Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The God of the Living
Scripture: Matthew 22:23-33
Code: 2357

Let's open our Bibles this morning to Matthew Chapter 22, and I want us to look at a very interesting and wonderful portion of Scripture in our on-going study of Matthew, one, which again, reveals the beauty, wonder, majesty and the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to look at verses 23 through 33, but before we look specifically at the text I need to sort of set the scene a little bit for you so that text will flow. It's always fascinated me that mankind in general has such anticipation of resurrection. I mean it's just built in the very heart of man that there must be a life after life. James Dwight Dana, formerly of Yale University, said one time, "I cannot believe that God would create man and then desert him at the grave." And I think he gathered up in that statement the sense of future hope that really captures every heart, in every time, in every culture with very few exceptions. It beats in the human breast that there's life after life.

If you were to go back and pick up the very ancient Egyptian book of the dead you would find that it is filled with hope of a resurrection life. For example, in the tomb of Pharaoh Kiops sealed over five thousand years ago was discovered the solar boat, which he had built so he could sail through the heavens in his next life. In the ancient Greek religion very often a coin was placed inside the mouth of the corpse so that he could pay his fare across the mystic river of death into the land of immortal life. Some American Indians used to bury a pony and a bow and an arrow with a warrior so that he would be able to ride and hunt in the happy hunting ground. And the Norsemen provided very often a horse to be buried with a dead hero so that he could still have his triumphant ride in immortality. In Greenland Eskimo children, when they died, were buried along with a dog so that they wouldn't have to find their way through the cold wasteland without a guide. It's just part of man to anticipate life after life.

Benjamin Franklin, who was not a Christian, penned his own epitaph and as a boy I saw it in Christ Church in Philadelphia, and this is what Franklin wrote for his won epitaph. "The body of Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book, it's contents torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding, lies here food for worms. But the work shall not be lost for it will appear once more in a new and more elegant revised and corrected by the author." See man feels the pull of the afterlife.

Now Jews were no different. It was part of Jewish thinking that there was life after life. If we study the Jewish writings around the time of Christ we find this is affirmed. For example, in non-biblical book called Second Maccabees, where we get an insight into Jewish history, their attitudes, philosophy, beliefs, we have quite an interesting section in that Second Maccabees about the idea of

resurrection. There's a section in there that describes a man named Rassis, and he is an elder in Israel, and he is greatly upset about the fact that they are under the bondage and domination of the Greeks, and rather than fall into the hands of the hated Greeks, he decides to kill himself. So in front of a crowd, and standing up on a rock, he takes his sword and proceeds to disembowel himself and then he reaches in and tears out his bowels and throws them to the crowd. And Second Maccabees says, "So he died, calling on him who is lord of life and spirit to restore them to him again." Now that was something of the Jewish belief, that there would be another life, another physical life restored after this one was lost. And he thought that by taking his life he was escaping this life only to get life again in a better situation.

There is another interesting book and it is the book of Baruch, B-a-r-u-c-h. And it also expresses the Jewish hope. It says in the 50th Chapter of that book, "The earth then shall assuredly restore the dead, which it now receives in order to preserve them. It shall make no change in their form but as it has received so shall it preserve them. And as it is delivered unto them so shall it raise them. For then it will be necessary to show to the living that the dead have come to life again and that those who have departed have returned again." In other words, that expresses the Jewish belief that you would die and actually come to life in the very same form in which you die.

The Pharisees believed that whatever relationships, whatever situation, whatever marital condition, whatever physical defects, whatever physical deformities, whatever scars, are you ready for this, whatever clothes you had on when you died, that's exactly what you'd be like when you came in the next life. And Baruch expresses the fact that the reason that they believed that was so that when the resurrection happened the ones who were living would know it was a resurrection. If you came back in a different form they wouldn't know you'd been resurrected. They wouldn't know it was you. And then Baruch goes on to say eventually those people who were resurrected and after it was proven they were resurrected would then be transformed into the same splendor that angels have who would be made equal to the stars, they would be changed into every form they desire from beauty into loveliness, from light into the splendor of glory. But first you had to come back and stay awhile the way you were.

