

As you are turning let me ask you a question. Do you believe in life after death? Well, I would hope so if you profess to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Because that is one of the main doctrinal stances of Christianity and that is the hope we have through Jesus Christ. Not only forgiveness of our sin but that in our repentance of sin we are promised eternal life with Jesus for all of eternity. Is this belief of an afterlife just a Christian idea?

Obviously not as we look at different cultures and those cultures were very pagan.

Look at this picture.



This is a 1922 picture of Howard Carter who has just found the tomb of the Egyptian Pharaoh King Tutkanhamun better known as King Tut! This may be a more familiar picture to many of you.



This being the actual gold mask that had covered the face of the mummified body of King Tut.

Because of Mr. Carter's finding of King Tut's tomb much was revealed about the Egyptian belief in an afterlife. In side King Tut's tomb was discovered wall paintings that depicted his death and now his journey into the afterlife. The tomb was filled with food, perfume, jewelry, couches, replicas of chariots and boats to help him along in his next journey. It was a common practice of Pharaoh's who would begin to fill their tombs full of these artifacts even before their death so they could enjoy the same comforts of their life on earth in their journey into the afterlife.

Another familiar picture is this of the Terracotta Warriors.



The Terracotta Warriors were created for the mausoleum of Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huang. They were designed to protect the Emperor in his afterlife. Along with his burial mound, there were found the warriors, horses, chariots and majority of the warriors had actual weapons when they were first discovered.

In Greek culture the dead would be buried with a coin in their mouth, so they could pay their way to the ferryman who would take them across the river Styx, spelled just like the old rock band Styx, into the afterlife. Gives new meaning to the song they had, Come Sail Away!

Even the Jews had an understanding that there was life after death or we could even say life after life. But that makes sense that there would be a belief in that because we are created by God who is the author of life and we were created never to die. In Ecclesiastes 3:11 God's Word tells us he has put eternity in our heart. There is knowledge of eternity in our soul that has seeking for purpose beyond this life here.

Are there those that don't believe in life after death? You better believe it! That Worldview is becoming more and more prevalent today and here is one reason why. Look at this picture.



This picture was sent to us this week and this article was placed in a High School in North Carolina.

“Evolution Isn’t Just A Theory” is the title to this article. In the article Mr. Zack Hutchens say this.

It is therefore obvious that children and adolescents need to understand and be taught the science of evolution, by means of natural selection. Scientific literacy in the general public is conspicuously tied to improved medicine, technology and education.

Meaning with out believing in evolution you are not a scientist and there can be no discoveries that are not tied to this belief system. Evolution is a worldview that says there is no afterlife. You live, you die and that is it.

Well here is one scientist and there are thousands to choose from, that do not believe that. Pictured here is Dr. Raymond Damadian.



Dr. Damadian designed the MRI machine which even today is one of the greatest scientific breakthroughs. Dr. Damadian is a Bible believing born again Christian and this is what he has to say about evolution from an article from the website of Creation Ministries International.

Dr. Damadian believes that America is ailing spiritually. Influenced more and more by an evolution-based humanistic education system, America is adrift of its spiritual moorings. Can such a society, with its relative ethics and increasing abandonment of God’s absolute standards revealed in the Bible, ‘continue to discern the just from the unjust?’ he asks. Will not such a society more and more forfeit the blessings which its forefathers wrought through obedience to God’s Law?

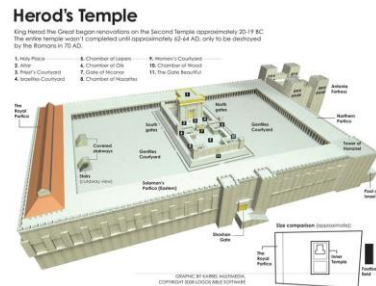
What the theory of evolution gives you is the opportunity to live however you want because in that worldview there is no absolute truth. We are in a battle for truth! So is there life after death! Remember from last week? Is it a 2 or a 5? What is the truth? Well, Jesus has a lot to say about that. Today we are going to be introduced to a group of men that that did not believe in the resurrection but said they believed in God of the Bible.

Let’s Read Matthew 22:23-33:

²³ The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, ²⁴ saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.’ ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ So too the second and third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ After them all, the woman died. ²⁸ In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For

they all had her.”²⁹ But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God:³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”³³ And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

Once again, so we can visualize what is going look at these following pictures. Take a look at this first one.

