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

The Savior Silences the Sadducees
Scripture: Luke 20:27-40
Code: 42-248

Luke chapter 20 is our text...Luke chapter 20. And I want to read to you verses 27 through 40...Luke chapter 20, verses 27 through 40. We're going to look at this text and find fascinating revelation of the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ here. And the setting you wouldn't think would produce that result since it is an assault by enemies who want Him dead, but in the end, as always, He comes out gloriously triumphant.

Verse 27, "Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees who say that there is no resurrection. And they questioned Him saying, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies having a wife and he is childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up offspring to his brother. Now there were seven brothers and the first took a wife and died childless and the second, and the third took her, and to the same way, all seven died leaving no children. Finally the woman died also. In the resurrection, therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.' And Jesus said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, for neither can they die anymore. For they're like angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed in the passage about the burning bush where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him.' And some of the scribes answered and said, 'Teacher, You have spoken well.' For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything."

It's always fascinated me that humanity has an anticipation of life after death. It beats in the human heart in every culture, in every era of time. You can go back to The Egyptian Book of the Dead and find there prominent belief in life after death in the most ancient of times of human history. In the tomb of Pharaoh Keops, sealed over five thousand years ago was found by archeologists the solar boat which he had built to sail through the heavens in the afterlife. The ancient Greek religion, a silver coin was often placed in the mouth of a corpse to pay his fare across the mystic river of death into the land of resurrection life. Even American Indians often placed within the grave of a dead warrior his bow and arrows and sometimes his dead pony so he could have them in the happy hunting ground. Norsemen were buried also with a dead horse and armor to carry on life in the world to come. In Greenland, dead native children were buried with a dog to guide them through the cold wasteland to come.

Humanity has always felt the pull of the afterlife, even in the most primitive of cultures. In far more sophisticated cultures, for example, Benjamin Franklin, not a Christian, nonetheless believed in life after death. Franklin penned his own epitaph which is on his tombstone to this day in Christ's Church in Philadelphia, it expresses his sentiment about life after death. This is what Franklin wrote. "The body of Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book lies here food for worms. Its content torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding, but the work shall not be lost for it will appear once more in a new and more elegant edition, revised and corrected by the author." So said Franklin. Whether you are in a primitive ancient culture or sophisticated more modern culture, it beats in the human heart to believe in afterlife.

The Jews were no different. They had a strong belief in resurrection life. You find it in many of their writings. For example, in 2 Maccabees, one of the books contained in the Apocrypha, non-scriptural writings between the Old Testament and the New Testament period in that 400 years. This particular book, the Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, written 1 B.C., it is estimated, has an interesting insight into the idea of resurrection. It's a very crude and primitive one. This is it. Maccabees tells of an elder whose name was Rosees(??). Rather than fall into the hands of the hated Greeks, he took a sword and disemboweled himself. Then standing on a steep rock, he reached in...says this Apocryphal book...and tore out his remaining bowels and threw them to the crowd. And so he died...says the writing, quote: "Calling on Him who is Lord of life and Spirit to restore them to him again." So says 2 Maccabees 14:46. While this is apocryphal, not true, not historic and certainly not scriptural, it is an indication of the thinking of the time.

Another first century A.D. Jewish writing, Barouk(???) has similar indication. It says this, "The earth shall then assuredly restore the dead. It shall make no change in their form but as it has received, so shall it preserve them and as it delivered them unto it, so also shall it raise them." This is also first century A.D. writing, puts it around, of course, the time of Christ, people would have been familiar with it. It was the idea that there would be a resurrection, but that when you were raised from the dead, you would be raised the same way you died, in the same form and in the same relationships. And then Barouk went on to say, "It shall come to pass when they have severally recognized those whom they now know," in other words, they all come back the same as they left so everybody knows who they are, "then their splendor shall be glorified in changes. They shall be transformed into the splendor of angels and made equal to the stars and shall be changed into every form they desire from beauty into loveliness, and light into the splendor of glory." So you come back exactly the way you left and then when you recognize everybody, a metamorphoses starts and you begin to change into whatever it is that you want to become. The apocalypse of Ezra, the apocalypse of Enoch, etc., other Jewish writings convey the same resurrection hope with a similar kinds of confusion.

