

Luke 20:27-40

The Coming Resurrection Is Real, Even If You Don't Think It Is

Introduction: The heart of the issue in this confrontation seems to this: how will Jesus respond to the authority of Moses? This situation also took place on Tuesday, March 31, 33 AD.

- 1) The setting—20:27 ²⁷ *Now when some of the Sadducees (who contradict that there is a resurrection) approached, they asked Him,*
 - a) These were the same people who were upset about Jesus cleansing the temple and telling the parable about rebellious farmers. They also make up the majority in the Sanhedrin.

- 2) The absurd hypothetical dilemma set forth by the Sadducees—20:28-33
 - This is not a legitimate search for knowledge, but rather an attempt to make Jesus look foolish in public.
 - a) The authority of Scripture—²⁸ *saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if (3rd class condition) a man’s brother dies, having a wife, and he is childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up offspring for his brother.*
 - i) The Sadducees trusted only the 5 books of Moses.
 - ii) Cf. Deut. 25:5-10, designed to be an act of compassion for the widow, and for the brother
 - b) The absurdly tragic hypothesis—20:29-32 ²⁹ *Now there were seven brothers (a large family of boys). And the first took a wife, and died childless. ³⁰ And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. ³¹ And likewise the third took her, and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children. ³² Finally the woman died also.*
 - i) They may have been borrowing from the apocryphal book of Tobit 3:7-17.
 - c) The alleged dilemma—20:33 ³³ *Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife will she be? Because the seven had her as wife.”*
 - i) Their reasoning is based on at least 3 assumptions: (Bock)
 - (1) The next age will be a continuation of this age.
 - (2) Marriage relationships in the next age will be the same as this age.
 - (3) The woman’s absurd dilemma springs from a hope in the resurrection.
 - ii) Their argument is essentially: look what sort of problems this alleged resurrection causes! God wants everyone to have one wife and now look at the problem we have!

- 3) Jesus responds—20:34-38 ³⁴ *And having responded, Jesus said to them,*
 - Luke omits Jesus’s rebuke concerning the Sadducees’ ignorance of God and His Word (Matt. 22:29; Mk. 12:24). Here are scoffers of sound doctrine who are ignorant of their own ignorance.
 - a) By identifying the norm in this age—20:34 *“The sons of this age (men and women; 16:8) marry and are given in marriage.*

- b) By identifying the norm in the age to come—20:35-36 ³⁵ *But those who are considered worthy (by God) to experience that age and the resurrection of the dead (and not everyone experiences this)*
- Jesus corrects their wrong thinking and theology
- i) What are their characteristics?
- (1) *neither marry nor are given in marriage;*
 - (2) ³⁶ *nor are they able to die anymore, (and thus have no need to get married and have children)*
 - (a) The Sadducees rejected the immortality of the soul, i.e. they believed in the extinction or annihilation of the soul.
- ii) Why are these two things (no marriage, no death) true of them?
- (1) *for they are angel-like [ἰσάγγελος] and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.*
 - (a) The Sadducees also denied the existence of angels (cf. Acts 23:8).
- iii) The Sadducees have the wrong assumptions about the age to come.
- (1) They mistakenly think that everyone will enter the next age.
 - (2) They mistakenly think that the next age will be the same as the current one.
- iv) Jesus has made their question irrelevant by teaching sound doctrine.
- c) By identifying the norm of God's character—20:37-38
- Jesus teaches sound theology in addition to correcting wrong theology
- i) The precise revelation—20:37 ³⁷ *But that the dead are raised even Moses disclosed, in view of the bush (no chapter or verse divisions existed), where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.*
- (1) Cf. Ex. 3:1-4:17; Jesus believes the record of the burning bush
 - (2) Jesus could have taught from Dan. 12:2 but instead stays with the Pentateuch which the Sadducees claimed to embrace. Their professed allegiance to the Word was diluted by their ignorance of it.
 - (3) This phrase alludes to God's covenant with all three men
 - (a) This phrase is found in all 5 books of the Pentateuch: Gen. 32:9; Ex. 2:24; Lev. 26:42; Num. 32:11; Deut. 1:8
- ii) The important principle—³⁸ *Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living, because all are living to Him.*
- (1) If God still identifies in the present tense with all three patriarchs during Moses' time, they must still be alive when God spoke to Moses.
- 4) Immediate responses to His teaching—20:39-40
- a) **Positive**, from those associated with the Pharisees—³⁹ *Then some of the scholars, having responded, said, "Teacher, You have spoken well."*
- i) Mostly because they think Jesus has defeated the Sadducees, but not so much that they agree with Jesus completely.
 - ii) Note the fragile coalition of hostility against Jesus. The only thing they have in common is being angry with Jesus at this point.

- b) **Negative**, from the Sadducees (who started this confrontation (cf. 20:27)—⁴⁰
Now they did not have the courage any longer to ask Him anything.
 - i) Their futile attempt to Jesus's alleged ignorance has left them speechless.
 - ii) Jesus is in control, not them. Jesus alone possesses perfect knowledge and righteous authority.
 - iii) MacArthur's commentary states: The more questioned He answered, the clearer it became that His understanding and authority were vastly superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees (and Sadducees).
- 5) Things we need to remember
- a) Don't be like the Sadducees who viewed the next age in light of this age. Instead, we should view this age in light of the next age.
 - b) Bock reminds us: The resurrection is God's promise. It must be faced as a fundamental reality of existence. It is a joyful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, if one knows Him.