

4. What makes one worthy to participate in the coming age?
5. In this particular passage, Luke describes those who will participate in the coming age as “God’s children” or “children of the resurrection.” He uses a similar phrase in Luke 6.

*But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful (vv. 35, 36).*

What might this passage teach us about those who are worthy to take part in the age to come?

6. Both the Sadducees and Jesus turn to Moses as an abiding authority.
  - a. How do they differ in their approach?
  - b. What are some keys to interpreting Scripture in light of who Jesus is and God’s ultimate purposes for humanity in him?

#### **DELIGHTED, SILENCED BUT NOT CONVINCED (vv. 39-40)**

*<sup>39</sup>Some of the teachers of the law responded, “Well said, teacher!” <sup>40</sup>And no one dared to ask him any more questions.*

1. The “teachers of the law” were more commonly aligned with the Pharisees, and would have agreed with Jesus wholeheartedly on this particular point. While they agreed with Jesus on most minor points of the law, however, there was major disagreement over their understanding of the nature of the Messiah and the character of those who would be considered worthy to participate in the age to come.

What do the Pharisees and the Teachers of the law teach us about the limits of good theology and sound biblical exegesis?

2. What are some places we may be in error because “we do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?”

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SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2023



# LUKE

## A PROMISE KEPT

GOD OF THE LIVING | LUKE 20:27-30

We are often cautioned, “While the Bible was written for us, it is not written to us.” Even though we may have a lot in common with the people who were the initial recipients of the Scripture, they lived in a very different time and place.

Tim Mackie of “Bible Project” fame, previously hosted a podcast entitled, “My Strange Bible.” As an Old Testament specialist Tim realized, the story of Scripture often transports us to distant lands, unfamiliar cultures, and often bizarre customs.

And while the Bible was written to people in a different time and different place with a different understanding of the world, it was also written for us because God’s truth transcends their culture, and our culture in order to speak a fresh word to every culture.

Jesus’ encounter with the Sadducees in Luke 20, reminds us how strange our Bibles can actually be.

In ancient Israel if a woman was widowed and childless, her brother in law would take her as his wife in order to preserve the family line and inheritance. The first son born in the union would carry on the family line of the woman’s deceased husband.

You’ll remember from the story of Ruth, how Ruth and Boaz’s first child was given to Naomi to preserve the family line of her husband and her sons and to insure that Naomi would be taken care of in her old age.

The Sadducees take advantage of this unique cultural practice to undermine popular belief in the resurrection. Jesus’ response transcends the cultural practice and points us to a greater appreciation of the beauty and truthfulness of Scripture and the wonderful future that God has for us.

## A ODD CULTURAL PRACTICE (vv. 27-33)

*27 Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.*

*28 “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.*

*29 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. 30 The second 31 and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. 32 Finally, the woman died too.*

*33 Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”*

1. This is our initial introduction to the Sadducees. We actually know very little about them. Contemporary Jewish writers describe them as the elite of the Jerusalem elite. In Acts, Luke notes, “the high priest and all his associates. were members of the party of the Sadducees (Acts 5:17).” They are noted in Scripture for their rejection of the resurrection, and their refusal to embrace anything beyond the Pentateuch (The Five Books of Moses) as sacred scripture.
  - a. What sets the Sadducees apart from Jesus’ previous opponents?
  - b. What did the Sadducees have in common with the Pharisees and the experts in the law?
2. The tradition that the Sadducees refer to is clearly laid out in Deuteronomy 25.

*“If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband’s brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. 6 The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel (vv. 5-6).”*

We have a negative example in Genesis where one of Judah’s son refuses to carry on the family line of his brother (Genesis 38:8-10), and a positive example in Ruth, where Ruth and Boaz offer their first born to Naomi in order to preserve her family line and place in Israel.

*So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! 15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.” 16 Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. 17 The women*

*living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David (Ruth 4:13-17).*

- a. Why might this practice have been an important practice in ancient Israel?
  - b. What is significant about the historical note we find at the end of Ruth?
3. While this might be a serious inquiry under any other circumstances, what motivates the Sadducees in this particular instance?
  4. What are some hints from the text that this might be less than a serious inquiry?

## THE GOD WHO TRANSCENDS CULTURE (vv. 34-38)

*34 Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, 36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection.*

*37 But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ 38 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.”*

1. Matthew and Mark tell the same story. In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus’ response is a little more pointed.

*Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? ...You are badly mistaken (Mark 12:24, 26)!”*

How does the Sadducees’ absurd hypothetical fall short of understanding the message of Scripture and the power of God?
2. Jesus draws a sharp contrast between the “people of this age” and “those considered worthy in taking part in the age to come.” While Jesus is sparing in his detail of the coming age, what are a few firm conclusions we can draw from this passage?
3. Those who are in Christ are often described as “experiencing the realities of the age to come” in this present age.
  - a. What are some of the privileges of the coming age we experience in the present?
  - b. How should the realities of the coming age shape the way we relate to this present age?