiah as his Lord.

Jesus totally stumps the Pharisees, who really wanted to believe in a human Messiah but not a divine Messiah.

So no one “was able to answer him,” that is to say, defeat Him by question or debate, and therefore, no one dared ask Him “any more questions.”

Matthew 22:41 "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,"

“While the Pharisees were gathered together”:

Jesus asks a question in his turn, utterly to confound them, and to show the people that the source of all the captious questions of his opponents was their ignorance of the prophecies that was relative to the Messiah.

Matthew 22:42 "Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, [The son] of David."

“What think ye of Christ?”:

A phrase often used by Christ to introduce a question designed to test someone (verse 17; 17:25; 18:12; 21:28; 26:66).

Here, the Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, and scribes had all put Him to the test.

He also had a test for them.

“The son of David” was the most common messianic title in the usage of Jesus’ day.

Their answer reflected their conviction that the Messiah would be no more than a man, and Jesus’ reply was another assertion of His deity.

This is really the problem in our churches today.

Most do not realize who the person of Jesus is.

Just like the Pharisees thought Jesus was the descendant of man, is what many believe today.

The problem with believing in miracles is that we have decided that Jesus was man walking around on this earth; when, in fact, He was God the Word, who took on the form of flesh and dwelt among us.

We limit Jesus, because we do not truly understand who He is.

We know that we are limited in what we can do, so we, believing that Jesus was man, have reduced Him to the point that we believe that he is limited as we are.

Just His name (Emmanuel), tells us that He was God with us.

Matthew 22:43 "He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,"

“How then”:

How is this doctrine that he is "descended" from David consistent with what David says when he calls him "lord?"

How can your opinion be reconciled with that?

That declaration of David is recorded in (Psalm 110:1).

A "lord" or master is a superior.

The word here does not necessarily imply divinity, but only superiority.

David calls him his superior, his lord, his master, his lawgiver, and expresses his willingness to obey him.

If the Messiah was to be merely a descendant of David, as other men descended from parents if he was to have a human nature only if he did not exist when David wrote, with what propriety could he then, call him his lord?

“In spirit”

By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

As a prophet (Acts 2:30; Acts 1:16; 2 Samuel 23:2).

Matthew 22:44 "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

“The Lord said”: This is the language of David.

"Yahweh said to my lord the Messiah, sit thou”.

This was a prediction respecting the exaltation of Christ.

To be raised to the right hand of a king was significant of favor, trust, and power.

This was done respecting Christ (Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12).

"Thine enemies thy footstool":

A footstool is that which is under the feet when we are sitting implying that we have it under subjection, or at our control.

So Christ shall put all enemies under his feet, all his spiritual foes, all that rise up against him (Psalm 2:9, Psalm 2:12; Hebrews 10:13; 1 Corinthians 15:25).

Psalm 110:1 "The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

Matthew 22:45 "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?"

"If David then call him Lord":

David would not have addressed a merely human descendant as "Lord."

Here Jesus was not disputing whether "Son of David" was an appropriate title for the Messiah; after all, the title is based on what is revealed about the Messiah in the Old Testament (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5), and it is used as a messianic title in (1:1).

But Jesus was pointing out the title "son of David" did not begin to sum up all that is true about the Messiah who is also "son of God" (Luke 22:70).

The inescapable implication is that Jesus was declaring His deity.

You see, the Spirit of Jesus Christ is eternal.

He has used many different names from time to time, but they are all the same Spirit.

The only time He used the name Jesus Christ, was for His short stay on the earth.

When He returns, we will know Him as Lord of lords and King of kings.

One of His names in heaven was the Word of God.

You see, whatever name He uses describes the job He is fulfilling at the moment.

He is the second person of the Godhead.

Even though He was counted in the line of David, He was David's Lord.

We cannot comprehend, as well as we should, all of this until it is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit of God.

Just as we can't answer every little aspect of this until we learn the secret of God.

Neither could these Pharisees, as you can readily see in the next verse.

Matthew 22:46 "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any [man] from that day forth ask him any more [questions]."

“And no man was able to answer him a word”:

They saw the dilemma they were reduced to, either to acknowledge the deity of the Messiah, or confess their ignorance.

And neither of them they cared to do, and therefore judged it to be the wisest part to be silent.

“Neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions”:

Neither Pharisees nor Sadducees, for the same is observed by (Luke 20:40), of the Sadducees particularly, and was true of all sorts, and every sect, of men among them.

And thus our Lord was freed from a caviling, captious, and troublesome generation of men.

From this time forward, to the time of his sufferings, which was not very long after; for this was the third day before the Passover, as appears from (Matthew 26:1).

Jesus' answers were so complicated, that they were beyond their comprehension.

Instead of them trapping Jesus, He trapped them at every question.

Matthew Chapter 22 Continued Questions

1. What was the Sadducees' belief about the hereafter?
2. What did they remind Jesus about what Moses told them concerning men who die without a son?
3. Anything that is fact is not _____?
4. These people wanted what kind of proof?
5. By Levitical law, if a man's brother marry the deceased's wife and bears a child, who does the first child belong to?
6. How many brethren are in this story they told to Jesus?
7. What question did they have for Jesus?
8. What were they really trying to prove?
9. How does this remind us of people today?
10. What two ways did Jesus say they err?
11. In the resurrection, what is the state of the married?

12. Why was marriage established on the earth?
13. What three Old Testament patriarchs were used as examples to prove that God is God of the living?
14. This does not mean that God is God just here on the earth, what does it mean?
15. What was the multitude astonished at?
16. What was the only thing that the Sadducees and the Pharisees could agree on?
17. What question did the lawyer ask Jesus?
18. What is the first and great commandment that Jesus gave him in answer?
19. What one thing puts our life in order?
20. What was the second commandment He gave?
21. Jesus said this covered all of what?
22. What question did they give?
23. What answer did they give?
24. Relate that to our modern churches?
25. Why is it hard for most people to believe in miracles today?
26. What one word tells us who He is?
27. What question did Jesus ask them that they had no answer for?
28. Who is Jesus, really?
29. Why did they stop asking Him questions?
30. Who trapped who in the end?