The apocalypse of Ezra and the apocalyptic writing of Enoch and many others convey the same resurrection hope. The resurrection is confirmed best of all to the Jews because God affirms it. In Psalm 16, is one of the most familiar and often used text by the Jews where it says in verse 9, "Wherefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices, my flesh also shall rest in hope for Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, neither will Thou permit Thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life." In other words, the hope that there would be no corruption ultimately, no ultimate death, but life after life. We find it also in Psalm 49:15, which says, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol or the grave, for He shall receive me." In Psalm 73:24, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory." It's also in Psalm 139:8, the same idea. Hosea 6:1-2, they used to use. It talks about after two days on the third day He will revive us, make us alive.

In Daniel 12, perhaps the most direct statement of all is made where it says there, Daniel 12:2, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

So here you have their tradition teaching; you have these non-canonical or apocryphial books, and you have the Bible and all of them come together to say there's life after life. Now the Bible didn't spell out how it was going to be, and so there was a lot of debate whether or not you'd have your old clothes or your new clothes, some believe you'd have the clothes you died in, and some believed you'd have different clothes, and there was a lot of discussion about the form, but so we can see from the writing of Baruch, they believed you would come back in the same form you left to make the point that you'd been resurrected and later on you'd be transformed.

Now all that's background as we look at Matthew Chapter 22. The Jews believed strongly in resurrection except one group. One group didn't believe in it. Verse 23 says, "The same day came to Him," that is to Jesus, "The Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection." Now they were at odds with all of Jewish culture, and they were at odds with all of Jewish theology. They did not believe in a resurrection. One group, and every time they are defined for us they're defined in those terms. In Acts 23:8, where they are mentioned for the last in the Scripture the apostle Paul stands before them and they are introduced this way: "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection neither angel or spirit, but the Pharisees confess both." So they were in a continually heated theological debate with the Pharisees who believed in resurrection and angels because they denied resurrection and they denied angels. And so they really were a very unusual group in Judaism.

Now keep in mind there were four major sects in Judaism: Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots and Essenes. Essenes were sort of hermits down in the desert who spent all their time copying scrolls and most likely copies the Dead Sea Scrolls, which we have found. Then there were the Zealots who were political activists, who were very nationalistic, who were sort of the terrorists, who were giving trouble to Rome. And then there were the Pharisees who were the religionists. And then there were the Sadducees.

And I'll give you a little bit of information about them so you'll understand what's going on here. They were not many in number. They were a very small group. They were extremely wealthy and very influential. They were the aristocratic ruling class in Judaism. They were the highest echelon. In fact, the chief priests, the high priest, the noblests of the priests were Sadducees. We do not know where that word, Sadducee, comes from. The majority of the members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body in Israel were also Sadducees. So they had great power, they had great influence, they had great prestige, and they also were wealthy because it was they who ran the temple concessions, the money changing, the buying and selling of all sorts of things that went on there were under their power.

They were not popular with the people. first of all rich people who tend to do things for the expediency of their own personal gain don't tend to be very popular. Secondly, their theology was not the theology of the people, for it denied the resurrection. The Pharisees were more popular with the people, and so the conflict between the Pharisees and the Sadducees even added to their unpopularity. They had structural power, they had money power, they gouged the people with the money changing, they gouged the people with the selling and the buying of the animals for the sacrifices, they were not a popular group.

Now politically they were pro Rome, which even added to their unpopularity. They were pro Rome for this reason: they were fat cats. They sat in the place where they could really make it. They prospered in their role as priests. They prospered under the Roman tolerance. Rome let them have their way, Rome let them do what they wanted, Rome gave them the right to function as they saw fit; therefore, they did everything they could to maintain Rome's presence. They did all they could to seek Rome's confidence and Rome's favor. They knew their authority was a delegated permission from the Roman occupation and their wealth and their position and their control and their influence and power and prestige all that was dependent on Rome letting them stay where they were. And so they were pro Roman.

Because of this the people resented them, not only because of their wealth, but because of their political alliance. By the way they completely went out of existence in 70 A.D. when the temple was destroyed because their power was only the power of money and the power of leadership, and once Judaism ceased to be self-governing in any sense and once the temple was destroyed and there was no more priesthood and no more power at that point they had no more reason to exist so they completely passed from history. They were connected to that point in time as influential aristocrats who stood in the place of priests; therefore, had some religious clout but more than that they were in the place of real rulers and those who profited off the people.