But nonetheless as of all peoples in all times, there is this pervasive sense that this life is not all there is. The resurrection of the body is commonly spoken of in the Talmud which is the source of rabbinic

teaching that basically articulates traditional accumulated Jewish theology. But in addition to all of that, the Jews, of course, had the Scripture and they knew the Scripture promised resurrection life. Psalm 16 verse 9, the psalmist David writes, "My heart is glad. My glory rejoices. My flesh also will dwell securely. You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or the grave, neither will You allow Your holy One to undergo decay, You will make known to me the path of life. In Your presence is fullness of joy. In Your right hand are pleasures forever." David expresses the hope that though he dies he will not remain in the grave. He will find the path of life, the Lord will take him into His presence where he will live forever in pleasure. That's biblical.

In Psalm 49, also, and I'll just mention a couple of these to you, but in Psalm 49 and verse 15, the psalmist again said, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave. He will receive me." There again is that confidence. Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I rejoice, yet will I trust in Him. I will awake in His likeness," says the psalmist. They had that confidence laid out for them according to Scripture.

One other one in Psalm 139, I think it's verse 8, a very similar statement is made. It says this, "If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there." In other words, wherever you go, into heaven or into the grave, you are in the presence of the Lord which means you still exist in His presence. Hosea chapter 6 says the same thing. Isaiah 26 says the same thing. Perhaps one other one to read to you specifically is at the end of Daniel's prophecy, chapter 12 and verse 2. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, and the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt." There will be the resurrection of everyone, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting contempt, some to heaven and some to hell.

So they had Scripture as well as their traditional ideas about resurrection life. It is commonly believed among the Jews throughout their history and certainly at the time of Jesus that there will be life after death, there will be life in the presence of God or out of the presence of God and there will be a resurrection body, a resurrection unto life or unto contempt and disgrace. That is the background of the text before us.

Now, there were some dissenters to that view among the Jews. They were known as Sadducees. They're introduced to you with simply a brief description of what they didn't believe in verse 27. "Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees who say that there is no resurrection." They say there is no resurrection. In spite of the common Jewish belief in resurrection, in spite of the Old Testament Scripture, some of which I mentioned to you concerning resurrection, there is one group of Jews who adamantly rejected that idea. They are the Sadducees. And someone said, "That's why they're so sad, you see." Because there is no life to come, there is no hope for the future.

Acts 23:8 again characterizes them. "For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit. But the Pharisees acknowledge them all," that is spirits, angels and resurrection. So they

were at the opposite pole from the Pharisees who believed in resurrection, angels and spirits.

Now this group was not an impressive Jewish sect by numbers. It was very small. But it was impressive in power. It is the aristocrats who were the Sadducees, the wealthy, the influential, the chief priests mentioned at the end of chapter 19 verse 47, mentioned at the beginning of chapter 20, the first few verses, chief priests were Sadducees for the most part. The high priests were Sadducees. Most of the Sanhedrin members, that is the 70 men who were the leaders of Israel, the council, the adjudicated for the nation, most of them were Sadducees. So they sat in the seats of power and influence, if not large in number.

As we come to the text then, let's begin with the approach of Sadducees, the approach of Sadducees in verse 27. "Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees." They approached Jesus. And as we know, this is Wednesday. Remember that? Matthew, in fact, gives the parallel account to Luke in Matthew 22, Mark gives a parallel account in Mark 12. Matthew says they came on the same day. The same day as the prior questioning by the Pharisees which puts it on Wednesday. Wednesday was a busy day for Jesus, the last week of His life, He is crucified on Friday. On Wednesday He's teaching in the temple. And He is in dialogue with the people and He is in conflict with these leaders.

