

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

M. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Overwhelming Critique Of The Sadducees' Beliefs (Matthew 22:23-33)

I. Introduction

- A. If Jesus is God's true Messiah, He should have the **wisdom of God**, and thus be **able to display** that wisdom.
- B. Matthew 22:23-33 records Christ's overwhelming critique of the doctrine of the Sadducees, the sect that with the high priest was the "aristocratic majority of the . . . Sanhedrin," Zon. Pic. Ency. Bib., vol. Five, p. 213.
- C. We view that overwhelming critique in appreciating the divine wisdom of our Lord (as follows):

II. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Overwhelming Critique Of The Sadducees' Beliefs.

- A. After the united effort of the political opposites, the Pharisees and Herodians, failed to entangle Jesus in His speech (Matt. 22:15-22), the Sadducees came to question Him to discredit Him in His answer, Matt. 22:23a.
- B. Matthew in his Gospel prefaces their question with the remark that the Sadducees held there was no resurrection, Matt. 22:23b. Their reasoning was that the soul ceased to exist at death, so at death, there was nothing left to raise in a resurrection, that a resurrection was thus illogical, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 72.
- C. To present the idea of resurrection as an absurdity, the Sadducees gave Jesus an illustration which they thought would force Him to admit that there could be no resurrection, Matthew 22:24-28:
 1. The Sadducees referred to the Deuteronomy 25:5-6 call by Moses that if a man died and left no child, his brother by levirate marriage was to wed his brother's widow and raise up seed for his brother, Matt. 22:24.
 2. Then, the Sadducees presented a situation in which 7 brothers died successively after each had wed the same woman in levirate marriage, Matt. 22:25-26. The woman also finally died, Matt. 22:27. Thus, the Sadducees asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection if each brother had married her, Matt. 22:28.
 3. This case was presented to try to show that if there were a resurrection, God would be forced to produce an adulterous state where the woman was married to seven men at one time, making the resurrection absurd!
- D. Jesus replied that the Sadducees (1) did not know the Scriptures nor (2) the power of God, Matthew 22:29.
- E. He then explained this two-fold critique of the Sadducees in Matthew 22:30-32 (as follows):
 1. First, Christ explained how the Sadducees did not know the power of God, for, in the resurrection, people neither marry as men, nor are they given in marriage as women, but are as the angels of God in heaven in that they are asexual, meaning human sexuality is a state characteristic only of this life, Matthew 22:30.
 2. Second, Christ explained in Matthew 22:31-32 how the Sadducees did not know the Scriptures:
 - a. Jesus asked the Sadducees if, in regard to the resurrection, had they read what God spoke in Exodus 3:6.
 - b. This was a crucial passage, for the Sadducees held to the inspiration of the books of Moses, including the book of Exodus, versus the oral laws and regulations added by the Pharisees, Ibid., Z. P. E. B., p. 214.
 - c. Jesus then quoted Exodus 3:6 where God said, "I *am* the God of" Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Matthew 22:32a. This statement reveals that though these forefathers had long been deceased when God spoke to Moses in Exodus 3:6, their souls **still lived**, or God would have said, "I *was* the God" of these men. Jesus highlighted this detail of the verb's tense to remind the Sadducees that God was not the God of the non-existing, but of the living souls of long physically deceased patriarchs! (Matthew 22:32b) The implication was enormous -- if the souls of the patriarchs existed after death, they would be resurrected!
 - d. [Important for us is the fact that the verb "*am*" in Exodus 3:6 is **not written** in the **Hebrew text** (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 81), but it is in italics in the KJV as it is **grammatically understood** to exist there in the **present** tense. Thus, Jesus' argument is **importantly** based on **the grammatical context.**]
 - e. [Also, as this grammatical context is used with the **historical context** in Jesus' argument, the patriarchs being then long dead, **Jesus used the literal, grammatical, historical method to interpret Exodus 3:6!**]
- F. Jesus' teaching, heard by the multitude, astonished them, Matthew 22:33, and Matthew 22:34 reveals that Jesus in His instruction had devastated the teaching of the Sadducees that opposed belief in the resurrection!

Lesson: *Jesus overwhelmingly critiqued the view of the Sadducees that there was no resurrection, showing they did not know God's power to raise the dead in asexual bodies or the Scriptures they themselves held to be divinely inspired, Scriptures revealing the souls of deceased believers exist after death, waiting for the resurrection!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ as the Messiah with the wisdom of God to be saved, John 3:16. (2) May we like Jesus interpret Scripture literally, grammatically and historically to handle it aright! (2 Timothy 2:15)*