Now religiously I want to tell you a little about them. That's sort of where they were in the political picture. Religiously they would be hyper fundamentalists. They were very very much literalists when it came to the Scripture. For example, Josephus tells us that in the application of the law to the people when they had to render a judgment they were more savage than any other Jews. They were more narrow minded, more cruel than the Pharisees. The Pharisees, says Josephus, were more lenient in the application of the law, and that's true because the Pharisees wanted to get around the law so they invented all kinds of ways to beat the law, didn't they? I mean if the law said don't divorce, they'd figure out a whole lot of ways to divorce. They were very lenient, very lenient. But the Sadducees were absolutists. They were fanatics for the literal Scripture. They refused the oral law, they refused the traditions, they refused the scribble law, they refused everything but the Old Testament. They were very rigid and they prided themselves on being those who preserved and guarded the pure faith, the pure faith. So they resented the looseness of the Pharisees, they

resented their oral tradition, their written tradition, all the stuff that grew up around the text. They were literally fastidious when it came to levitical purity and followed to the very letter all of the levitical order.

Now the key identification of their doctrine was that they denied the resurrection. You say, well if they were literalists in the Old Testament and you just read various Old Testament passages that speak of resurrection, how could they deny the resurrection? Here's how: they gave primacy and authority to the five books of Moses. Now hang on to that thought. They gave primacy and authority to the five books of Moses. They said all the rest of Scripture just comments on and reflects off the books of Moses, and since resurrection is not taught in the five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; therefore, we do not believe in resurrection. Some scholars go so far to say that the Sadducees only believed the books of Moses to be the word of God. I tend to think that would go beyond that, but that they would only see the rest of the books as commentary on the books of Moses; therefore, they couldn't be commenting on a resurrection if Moses never mentions a resurrection in his five books.

So they; therefore, denied the after life. Well if you've done that folks, you can live anyway you want here and now, right? I mean you might as well grab it all here because this is all there is. They believed that the body and soul went out of existence at death, no penalties and no rewards, no future, nothing, just non-existence. Therefore, they filled up their life with anything and everything they could to fulfill them. Now because they were somewhat limited by literal interpretation of the Scripture, they sort of used their religion to gain their profit. The supremacy of the Pentateuch caused them to deny the resurrection.

Now in debate with the Pharisees this must have been the big issue because in Acts 23, when Paul is sort of on trial he gets the Pharisees and Sadducees into a fight and it's a fight over the resurrection. Acts 23:8, that I read to you a moment ago. They must have fought over this a lot because it seems so stupid to the Sadducees that the Pharisees believed in a resurrection where people who died would come back the same way they die, in the same form, with the same relationships, in the same conditions, and all of that. So they mocked the Pharisees at that and they constantly must have confronted the Pharisees about will you give us an answer from Moses? Where in the Pentateuch does it say there's resurrection?

Now the Pharisees made a noble effort at it folks, where they had a real tough time coming up with a verse. And as far as we can tell they sighted two verses and these are the two that they sighted to answer the Sadducees claim that Moses never talks about resurrection. The first one was Numbers 18:28, says this: "Ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest." Now does that seem to talk of resurrection to you? You shall give therefore the heave offering to Aaron the priest. And their argument was since the verb is in the present tense; therefore, Aaron is still alive. Not a very strong argument I would say. And the other verse they used was Deuteronomy 31:16.

Deuteronomy 31:16 says, "This people shall rise up, and the rest of the verse says go a whoring." So that verse doesn't really do it either. And they did site Deuteronomy 32:39, "I kill and I make alive," but all that means is that God is the author of life and death. So they were stymied. So this debate went on and on. The Pharisees were definite about resurrection. The Sadducees were definite that there was none.

Now though they disagreed violently on that, and listen they disagreed violently on their attitude toward Rome, the Sadducees were pro Rome, the Pharisees were angrily anti Rome. They despised each other because the Pharisees tended to be the lower class and they the higher class, so they've got social animosity, they've got political animosity, they've got theological animosity, but there's one thing they agree on and that is we must get rid of Jesus Christ. That they agreed on. You say, why did the Pharisees, well we know why the Pharisees cared. Why did the Sadducees care? Why did the Sadducees feel the need to eliminate Jesus Christ? Well let's look at our text and see the approach of the Sadducees.