The Pharisees have come after Him. The Herodians have come after Him. And now it is the Sadducees' turn. And they are furious at Jesus. When you study the gospel accounts, you don't see the Sadducees very often. You don't see them in Jesus' ministry in Galilee. You don't see them as He's moving around in the land of Judea. Where you see them is where they always were, and that's at the temple. They come into play at the times that Jesus cleanses the temple. He did it at the beginning of His ministry, He did it again at the end, as you remember, we studied it in chapter 19. They ran the temple operation, very lucrative, very powerful. They were wealthy. And Jesus interrupted their very successful business. They hated Him. They were furious at Him for what He had just done a matter of hours before this event in cleansing the temple, throwing out the buyers and the sellers and the moneychangers. And so He had assaulted them just as He had assaulted the theology of the Pharisees, He had assaulted the economics of the Sadducees. They had the power over the temple operation.

Now let me just give you a little more background about them. Politically they were eager to cooperate with Rome. Since there was no resurrection, since there was nothing to be worried about in the life to come, they put all their stock in this life. They went after all the power, all the wealth, all the position, all the control that they could get. And in order to do that, they had to cooperate with Rome because they were an occupied country under Roman power. It was the Romans who gave them the right to do what they did. They had a delegated authority from the Romans. And so they did everything they could to kowtow to Rome to make sure they curried the favor of Rome to keep their position. The people hated them...they hated them. That's why there weren't many of them. It wasn't a popular thing to be. The people hated them for their accommodation to Rome and they hated them

for the corruption of the system to which the people were subjected every time they came to the temple. They pursued policies that pleased Rome and therefore they pursued policies that angered the Jews. And their corrupt temple operation was a continual irritation to the nation.

By the way, in the destruction of 70 A.D. when the Romans finally had all they could take from the Jews who were rebelling against them and came in and destroyed Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, crushed the nation, actually massacred people in up to a thousand towns and villages around Israel, when the Romans finally brought it all down, the Sadducees ceased to exist. Once their priestly position and power was broken their history was over.

Religiously they were very narrow and very strict. Some people have thought that they were liberal. They were liberal in the sense that they didn't believe in resurrection and angels and spirits and that's a view like liberal theologians take today. But in applying justice in the land and in applying the law, they were virtually cruel. It was part of how they kept their power to be cruel. Josephus tells us they were more savaged than any other group of Jews. The Pharisees, he says does Josephus, were lenient in dealing with people compared to the Sadducees. They were brutal in enforcing their will upon the people as they interpreted the Law of God, in order to keep their power and position. They were viewed then as fundamentalists and traditionalists who refused to accept the oral law and the scribal law. Which, by the way, the Pharisees fully accepted. The Pharisees accepted Scripture and the oral tradition and the scribal writings. But the Sadducees did not. They only accepted Scripture. They prided themselves on being committed to the pure faith, nothing more. They interpreted Mosaic Law more literally than any others and were fastidious beyond all others in the matters of Levitical purity. They denied any future life of blessing or reward at all. They believed, says Josephus, that the soul and body perish together at death. There are no penalties in the life to come, there is no life to come, there are no rewards. They are known for that and that is the way they are defined by the New Testament.

Now the question comes, how in the world could they call themselves literalists, fundamentalists, traditionalists, purists adhering to Scripture and not accept the scriptures that I read to you about resurrection? And the answer is, they very likely held to the primacy and the priority of the Mosaic Law, that is the five books of Moses...the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, the five books. Everything was subordinated to the books of Moses. Since they were protectors of the pure faith, they apparently affirmed the absolute priority of Moses. And they said all other books in the Old Testament are merely commentators on those five books and since nowhere in those five books is resurrection mentioned, therefore resurrection is not a part of the pure faith and any other attempt to talk of resurrection is an aberration, even by another Bible writer. The doctrine of resurrection life cannot be found in the Pentateuch, they said, so resurrection as a reality must be rejected, since all of the rest of the Old Testament is only commentary on Moses and it wasn't in Moses' writings, then there must be another way to understand that commentary than to believe in resurrection. That's how they defined themselves. They lived life as if there were no tomorrow, being fastidious on the one hand,

pounding people in a cruel and brutal way with the law, but with a view to using that to keep their power base so they could indulge themselves in anything and everything they wanted at the expense of the people.