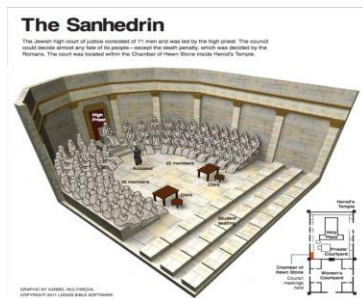


Now where is Jesus? He is in the Temple and he is teaching from the area that is called Royal Stoa or the Royal Protico. In a few more days Jesus will be arrested, and he will be hanging on a cross as he will be crucified because of these men



These men, the Pharisees, that have been coming and listening to him teach while he is in the Temple. They have been plotting against Jesus for some time and we left off from last week as they had sent some of their disciples and the Herodians to try to trap Jesus again. After not being able to do that they left. They left, never to return.

Now here comes these other guys called the Sadducees. The Sadducees were part of the Sanhedrin as were some of the Pharisees. The Sanhedrin was made up of 70 men of these two groups with the Chief Priest being number 71. They had a location in the Temple where they would discuss the law, teach the law and pass judgment that lower courts could not. The. This place was located in the inner part of the Temple courtyard and it looked like this as depicted in this picture.



There were two big differences between Pharisees and Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in a bodily resurrection or an afterlife. Second, they held to the first 5 books of Scripture as authoritative. Those books would be Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Which are the writings of Moses. If it could not be attributed to Moses they would consider it commentary but would not so much apply it to their belief system. Part of the upper-class and the Sadducees were also pro-Rome! They were not very popular with the people.

Because of these beliefs the Sadducees really had no interest in Jesus and the Messianic teachings that were going on. If there is no resurrection, then it did not really matter how you lived your life. But why the sudden interest? What have we been learning over the past month or so? Jesus has come in and he has cleaned out the Temple and because of what he had done in raising Lazarus from the dead just a few weeks before the people were believing in Jesus in numbers like never before.

The fear that was that Jesus was going to create a revolution here. The people would revolt against the Pharisees and Sadducees and if this happens then Rome would get involved. The Pharisees would lose their power, King Herod and the Herodians, the political wing of this group would lose their power and if this were to happen so would the Sadducees.

See the Sadducees did agree with the Pharisees on one thing. They were in cahoots, they were involved with the Pharisees in the high exorbitant interest on the money changing and the exorbitant costs of selling the animals for the sacrifices during Passover.

So here they are before Jesus again plotting, trying to catch Jesus in something that would discredit him before the people. Here is their question that they bring to Jesus. Look at verses 24 to 28 again.

Matthew 22:24-28

²⁴ saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.' ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ So too the second and third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ After them all, the woman died. ²⁸ In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

Here the Sadducees start out by calling Jesus, Teacher. Again, just like the Pharisees before, beginning with this condescending flattery. Remember what I said earlier. The Sadducees put an emphasis on Moses. As would any Jew. Moses was the great lawgiver. So, the question they bring before Jesus relates to what is called "The Levirate Law".

Knowing Jesus' high regard for Scripture they are thinking they have him now. He would not go against this because this is in Scripture. Turn to Deuteronomy Chapter 25 beginning with verse 5. As you are turning let's explain.

God, through Abraham, and that is going to be very important in a minute. But through Abraham, God, brought forth the Jewish nation and put an emphasis on their nation of being separate from the other nations that did not believe in God. They were to worship the one and true God. God Jehovah. They were to stay pure in the family lines that were created with the 12 tribes. So, family lineage was very important. The levirate law was put in to place for the Jews to keep family lines going. Okay. Deuteronomy Chapter 25 and verse 5.

Deuteronomy 25:5

If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

We find this in Deuteronomy but if we were to go to the book of Genesis you will find that this was practiced even before Moses. Look at the absurdity of the question! You have the oldest son getting married and then through the death of all the brothers you eventually come to the seventh and youngest son to take this woman as his wife. Just the number of different scenarios that make this absurd is mind boggling.

That's the whole point the Sadducees were trying to make. Because their belief in that the bodily resurrection was absurd to them they were going to try to make this very difficult for Jesus. Can you imagine the smirks on their faces? Think about all the people that are watching this. Remember this area in the temple is filled with people. They are watching this boxing match go on between Jesus and the Pharisees, The Herodians and now the Sadducees. They really think they have Jesus on this one. But look at Jesus' answer in verses 29-32.