The approach: the same day, what day is it? It's Wednesday. It's Wednesday of the week when our Lord was crucified. Two days and it's Friday and He'll be on the cross. Two more days and He'll be out of the grave. But it's Wednesday and Jesus has been teaching in the temple and He is stopped by these religious leaders who ask Him a series of questions and they desire to discredit Him. The first question came from a combination of the Sadducees and the Herodians and they wanted to get Him in trouble with Rome so Rome would take His life and He evaded that so marvelously, He indicted them instead. And so they sort of abandoned the idea they could get the Romans on His neck and the Sadducees now come same day Wednesday and they've got a question and the intent of their question is to discredit Him with the Jews. In other words if we can't get Him to say something that's insurrectionist, if we can't get Him to start a revolution that the Romans are going to have to squash by putting an end to His life, if we can't get Him in trouble with Rome, then let's discredit Him with all the people, and let's put Him in a position where He comes off a fool for what He believes and teaches and the crowd will immediately dissipate and see Him for what He is. And so the attempt here is to discredit Him as a teacher.

Now why do they feel this way? Well let me give you a little background, very briefly. We don't see the Sadducees appearing at all early in the life of Christ. They didn't really even have a messianic hope. That's kind of interesting isn't it? The Sadducees basically had no messianic hope. Why have a messianic hope if you have no life after death, right? So that's one of the reasons they were so utterly indifferent to the messianic claims of Christ. They didn't believe in a messianic hope. There was no life to come. So what was Messiah supposed to do for you? And as far as they knew they were living in the glory right there because they were making hay, prospering.

So they really had no part in the early life and ministry of Christ, but now they're very much involved. And the reason they have instantly become involved is because Jesus has just disrupted their

business. One day before this day, on Tuesday, He had cleansed the temple, thrown out the moneychangers, thrown out the buyers and sellers of all the goods that were there, and now He is invading their territory and now they are involved.

And there's a second reason they're involved now. They see the crowds coming around Jesus. They watched on Monday when He rode into the city and the people threw palm branches and garments at His feet and they hailed Him as the Son of David, the Messiah, the Savior, the King, and all of this, and they see now that this man potentates a revolution. This man can lead the whole nation away. He can start something that the Romans will have to stop and when the Romans move in to stop this revolution in the Holocaust they can see themselves being trapped. In other words their own necks are on the line. Their own heads are vulnerable.

And so Jesus is not only personally violated their turf and their territory with the cleansing of the temple, but He has put them in a position to be brought under Roman domination with a firm hand if indeed a revolution breaks out. And to see the focus of this look at John 11 for a moment. In John 11:54, pardon me, we'll start at verse 47 and go down. But in John 11:47, it says, "Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council." So the Sadducees and Pharisees got together and they said, "What do we do for this man does many miracles. If we let Him thus alone all men will believe on Him and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." Now you see the heat? They're afraid He's going to start a revolution, He's going to lead the whole of the people after Him, attracted by His marvelous power, Rome's going to come in and a Holocaust will result, which will affect the power, prestige, wealth, opportunity of the Sadducees. "And one of them named Caiaphas, who was a Sadducee and was the high priest says He has to die." So verse 53 says, "From that day forth they took counsel together to put Him to death." So the Sadducees got in on the death plot with the Pharisees. When they saw the potential for Jesus to bring about a revolution, which could mean Roman intervention, the Holocaust of which could cause them to lose their careers or even their lives. And so they sought to kill Him. And then to add to that when on Tuesday He cleaned out their operation they were only doubly angry and ready to take His life.