Now on the other hand, the Pharisees were very, very definitive about the resurrection. And the Pharisees loved to discuss the resurrection. It seems to me that they sort of followed the flow of Barouk(??) and some other writers that you would be raised the same way you died because the Pharisees discussed things like when you are raised from the dead, will you be naked or will you have clothes on? Well they couldn't comprehend that everybody in the resurrection would be naked so they came to the conclusion that you would have clothes on. And then the question was..where would you get the clothes? And then the debate was about whether you get new clothes or whether you rise in the same clothes you used to wear, in fact the very clothes with which you were buried. And then the question they loved to discuss was if you have defects in this life, physical defects, or mental defects, or whatever, when you rise from the dead again will you have those same defects? And many of the Pharisees felt that you would rise in the same clothes you died in and you would rise with the same defects you had in this life. In fact, some of them believed that all Jews would rise...all Jews who died throughout all of history would all rise in the land of Israel. In other words, wherever they died, they would all rise in the land of Israel. And, in fact, it was suggested that beneath the earth there's a massive network of tunnels and somehow they're all slanted so that whenever Jews go into the ground, they wind up rolling down a series of tunnels till they all land in a pile in Israel. So that they're all conveniently there as a result of this complex of tunnels and they'll be raised there.

The Pharisees loved to discuss these kinds of things and occasionally discussed them with the Sadducees. The Sadducees thought this was ridiculous, as it is. Thought it was bizarre. Thought it was outrageous and loved to scorn and mock such ridiculous things. They became mockers of the resurrection. They were so defined by not believing in the resurrection, that they had mastered the art of infuriating the Pharisees and the rest of the people with their arguments. They made a joke out of resurrection. And one of the things that was bizarre and irrational about resurrection to them was, what if somebody had married multiple times in this life, in the next life if you're going to come back in the same clothes, in the same form, with the same defects, and in the same relationships, whose going to be your husband and wife? And apparently this question had never been sufficiently answered because when it comes their turn to throw a question at the Master Rabbi, this is their best shot. They are very good and very adept at defending their disbelief in the resurrection. They've been doing it for a long time, they pull out their best shot.

So they come to Him, it's Wednesday, and they come approaching Him with a view of getting rid of Him because He's a threat to them. That plays out clearly in the words of John 11...John 11:47, "The chief priests," who would be the Sadducees, "and the Pharisees convened a council." They can't agree on theology, but they can agree they want Jesus dead. We saw last week the approach of the Pharisees, get Him arrested by the Romans. But the chief priests took a different approach. I don't

really think they wanted Him arrested by the Romans, I don't think they necessarily cared about that. Eventually they fell in line with that. I think they were very worried about Rome getting involved in anything, doing anything to irritate Rome at all threatened their security. But in this conflux of Pharisees and Sadducees in John 11:47, they come together, hold a council and they say, "What are we doing? This man is performing many signs." They never denied His miracles, even the raising of Lazarus from the dead. "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." That was what they feared, they feared losing their position, losing their place. "And if we don't do something about Him, the Romans are going to come and take away our position." That has to be the sentiment of the chief priests. The Pharisees, they want the Romans to come and arrest Him and the people will immediately know He's not the Messiah because He can't overthrow the enemy.

But the Sadducees, they don't want the Romans involved in this because they think they'll lose their position. So a certain one of them, the high priest, Caiaphas who is a Sadducee, said to them, "You know nothing at all. Do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish?" In other words, we have to have Him put to death. He's got to die or we're all going to perish. And so the Pharisees and the Sadducees come together, even though the Pharisees wanted Him dead for sure, the Sadducees might have not necessarily wanted Him dead thinking Rome would invade, Caiaphas steps up, he's the high priest, and says, "Wait a minute, He's got to be dead or we're all going to lose everything." They're determined that Jesus has to die.

The Sadducees approach is to discredit Him in front of the people by asking Him a question that nobody's been able to answer. This is their ultimate question. This is the one that stumped everybody, I'm sure, all the way along in the debates. This is their best shot. Let's make Him look stupid, let's make Him look foolish by this question on the resurrection.

