

Luke 20C

- Last week we had just begun to look at the third group to inspect Jesus in the Temple during His final week in Jerusalem
 - Inspections were intend to detect imperfections in the Lamb
 - Jesus withstood tests brought by three of the key leadership groups within Israel already (Scribes, Pharisees & Herodians)
 - Now He is going to withstand an attack by the final group

[Luke 20:27](#) ¶ Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection),

[Luke 20:28](#) and they questioned Him, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that IF A MAN’S BROTHER DIES, having a wife, AND HE IS CHILDLESS, HIS BROTHER SHOULD MARRY THE WIFE AND RAISE UP CHILDREN TO HIS BROTHER.

[Luke 20:29](#) “Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless;

[Luke 20:30](#) and the second

[Luke 20:31](#) and the third married her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children.

[Luke 20:32](#) “Finally the woman died also.

[Luke 20:33](#) “In the resurrection therefore, which one’s wife will she be? For all seven had married her.”

- Begin (again) with the Sadducees distinguishing characteristic
 - They didn’t believe in resurrection
 - They also didn’t believe in angels nor spirits (demons)
 - They felt that when the body died, all that remained was the spirit
 - They expected that the future state of man in the kingdom was a spirit only experience
 - They were a somewhat more liberal group in terms of the political spectrum
 - Though they were still fairly strict in their view of the OT
 - Strict in the sense that they didn’t agree with the Pharisee’s willingness to add their own rules around the law

- They felt the OT should adhere strictly to the original OT writing
 - Interestingly, the Sadducees were the ones in charge in Jesus day
 - They had the ruling majority on the Sanhedrin council, so they were the majority party in control
 - And they protected that majority by trying to discredit their adversaries
 - They liked to show up their enemies was by devising questions so hard to answer that they could make you look foolish in the attempt
 - A rock too big to pick up
- This is the approach they are taking with Jesus here
 - They ask a question that no one up to this point had ever been able to answer
 - And they choose this particular issue because they knew Jesus had taught on resurrection before
 - Many of His parables and descriptions of the coming kingdom talked about the coming resurrection of the righteous
 - So they want to see Him defend His view of the afterlife
 - Here's how the trap worked essentially
 - The principle is that since this kind of situation is technically possible
 - This is an extreme example of the Levirate marriage responsibility under the Mosaic Law
 - In Deut 25:5 the law required that a widow who had been left childless was to be married to the oldest unmarried brother of the deceased
 - The purpose was to produce a child who would be considered the natural heir of the deceased man

- But in this extreme example, each new brother keeps dying before the woman gets the benefit of a child
- Each marriage would have been a legitimate marriage, and it was the Levirate rule that resulted in the multiple marriages
- But even though these multiple marriages created no problem on earth because they were one at a time, it would create a problem for a resurrected world
- People walking around with multiple binding marriages seemed ridiculous
 - Therefore the idea of resurrection seemed to be a ridiculous unless you could propose a solution to this problem
- So the Sadducees' point in asking the question wasn't to learn a solution to the problem
 - They didn't believe in resurrection, so they didn't believe this would ever happen
 - They just expected Jesus to struggle trying to answer the question and in so doing, he would be made to look foolish
 - And like Simon the Pharisee who scoffed at Jesus in Chap 7
 - Prostitute washing His feet...a true prophet would know who she was
- Jesus begins by specifically addressing their contrived situation
 - In Matt & Mark's accounts, Jesus is recorded as beginning his response with a very critical comment about why they were so confused about resurrection
 - He says they are mistaken is because they don't know scripture and they don't know the power of God
 - They didn't understand what scripture taught on the issue of resurrection
 - And they didn't realize all that God was capable of doing