Now, you can be sure, too, that they rejected Jesus' teaching. They literally despised teaching about resurrection. And so do those who wish to be Hedonists of that sort. I mean if you want to live it all you can get out of it in this life and do whatever you want and fill up your cup to the brim right here and now, then you don't want anybody dumping on your that there's another life that you're going to have to make an account for. So they didn't want that and so when people preached the resurrection they were very upset. And in Acts Chapter 4, after the resurrection of Christ, the apostles were going along and preaching the Sadducees got them and put them in prison because they were so irated that they were preaching resurrection. And in Chapter 5, again they got them again and put them in prison and said, "We told you not to preach that. You've now filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and everybody's talking about resurrection." And they could see that would preciprecate the crowds turning against them because they didn't believe in resurrection and if everybody began to believe in

resurrection they would be the teachers nobody would listen to. So the heat was really on them. The people were turning away from them and hearing Jesus and He was talking resurrection just as the apostles after Him did. The Romans might get upset and move in and they all might get devastated.

And so it's a difficult situation for them. They add to that He's cleaned out their temple. Now they were very hostile after this. In fact, Josephus says it was the Sadducees who murdered James, the brother of our Lord. That's how angry they were.

Now, here's there plan. They want to ask Jesus a question that will make Him look like a fool, to discredit Him with the people. You see if you can just discredit Jesus with all the people then He's lost His influence, then it doesn't matter what He teaches anymore, and then it's no threat with the Roman situation because if nobody listens to Jesus He's no threat anymore, right? So, if they can discredit Jesus with the Jewish people they've accomplished their goal. And they approach Him with what you could call a *reductioascertivum*in Latin, a logical absurdity. They asked Him a question that no doubt they had asked the Pharisees a myriad of times.

Let's approach the question in verse 24. We go from the approach of the Sadducees to the absurdity of the resurrection. Now follow this, most interesting. If they can't silence Him as a insurrectionist; they'll silence Him as a fool. And so they come to this absurdity saying, "They asked Him saying, 'Master,'" that's what Matthew Brodius calls polished scoffing. They wanted to discredit Him as a teacher, but they call Him teacher in a condescending flattering way. "Moses said," and you can note they quote Moses right, Sadducees, "If a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother." Now that was what was known as the levirate law, l-e-v-i-r-a-t-e from a Latin word having to do with brother-in-law. That was a very historic Jewish law. By the way, it's taken from Deuteronomy 25:5-6, Deuteronomy 25:5-6.

Now the law said this: if a man marries a woman and he has no child, no male child, and he dies that man's name and family is not passed on. So an unmarried brother is to take over his widow to marry her to raise up a child and that firstborn son will be considered the child of the dead husband. That was the law. Now God gave that law in those ancient times to preserve the land in its tribal inheritance, to preserve the families. It was all about heritage. It was always all about maintaining the twelve tribes and their land and their territory and their heritage, maintaining a messianic line. And you can go all the way back to see that law applied before it was even given. You go back into the time before the law in the 38thchapter of Genesis in the time of the household of Judah, the son of Jacob, and you will remember that there was a situation where Onan, you remember the name Onan, Onan refused to comply and to raise up a child to his dead brother's wife, and the Bible said Onan spilled his seed on the ground. He refused to give a child to his brother's wife, to go in and become her husband, and take that role. And it says that God killed him, Genesis 38:8-10. God took his life, because in those early years in the formation of that people and keeping that identification pure that Messiah might come to His people, God maintained these kind of laws so that names and

families could be passed on.

Now it had to be a single brother. It wasn't a polygamous situation, but he would go in and take up that wife has his own from her widowhood and raise up seed to her. The law then was originally given in patriarchal times to maintain the name of a family, the honor of a family, the estate of a family, the tribe, and all of that.

Another very beautiful illustration of that is the illustration of Ruth, isn't it? You remember Elimelech had two sons and Ruth had married one of the sons and that son had died. You remember his name was Obed and there was no child. And along came Boaz into her life and Boaz took her as his wife and raised up a child and we're very interested in that because you must remember that the line of Elimelech was the line of whom, of Messiah. And so that very idea of a near kinsman coming into the line to take up the place of a dead husband to raise up seed fits right into the line of Messiah Himself.

So that was a law well known to people. Now we don't know how in practice it was in time of Christ, but it was nonetheless something God gave for the patriarchal period. So they postulate Deuteronomy 5 and 6 and here comes their question in verse 25, and it is logical absurdity that they're after.