So we see the approach of the Sadducees. Secondly, the absurdity of resurrection. They make it look like an absurdity. They questioned Him saying, verse 28, "Teacher," that was a very honorable thing to call Him, as we remember from back in verse 21, reserved for the most notable of rabbis. "Teacher," they are now raising the bar, as it were, by acknowledging Him in this honorable way, they expect Him to give a wise answer. "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies having a wife and he is childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up offspring to his brother." They bring up Moses, of course. They bring up the Pentateuch, of course. They bring up Deuteronomy 25...Deuteronomy 25.

Now I just remind you of it. Deuteronomy 25, part of God's law for the nation Israel, this is what it says, verse 5, "When brothers live together, one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man." There are several brothers, one of them gets married, he dies before he can raise up a child to propagate the family. She's not to

marry a stranger, her husband's brother shall go into her, take her to himself as wife and marry her, perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out from Israel. In the time when Israel is on the edge of going into the land in the book of Deuteronomy, they're going to go in. The land is going to be apportioned. Families, tribes are going to get certain portions of the land. It is very important for those tribes to have progeny, to have offspring, to continue God's covenant promise and the promise is in the giving of the land to those tribes. What happens if somebody has a wife and never gives birth to a son, a brother in the same family then takes that woman as his own wife, to raise up the seed to keep the family moving because that was God's covenant promise and purpose. That was a way of protecting and preserving the nation and the identity of the peoples and the places that God had designed. It is called levirate marriage from the Latin meaning brother.

It first appears in the Old Testament, by the way, back in Genesis 38 in the household of Judah, son of Joseph. Onan refused to comply and raise up a child to his dead brother's wife and it resulted in God taking the life of Onan in Genesis 38. God wanted to protect and preserve His people and the tribes of His people for the fulfillment of His plan and prophecy and this is the way God did it. So the Sadducees know the Pentateuch and they know that law, as do all the Jews. And so they bring it up to Jesus. Perhaps the most notable illustration of that is Ruth. Elimelech, you remember, died without ever leaving an heir, and so when Ruth went back to Israel, Elimelech's relative Boaz came along, took Ruth as his wife, raised up a child named Obed. Out of Obed comes Jesse, out of Jesse comes David, out of David ultimately comes the Lord Jesus Christ. God had a purpose for this Law in the early years of his history.

So they bring it up. And then they come up with their absurdity. Here it is. "Now," verse 29, "there were seven brothers," and by the way, Matthew's account says seven brothers with us. Are they saying by that, that this really happened? I don't know. But here it simply says, maybe hypothetically, maybe it is something that happened once somewhere. "There were seven brothers, and the first took a wife and died childless. And the second, and the third took her, and in the same way, all seven died leaving no children." Wow. This is a dangerous lady. I think if I'm brother number four, I'm getting out of town. Certainly if I'm brother five, six and seven, I'm nowhere to be found. This woman is fatal. Wow, seven brothers marry this woman and they all die.

And then verse 32, "Mercifully, finally the woman died also." What a gift that is. No telling how many lives were saved by that. And so they make this kind of bizarre situation and then they say, "In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be for all seven had her as wife?" You could see the smirk on their face. How many times had they posed that question before? How many jokes had they made out of the absurdity of resurrection using this kind of illustration or analogy? The Pharisees were the ones who said the next life will be just like this life...same person, same features, same clothes, same weakness and strengths, same relationships. Are you kidding? And there were some, like Maimonides who actually said children will be born after the resurrection. He's the original

Mormon. That's not new.

