

## REJECTION OF THE MESSIAH KING #2

Matthew 22:23-40

Yeshua §§140-141

Next week I will conduct three funerals: a graveside on Friday, Belle Brett's memorial on Saturday and Bill Stevens' memorial on Sunday. (And I am very grateful to all of you who will be serving right alongside me.)

I've never had a schedule quite like this. But it will be good because all three of the deceased are believers which literally makes all the difference in the world. A memorial service for a follower of Jesus is so different from a memorial service for a person who was not a believer.

What core truth makes the difference?

The resurrection!

Jesus promises:

*JOHN 11:25 (ESV)*

**"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,**

Jesus revealed to the Apostle Paul the event of our resurrection:

*1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18 (ESV)*

**13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the**

## **Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.**

I want to encourage you with these words. I want to fire up the imagination of your minds to picture that glorious day when we will be resurrected. I want to encourage you to think often and to think deeply about the resurrection that you might be set free from the fear of death and live with the joyful expectation of your resurrection.

In the days of Jesus there were three major schools of thought under the umbrella of Judaism, kind of like our denominations under Protestantism. One of those schools of thought was Sadduceeism which, on one hand, believed in the inspiration and authority of the Hebrew Scriptures, but on the other, did not believe in the resurrection. The Sadducees, like the chief priests and elders, held prominent positions of authority in Jewish leadership.

On Day Two of Crucifixion week, the Sadducees joined the fight against Jesus. They attempted to discredit Jesus by presenting a thought problem regarding the resurrection.

Let's pick up the story in Matthew 22:23-28.

### **THE SADDUCEES' CHALLENGE (22:23-28)**

*MATTHEW 22:23-28 (ESV)*

**23 The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question,**

#### ***Who Are the Sadducees?***

Little is known about the origins of the Sadducees; none of their writings exist today. The New Testament is one of the primary sources of information about the Sadducees and it doesn't give us much.

What we do know is that in the days of Jesus there were many schools of thought under the umbrella of Judaism. But the three major, most influential schools of thought were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

It seems the Sadducees held to four primary principles the first of which Matthew points out in verse 23: the Sadducees did not believe in a bodily resurrection from the dead. In fact, the Sadducees believed upon physical death the human soul ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

Attempting to discredit Jesus, the Sadducees proposed this thought problem built on the bodily resurrection from the dead and the levirate marriage law of the Law of Moses.<sup>2</sup>

**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.”**

They must have thought it was a good argument capable of confounding Jesus. But they made at least one erroneous assumption; they assumed life in the resurrection will function exactly as life functions in this age. Jesus easily defeated their challenge and revealed new truth about the resurrection of believers.

## **JESUS' REFUTATION (22:29-33)**

*MATTHEW 22:29-33 (ESV)*

**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**

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<sup>1</sup> The other principles held by the Sadducees included 1) the Hebrew Scriptures were authoritative. They did not accept the oral law of the Pharisees as having authority. 2) They emphasized human responsibility and free will. They rejected the idea of divine fate. 3) They did not believe in angels and spirits. A. Andrew Das, “Sadducees,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> In Deuteronomy 25:5-10, God required a dead man’s brother to marry his childless widow and father a son who would assume the dead man’s name and inherit his portion of the promised land. Chad Brand et al., eds., “Levirate Law, Levirate Marriage,” *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1028.

**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.**

First, Jesus revealed resurrection life is different than mortal life. Resurrected people will not marry. Angels do not marry. In that sense we will be like the angels in the resurrection. When we are resurrected, we will not be married nor will we marry. Marriage is an arrangement unique to mortal life. To be clear, the Messianic Kingdom will include both mortals and immortals (resurrected human beings). In the Messianic Kingdom, mortals will marry and be given in marriage. But in the Messianic Kingdom, those of us who have been resurrected (immortals) will not marry.

I find many of us do not like this revelation; we can't imagine life without our spouse. If that's you, you're blessed. To hear you will not be married to your spouse in the resurrection may knock the shine off the future. But we need to trust God. He Who created marriage has something in store that will far exceed the joy and blessing we have experienced in marriage.

The fact that the resurrected do not marry defeated the Sadducees' conundrum. The childless woman will not be married to any of the seven brothers in the resurrection.

Jesus didn't stop there. Jesus took the opportunity to correct the error of the Sadducees in denying bodily resurrection. Jesus quoted from Exodus 3, a portion of Scripture the Sadducees accepted as divinely inspired.

*EXODUS 3:5-6*

**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.**

God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. He said *I am* not *I was* the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Though physically dead, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are very much alive. The human soul survives the physical death of the human body. Those possessing justification salvation will be resurrected: Jesus the firstfruits followed by Church Age saints at the Rapture, then Old Testament and Tribulation saints prior to the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and finally Millennial Kingdom saints at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom.

With ease, Jesus defeated the Sadducees and in the process gave further revelation about the resurrection. Matthew says the crowd was astonished by His teaching. As we would say, they were *blown away*.

Don't you love it!

Don't mess with Jesus; He's invincible, He's unstoppable. Even if you kill Him, He's going to come back to life and do what He said He's going to do.

You can't beat Him, so why not join Him!

Jesus' resurrection and His promise that He will resurrect all who believe in Him (John 11:25-26) are the reasons we need not fear death.

Our leaders are using the fear of death to control our lives. Satan is using the fear of death to divide families and to divide the Church. I know this is delicate territory; we respect the fact we do not all hold the same convictions about Covid and vaccines, but my brothers and sisters can we all agree we should not be driven by the fear of death? Death is separation. Physical death is separation of the soul from the body. Relational death is separation of relationship between family members and friends. Isn't it ironic that the steps we have taken as a culture to protect against physical death has resulted in relational death at unprecedented levels? We need to fight against this culture of death by setting our minds on the resurrection and committing

ourselves to continue to love one another by staying in touch with each other even if it's by phone, text or computer. We need to be the people who continue to bring love and life to this world.

Having defeated the Sadducees, Jesus is again confronted by the Pharisees. The opposition just wouldn't quit. When the Pharisees heard Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they stepped up to the plate to take another swing at Jesus.

### **THE PHARISEES TEST JESUS (MATT. 22:34-40)**

*MATTHEW 22:34-40 (ESV)*

**34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."**

Was this meant to test Jesus' knowledge of the Mosaic Law? It seems the Pharisees were probing to find a flaw in Jesus' understanding of the Law. Instead, Jesus' answer is flawless and consistent with everything He has ever taught about the Law (Luke 10:25-28).

The greatest commandment of the Law of Messiah is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. The second greatest commandment is that we love one another as Jesus has loved us (John 15:12-17). On these two commandments depend all the Law of Messiah and the New Testament Prophets.

Here in these passages are two of the most important truths to guide us in these dark days: the Resurrection and Love. Through our love for God and one another and the hope of the Resurrection, let us live free

of the fear of death, not for our selfish purposes, but so that we can love others and so that we can help others come to life-changing faith in Jesus.