"Now there were with us seven brethren." Now when they say they were with us we don't know whether they mean personal acquaintance somebody they really knew or whether they're just telling a fairytale. They claim it's somebody they know, but sometimes you can tell a story so long you think it really happened. And sometimes you just don't tell the truth. But anyway they introduced this thing and they say there's this group of seven brothers. "And the first one he married a wife died. Having no issue, left his wife to his brother," according to the levirate law. Second died left it to the third, third left to the fourth, fourth died left to the fifth, fifth died left to the sixth, sixth died left to the seventh, and I'll tell you right now if I was the seventh I wouldn't be in town. I mean that's a lethal lady. I'm not sure what's going on, but everybody's dying real fast. But anyway, this is their question. So you can just see the glint in their eyes, see, and this little smirk on their face when they say in verse 28, "Therefore, in the resurrection whose wife shall she be?" See. Ha, ha. You see the stupidity of that? They're all going to come back the way they were when they died, right? So this gal's going to come back and be everybody's wife and you've got polygamy in the righteous eternal resurrect ional life. What an idiotic thought. And really it is idiotic and it must have stumped and stymied the Pharisees more often than they cared to acknowledge. He said they all had her. Whose wife will she be? If everybody comes back the same way with the same shape and form and relationships and even in the same clothes whose she going to belong to? And they think they've got Him because they believe He'll answer like the Pharisees because they know He's taught resurrection. It's been a part of His teaching. They know about the resurrection of Lazarus probably, or at least the claim. So they know Jesus believes in resurrection. They may have gotten the word on His message given in John 5, where He talks specifically about it, about what He said by the grave of Lazarus, "Whosoever

believes in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" and all that. "I am the resurrection and the life." They knew what He taught and so they figured, we got Him, we got Him. He's not going to have an answer for this and all the people are going to know that we're smarter than He is. And that'll discredit Him. From the approach to the absurdity to the answer, verse 29.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, 'You are mistaken. You do err,'" I'm going to stop there for a minute. I like that direct approach. You are wrong. You have just put your ignorance on display. Lensky says, "The bubble blown by the Sadducees is punctured." He really discredits them. You are mistaken and He uses the word *planeo*. We got our word planet from it. It means to cause to wander, to lead astray and it's in the middle voice reflective. It means you are causing yourself to wander. You are leading yourself astray from the truth. You are mentally cut loose from reality. That's really what He's saying. To put it in the vernacular, you are spaced out.

You remember in Jude 13, where the false prophets are called wandering stars to whom He's reserved the blackness of darkness forever? Well these guys have wandered off from reality and He says the reason is, "You don't know the Scripture and you don't know the power of God." I suppose if there were two things that they had advertised that they knew they would be the Scripture and the power of God, but He says, "You don't know the Scripture and you don't know the power of God." You don't understand God's word and you don't understand God's power. Had you known the Scriptures you would have know God promises resurrection. Had you known the power of God you would have known that God can raise people in a state where that's not going to be an issue. If you knew the power of God you would know that He wouldn't recreate people with the same problems here. He's not limited to that, as if God has spent all His creative power on the way we are and can't improve on it? If you knew the power of God and if you knew the Scripture you wouldn't be so spaced out in your thinking.

And so He directly moves into those two dimensions. First He talks on the issue of the power of God in verse 30. Watch this, this is very interesting. "For in the resurrection they neither marry or are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven." It doesn't say they are the angels, it says they're like them. We're never going to be angels, but we're just like angels. You say what are angels like? Spiritual beings, eternal beings who do not marry and do not procreate. Why not? Because they have a fixed number and since none of them ever die you don't need any to replace them. Why do you have sex, marriage, and reproduction childbirth in this life? To keep people populated because everybody dies and it's given to us for the perpetuation of the race. But the next life doesn't need that because nobody's going to die over there, so if nobody's going to die over there and it's a fixed number of redeemed nobody needs to be replacing anybody. Sex, marriage, reproduction, childbirth, all that is for this life only, not the next life. And you might be interested to know that some of the Jewish teachers including my Monidees even taught that there would be childbirth in the resurrection life. And so the Lord is saying look we're going to be different in the

resurrection simply means in the state of life after death and the time of resurrection or the experience of resurrection or the life of resurrection, there will be no marrying or giving of marriage. No marriage in the next life, folks. None.