So they present the absurdity of resurrection. It is a joke to them in the way that it was understood at that time. So from the approach to the absurdity, to finally the answer of Scripture...the answer of Scripture. Verse 34, we're going to move faster on this. "And Jesus said to them..." Oh, I have to stop there. I hate to do that because something's left out here that's included in Matthew and I cannot let it go by. Matthew 22, which is the parallel passage giving the same account, adds this, Matthew 22:29, "Jesus answered and said to them...listen to this...'You are mistaken not understanding the scriptures or the power of God.'" Wow, if you think it was painful for Him to go in with a whip and clean out their business, how painful was it for them to take that shot at their theology? They prided themselves at being interpreters of Scripture. You are mistaken, from the verb planao meaning to cause to wander, to lead astray. Means you have caused yourselves to wander, you have led yourselves astray, you are cut loose from the truth and from reality. You don't get it. Why? "Because you do not understand the scriptures." What an indictment that is.

I'll tell you, folks, I could camp on that, we're not even in Matthew so I can't do it, but I can camp on that, not understanding the scriptures, and talk for a long time on the implications of not understanding the scriptures. But the bottom line is, you don't get anything right. Interpreting the Scripture accurately is the source of all true understanding. Not understanding the scriptures...you couldn't have said anything more painful for them to hear than that. You are ignorant interpreters of Scripture. You've gotten it wrong. You have misled yourselves. You have wandered from the truth. You do not understand the scriptures. And that could describe every false teacher ever.

They prided themselves on the knowledge of the Scripture. They didn't have it. And then "you do not understand the scriptures" He says, "Nor the power of God." Had they known the scriptures, had they really known the scriptures, had they really known the scriptures they would have known that God promises resurrection. Had they known the power of God, they would have understood that God can raise people in a state where all their supposed absurdities are absent. They were spiritually blind.

And so, He's going to tell them the truth. Verse 34, "Jesus said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.'" Sons of this age, that's a Hebraism for people living in this world, us, temporal humans. What is Jesus saying? The matter of marriage, sex, reproduction, childbirth and everything accompanying it is for this life, not the next. It's for this life, not the next. There is for this age marrying and giving in marriage. That is a part of this age. Mormons take note, you will not spend forever on your own planet having celestial sex and producing supernatural children. Muslims take note, you will not be on green pillows having sex with 72 virgins either in the life to come. Marriage is for this life only.

Verse 35, "But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age," not this age, that age, that is eternal life in the presence of God, and the resurrection from the dead, "neither marry nor are given in

marriage." There's not going to be any marriage there. Not going to be any families there. Why? Verse 36 ought to make it obvious. "For neither can they die anymore." Nobody's going to die, nobody has to be replaced. You don't need to propagate because nobody is going to die. "Rather they're like angels." That's a verb that Luke coins, isos angelos, equal to angels, used only here. The angels were all created at one time, they don't procreate and they don't die. Their number is fixed. There's no need for marriage because there's no need for propagation.. There's no need for replacement. There's no need for continuity in the race. There's also no need for that kind of union because having a relationship with God and Christ as our true bridegroom and having a perfect relationship with everybody else in the glory of heaven precludes the necessity of having any other lesser relationships.

And so He says, "You don't understand the Scripture. You don't understand the power of God. Marriage is for this age, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry or are given in marriage."

Notice that little phrase in verse 35, "who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection of the dead." That poses the question, why does He say that? I think it's a warning. I think it's a direct warning to the Sadducees. In effect it's saying to them, implying to them, you obviously aren't worthy to attain to this since you don't even believe in this. It's a warning. You don't even believe in angels, sons of God, sons of the resurrection, that age to come, the resurrection from the dead. You reject all of that. Obviously you're not worthy.

On the other hand, how would one be considered worthy to enter heaven. How is one considered worthy to become a son of God, a son of resurrection? Answer, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear about that. We don't have any worthiness of ourselves. All our righteousness is filthy rags, the Old Testament was clear on that. Isaiah said that. Worthiness is because we are granted the merit of Christ, or granted the righteousness of God through faith in Christ by sovereign grace. But I think Jesus is saying to them, those who are worthy to attain to that age, implying obviously you're not, not at this point. And the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor given in marriage. Forget that idea. Your question is absurd because there's no marriage at all in heaven.