Matthew 22:29-32

²⁹ But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living."

Who are these people again? They are the leaders of the temple! They are the ones that are supposedly experts of the Word of God and they continually teach false doctrine and they lead the people and themselves astray from the truth of God's Word. That is what Jesus is telling them right here.

You are wrong is the Greek word: Look at the screens:

Planao – To cause to stray, to lead astray, to lead away from the truth!

Can you imagine the reaction of the Sadducees? The Pharisees had come to trap Jesus. They couldn't do it, so the Sadducees come. Move aside boys let the professionals handle it. These are supposedly scholars of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible).

Jesus uses Moses to show their error. I want to talk about that first. Luke records this encounter also. Turn to Luke Chapter 20:37-38

Luke 20:37-38

But that the dead are raised even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living for all live to him.

What bush is Jesus talking about? Look at this picture.



The burning bush when God called Moses to go back to Egypt to get the Israelites out of their bondage.

Now where do we find that passage. Turn to Exodus Chapter 3. As you are turning this where Moses took the sheep that he was keeping to Mt. Horeb which is called the Mountain of God. As he is there he sees this burning, bush but it was not being consumed. It was not being burned up. Let's read verse 2 to verse 6.

Exodus 3:2-6

² And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Now let's look at verses 13 to 15:

Exodus 3:13-15

¹³ Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Why is this so important? Earlier if you remember I said that the Sadducees gave a lot, if not all of their doctrinal stances on the Pentateuch, the first 5 books of the Bible, what Moses had written and did not give as much credence to the rest of the Old Testament. But Jesus shows them from the very words written down by Moses that there is this understanding that there is a resurrection. Because when God says to Moses I am the God of Abraham, I am the God of Isaac and I am the God of Jacob he is saying because of their faith in me that they are with me.

So, the understanding of the resurrection of the body and of eternal life with God has always been with the Jewish nation. We see it even more in the books of Isaiah and Daniel.

But Jesus described the resurrection in a more detail to show the absurdity of the Sadducees question. Because first he tells them they are wrong in their understanding of Scripture, but they also do not know the power of God. Turn back to Matthew Chapter 22 verse 30.

Matthew 22:30

³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Jesus is coming back! Amen! In two stages. First is when a little event that takes place called the "Rapture". In 2 Thessalonians Chapter 4 the Apostle Paul wrote. For the Lord will descend from heaven with a cry of command. Dead shall rise first. Then we who are alive will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and, so we will always be with the Lord.

Then there is the seven-year tribulation, Jesus' millennial reign, the battle of Armageddon and finally eternity is ushered in as Satan and all those that have rejected Jesus as savior will be cast into Hell.

So, in heaven there will be no need for marriage. There will be no more dying and there will be no more need for people to be born. In the resurrection we will receive our glorified bodies and all fellow believers will spend eternity worshiping and serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now, we do not become angels, but we are like angels with our glorified bodies.

Jesus not only said you are in error of your understanding of Scripture, but you also don't understand the power of God. Do you not think that God, who spoke everything into existence and his power displayed through creation? Do you not think that he could change our dead or dying bodies to the glorified state that it must be to be able to stand before him!

Well how did the Sadducees react to all this. We see in Matthew that he records that the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians left, walked away when Jesus answered the question of the tax.

In Luke Chapter 20:26: Look at the screen:

Luke 20:39-40

³⁹Then some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well." ⁴⁰For they no longer dared to ask him any question.

You see there is a resurrection that happens that give us the opportunity to have this glorified resurrection. In just a few days Jesus will be hanging on a cross as he takes the sins of mankind upon his body and pays the price that gives us the opportunity of salvation. He will be laid in a tomb but in three days he will rise again. He will be resurrected. In 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 Paul verse 3 to 8.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance to the Scriptures. That he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. That he appeared to Cephas, then to over 500 brothers, to James and then to Paul himself.

But you see there is a problem. Jesus' tomb is empty. So, what will be your reaction today. Will you walk away? Will you be silent? As Justin comes. However, God has spoken to your heart today this altar is open. If I have met with you and you are ready to join today you come forward. If you see your need of Jesus today you come.