Now that hits people in this world two ways: some people say hallelujah. I mean I've had all I need. It's unfortunate, but some people do feel that way. Other people's anxiety is a little different. They're in a big hurry before the rapture because they're afraid they're going to miss something really wonderful and that true. But comparatively speaking we have to realize that the best of this life can't even begin to touch the life to come, so it's going to be no marriage so you know when you get to heaven there will be no people set apart for any other individual people. There will be no two people who have an exclusive relationship. There will be no intimacy in that sense, and I mean that in the sense of marriage. It could even extend from there to friendships. Nobody will be closer to anybody else because we'll all be perfectly close to each other and all perfectly intimate with the living God Himself.

So, He says in heaven we're going to be like angels. Now what kind of a God have you got that has to be stuck making over a bunch of people that were so messed up as the ones here? You don't have a God who has the power to create people who aren't going to have that problem? We're going to be like the angels. We're not going to be the angels, but be like them. And they were glorious eternal heavenly creatures whose number was fixed who never died and never reproduced. Marriage is necessary in this life for reproduction, preservation, propagation for the race. In have it will be as unnecessary for us as it is for angels. That's why Luke in his parallel passage says, "We will be equal to the angels." Equally deathless, equally spiritual, equally glorified, equally eternal, who have no longer any need to reproduce. The point is you Sadducees show nothing but your ignorance. Nothing but your ignorance that you can't believe in a God who could create a body for a resurrected life that would be greater than the one He created in this world. You have a weak, small, inadequate view of God.

Now Paul dealt with the same issue in I Corinthians 15. Apparently the Corinthians were struggling with this, what kind of body are we going to have? They were probably victims of years of Pharisaic Judaistic teaching too. We're going to come back in the same deal, same clothes, with the same relationships and all, and you remember in I Corinthians 15 Paul says look God's made all different kind of bodies, right? There are bodies of birds, bodies of creeping things, and bodies of animals and there are heavenly bodies, terrestrial bodies, celestial bodies, God's got one kind of thing for the sun and one kind of thing for the moon and one kind of thing for the stars and everything else that He made and it's all different, and listen, if God is the master of so much plurality and variety in the creating of bodies that are in this sphere, what in the world is He going to create in the next one? It's got to be something different too. We shouldn't think of God as confined or limited. If He can produce variety here there's yet variety beyond that, infinite variety, which we'll see demonstrated in the resurrection.

And so He says, "In that day this corruptible will put in incorruption, this mortal will put on immortality. We shall be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, right? So Paul may have been dealing with a residue of the same kind of teaching that you're going to come back the same way you left. He also used the illustration of seed. He said, "Seed dies and it comes back completely different. You couldn't look at a seed and tell what kind of a tree it would be, could you?" And so we're going to come back in a unique and marvelous transformed way. And how can you be so ignorant of God's power as to demand that God is unable to produce anything more than people as they are?

And then he says you're not only ignorant of the power of God, but you're ignorant of the Scripture. You're even ignorant of the Pentateuch, verse 31. Watch this: "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read," that just so sarcastic, "have you not read that which was spoken to you by God?" Haven't you been reading your Scripture about the resurrection and he quotes in verse 32, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Stop there. You know where that's from? Exodus 3:6. That's the Pentateuch. You say, well wait a minute. Is that supposed to be a statement about resurrection? It is. Is indeed a statement about resurrection. He quotes Moses because that's what they demanded and the statement is an emphatic statement. In the Greek it's *egome*I am, present tense, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And the argument here is an argument of the verb tense. He doesn't say I was he God of Abraham, I was the God of Isaac, and I was the God of Jacob. You see in Exodus 3:6, Abraham was dead, Isaac was dead, and Jacob was dead already. How then can He say I am the God of Abraham, I am the God of Isaac, I am the God of Jacob, which is exactly what the Hebrew of 3:6 implies?