Why? Verse 36, "Cause people don't die anymore, they are equal to angels, they are sons of God." What does that mean? They take on God's life...God's life which is not sexual. They take on God's life which is an eternal life. They become sons of the resurrection. Whenever you see in the Bible "son of...sons of this age...sons of God...sons of the resurrection," and you'll see that repeated throughout the gospels, it's simply a way to identify the essential nature or essential defining quality of something. If you're a son of Belial, the essential quality is satanic. If you're a son of God, the essential essence of life is divine. If you're a son of the resurrection, you possess resurrection life. That's the defining reality. If you're a son of this age, humanity is your defining reality. If you're a son of the age to come, eternality is the defining reality.

And so He says, those who come to the age of resurrection will take on the character of angels who do not procreate, do not have those kinds of relationships. Take on the character of sons of God, that is they will be the possessors of the pure fulfilling life of God. And they will take on the character of resurrection, newness of life. Marriage is not necessary, marriage does not define any aspect of life in the age to come.

And so our Lord corrects their theology. If you want more about that, read 1 Corinthians 15, start at verse 35, read to the end of the chapter where the Lord through the Apostle Paul gives us a look at the form of the resurrection body. It will be a body like the glorious resurrection body of Jesus as it tells us in Philippians 3:21.

So Jesus straightens them out. Marriage is not for resurrection. Let's get that right. That eliminates the need for your question. But that's not the main answer. The main answer comes in verse 37 and it is a powerful answer. Listen to this, "But that the dead are raised," in other words, let's get back to the point. Forget the marriage thing, we settled that. "But that the dead are raised, which is the big issue here, you say they're not. Even Moses showed..." Wow, now He's coming at them in their own zone, right? In their own zone because that's the issue. It's not in Moses, it can't be so. So He says, "Even Moses showed in...literally...in the bush, in the text about the bush, the passage about the bush, the burning bush, Exodus 3."

What? In Exodus 3 Moses showed the truth of resurrection? How did he do that? "Because it was there where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Well, what does that mean? Well I think the important thing for you to know is that when in Exodus 3:6 God said, listen to this, here's a quote, "I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I am the God of Jacob." When He said that emphatically, and it's recorded...the I am is recorded in Matthew's version of this, Matthew 22:32, I think it is. When He said, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He did not say, "I was the God of Abraham, I was the God of Isaac, I was the God of Jacob." I am...I am and therefore they are. Follow that? A little bit of a careful exegesis of verb tenses. He doesn't say, "I was their God." He says, "I am their God. I am and they are...not I was and they were."

In Genesis 26:24...in Genesis 28:13, God calls Himself the God of Abraham and Abraham is dead. In Exodus 3:6, 15, 16, again in chapter 4, God calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all three are dead. So is God the God of dead people? Verse 38, "Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all lived to Him." From our perspective they're dead. From His perspective they're...what?...they're alive. They all live to Him. The God who says, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," isn't establishing His glory on the basis that He's worshiped by corpses. That wouldn't bring Him any honor. Notice that each is singled out individually...the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, emphasizing the personal reality of each. Each is alive to God, in God's presence, in relationship to God though dead from a worldly view.

No. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. For all live to Him. To God, all who are His are alive and in union with Him in His presence...just as the Old Testament says. Death does not end one's existence. There is another life, an afterlife, a resurrection life for those who belong to God in His presence. "I am" said Jesus in John 11, "the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in Me though he die yet shall he live." We will live forever and if we belong to Christ, we will live forever in the presence of Christ and in the presence of God.

This is devastating stuff. They're just done in, vanquished would be a good word...crushed. They gave Him their best argument, their most tried and tested absurdity and He dismantled them by telling them they didn't understand the Scripture or the power of God. He dismantled false views of resurrection held by their opponents that you're going to be married in the resurrection and the life of theirs is going to be very much like life here. And then He really struck the final blow when He proved to them that Moses affirmed in His writing, and not just Moses but God Himself in the record which Moses wrote, that He is the God of the living.

And that leads us to the last point, the astonishment of the crowd...the astonishment of the scribes, and I guess you could say the astonishment of the Sadducees. "Some of the scribes answered and said, 'Teacher, You've spoken well.'" Scribes are the legal experts. They were the theologians. They were the ones who thought most carefully and deeply about Scripture. They were wowed. They were floored. This is an understatement, "You have spoken well." Matthew 22:33 says, "The multitudes heard and were astonished." The word "astonished" and there could be a number of words in the Greek, but the one that's used in Matthew 22:33 is ekplesso and one lexicon, I think, gives it a good spin. This is what it essentially means. "To strike out of one's wits." It's kind of an Old English approach. We would say this, to blow their minds. That's exactly what it means. He blew their minds. They were just astonished at the teaching of Jesus, astonished, amazed, astounded, marveling.

And the Sadducees? They were done. Verse 40, they didn't have courage, the Greek verb is to dare, or to presume, "They didn't dare question Him any longer about anything." They gave it their best shot, they were done. They had been cleaned out economically and then they had been dismantled spiritually and theologically. They're done. They disappear.

And by the way, as far as Luke's gospel's concerned, that's the last question anybody asks. That's the last bit of an encounter with the leaders. Now Jesus starts in verse 41 to ask the questions that lead to the cross. However, again Matthew has to come in to play because Matthew records, though Luke does not, that the Pharisees, relentless guys they were, want to take one more shot. So Matthew 22:33, "When the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at His teaching." As I said, it blew their minds. "But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together and came up with a question."

They're just gluttons for punishment, aren't they? He put the Sadducees to silence. They came up with one more question, you know what it was? What's the greatest commandment? And, of course, Matthew gives us that account.

Oh by the way, after that question, even the Pharisees were done, verse 46 of Matthew 22. "No one was able to answer Him a word nor did anyone dare from that day, Wednesday, to ask Him another question." He had been confronted by the hate-filled religious leaders who want to discredit Him, each has his own style and approach. He is unaffected by their paltry assaults. He only manifests greater glory, produces greater wonder, greater astonishment. And Luke says that was it, they didn't have courage to come and question Him any longer about anything.

What do we draw out of this text? It's like always in the gospel of Luke, what we draw out of this is the wonder of Christ, right? Staggering. Here's what I see... the majestic wisdom of Jesus. His wisdom allowed Him to control every conversation, every discussion, supernatural wisdom evident. The second thing I see is devotion to Scripture, rightly interpreted. And third thing, the affirmation of the promise of resurrection.

So the enemies of Jesus, the Sadducees, give Him an opportunity, a great and glorious opportunity, they give Him an opportunity to demonstrate His supernatural wisdom, His relentless devotion to the Scripture, and His affirmation of the promise of resurrection. And so this passage which is a defeat for His enemies is a triumph for His friends, right? While they're stunned into cold-stone heart silence, we come away rejoicing because our Lord is infinitely wise, our Lord is committed to a true and accurate interpretation of Scripture and its application, and our Lord affirms with His own lips the promises of the Bible concerning resurrection. And so I lean more heavily on my all-wise, all-powerful, all-true and always living Lord Jesus Christ. And this joy is only for those who are worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead. And who are those? Those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His sacrifice, His death and resurrection alone and no confidence in their own works, those who come repenting saying, "God, I have no righteousness of my own, I plead that You would forgive me and apply the righteousness that belongs only to Christ to my account." In an act of faith we are forgiven of all our sin, we are covered with the righteousness of Christ. We receive the promise of eternal life and thus by His worthiness we have been made worthy to attain to the resurrection from the dead. We live then in that hope, affirmed by the words of our Savior Himself in this great encounter.

Lord, as we close this time together, we will hear the echoes of these words hopefully for a long time, sons of God, sons of the resurrection. What a privilege. What a privilege. We thank You for the hope of eternal life that is found in Christ and in Christ alone, because He lives we shall live also. Whoever believes in Him will never die. We thank You that in Christ and in Christ alone we have become sons of the resurrection. We will enter in to a resurrection life not like this life at all, but like Your life and

like that of holy glorified eternal angels. What a glorious promise of which we are unworthy. We cling to the worthiness of Christ. Make us faithful to live to honor Him and to proclaim His gospel. Amen.

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