Well you can see it also in Genesis 26:24, Genesis 28:13, God says I am the God of Abraham and in both of those passages Abraham is already dead. And in Exodus 3:6, Exodus 3;15, Exodus 3:16, Exodus 4:15, God says I'm the God of Abraham, I'm the God of Isaac, I'm the God of Jacob, and they're already dead. And His point then, at the end of the verse, is God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, so if God says I am the God of these people they must be, what, alive, alive. God is not worshipped by corpses. He's not the God of people who don't exist. Who wants to be the God of people who don't exist?

Now note that each is individually singled out there, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and He's talking about personal intimate relationship of each of them. Now the genitive here of the God of, the God of, the God of, can be seen two ways. It could mean this: the God to whom Abraham belongs, the God to whom Isaac belongs, the God to whom Jacob belongs. Or it could mean the God who belongs to Abraham, the God who belongs to Isaac, the God who belongs to Jacob, and I like to see both. I am the God to whom Abraham belongs and who belongs to Abraham. I am the God to whom Isaac belongs and who belongs to Isaac. I am the God to whom Jacob belongs and who belongs to Jacob. In other words, I am the God who continues to have an intimate relationship of life and worship with these who are dead, which means they still must be,

what, alive.

Profound, absolutely profound. He is not the God of dead mean. He's the God of the living, and if He said after they were all dead He was their God present tense now, and they belonged to Him and He belonged to them, then they were still some place. The unchanging, eternal, covenant keeping God who made His promises to His chosen will bring them to fulfillment and they are alive and they are alive to rise again, they are alive to enter the fulfillment of the covenant given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are alive to inherit all that was ever promised to them.

He devastated them. He'd done what the wisest Rabbi never had been able to do. He'd one what all the masterminds of the Pharisees had never been able to do. He came up with a verse. Came up with a verse, more than one verse right out of the Pentateuch. He was not fool. He made them look like fools.

There will be a resurrection. There will be a resurrection. They were about to see the first fruits of it, by the way, on Sunday. It was coming pretty fast. So we start with the approach, then we see the absurdity, then comes the answer from the Scripture and finally the astonishment in verse 33.

"And when the multitude heard this they were astonished." That is doctrine. Luke says, "Some of the Rabbi's, not Sadducees said, 'Teacher thou has well said." This new Rabbi from Galilee answered the unanswerable question, gave the passage that none of the Pharisees or all of the Pharisees could discover, and it says, they were astonished, a very interesting word, *ekpleso*. It means to strike out of one's wits. They went out of their minds; it blew their minds. Amazing, astounding, marvelous, this Jesus Christ, hailed as king, hailed as Savior, hailed as Messiah, confronted by hate filled religious leaders who wanted Him discredited and dead. He's unaffected by their pecking assaults. And He only manifests greater glory, produces greater wonder and confounds His enemies. They'll be back for another shot in the next passage.

For your thinking, listen, three things that I see as great confidence builders in this text: one, I see here the majestic deity of Jesus. Oh it's so exciting to me to see Christ come up with things that no one else could ever come up with, answer questions that can never be answered, why, because this is the infinite mind of God, this is proof positive that this is God in human flesh. And so I see majestic deity revealed here and that's a confident thing to see. I mean I know in whom I have believed, right, and he is none other than Christ the Son of the living God. I see His deity in His profound wisdom.

Second thing I see is His commitment to Scripture. Oh how He loved the word, oh how He knew the word, just exactly the right one for the right situation. I bless God that He put His confidence in the word, because if Jesus leaned on the word that's a great confidence builder for me to lean on the word, isn't it?

And thirdly I see his affirmation of resurrection. Whenever I might be prone to doubt the resurrection I'm reminded that Jesus never doubted it for a moment, never for a moment, and affirms here that those who are dead are still alive because God is the God of the living. And so I'm encouraged with another view of Jesus as God, with another view of His dependence on Scripture, with another view of the hope of everlasting life. Instead of them discrediting Him, He discredited them and exposed Himself in all His majesty one more time.

Let's pray together. Our hearts thrill O Lord when we experience a scene like this. We're there, we just sense that we're there and we rejoice that the people were astonished at His teaching. May we be so astonished even as they were and less fickle for they were the same ones who cried for His blood. Deliver us Lord, from just being astonished, just being amazed, just marveling. Bring us to full faith in the Savior. Thank you for the confidence He gives us in Scripture and in future resurrection.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2016 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).