- They had limited God's power in their minds so as to produce this problem
 - The problem is they had assumed that the nature of a resurrected body would be limited to simply being a carbon copy of the body we have today
 - And that the life and relationships that exist today will be repeated in the next age
 - This perspective was not consistent with what scripture tells us about that next life
 - And it assumes that God's power is unable to go beyond what He created in the first instance
- It occurs to me that Jesus' answer here is probably the correct answer for almost any issue or any person that stands in opposition to the truth
 - People who cling to false doctrine or who refuse to accept sound teaching
 - People who are attracted to unhealthy churches or who are sucked in by false gospels
 - All these people and the issues that draw them
 - All of them are the product of a lack of knowledge of scripture
 - And an ignorance of the power of God
 - Scripture is just a collection of stories, sayings and good advice
 - And God is nothing more than an air traffic controller
 - Passive observer, like a wildlife photographer
 - If these people were to truly study and understand scripture
 - If they devoted as much time and energy to immersing themselves in it, living through it and by it, burying it in their heart, treasuring it
 - Then perhaps they might be able to find the answers they were looking for when their faced with troubling questions or doubts

- And if they would stop placing the God of the Bible into a box of our own making
 - Our minds and imaginations can't begin to plumb the depths of what God can accomplish
 - We can't do what the Sadducees had done and think that our imaginations can produce limits that God cannot cross
- In His answer Jesus addresses their two mistakes in reverse order
 - First, He deals with their lack of appreciation of the true power of God
 - In verse 34 & 35 Jesus says that while we are married in this age, the resurrected body does not enter into a marriage
 - And the reason for this stems from the nature of marriage and the nature of the resurrected body
 - First, marriage is a reuniting of flesh
 - Remember that the first woman was made from the flesh of the first man
 - So in marriage the two flesh become one again
 - But the resurrected body we will have will be uniquely created
 - All those of this age who are deemed worthy of entering the kingdom will have already been created and present at the beginning
 - No need for procreation
 - No need for a marriage in order to produce new offspring
 - So the point in marriage is something unique to this age
 - Second, marriage was for the relationship itself
 - It was not good that Adam be alone
 - He needed a helper or partner
 - But in the next age the sons of God will no longer need a marriage relationship, since we will have God present in our midst

- We will serve Him according to Revelation 22:3
- Then in verse 36 Jesus moves to a discussion of the nature of the resurrected body itself
 - Jesus says that the resurrected sons of God will be unable to die, but be like angels
 - This is an especially pointed comment, because Jesus knew the Sadducees also didn't believe in angels
 - He's basically taking a second verbal swing at them even as He teaches them about resurrection
 - But what Jesus says tells us a lot about the nature of next body and the age itself
 - We can get an even better idea of what this will be like from Paul's first letter to Corinthians
- Paul is addressing false teaching in the Corinthian church that had repeated the error of the Sadducees
 - They had begun to believe that resurrection wasn't possible
 - Paul uses the comparison to a seed to teach on the true nature of resurrection

[1Cor. 15:35](#) ¶ But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"

[1Cor. 15:36](#) You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;

[1Cor. 15:37](#) and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

[1Cor. 15:38](#) But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

[1Cor. 15:39](#) All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one *flesh* of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.

[1Cor. 15:40](#) There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another.

[1Cor. 15:41](#) There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

[1Cor. 15:42](#) ¶ So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*;

[1Cor. 15:43](#) it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

[1Cor. 15:44](#) it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*.

[1Cor. 15:45](#) So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.

[1Cor. 15:46](#) However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

[1Cor. 15:47](#) The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

[1Cor. 15:48](#) As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

[1Cor. 15:49](#) Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

- And Paul says that if God can create a seed, bury it and have it produce a completely different living thing – a tree
 - Then he can do the same for human body
 - Just as the world and the stars are all made out of completely different materials, shapes and natures
 - So God is capable of creating a completely different kind of body for the resurrection
 - This is what Jesus meant when He told the Sadducees that their errors were the product of their lack of understand of God’s power
- Then he goes on the describe the nature of that new body
 - The first was buried in its mortality
 - The second will be raised in immortality
 - Unlike the first, it’s imperishable – aphantasia - immortal – will not die
 - This means no sin, because the reason death exists at all is because Adam introduced sin
 - The first was buried in dishonor – shame – referring to our sinful flesh
 - God never fixes the sin of our container, our flesh
 - He just replaces it
 - The second body will be raised in glory

- The first was buried in weakness
 - But our new body will have power
- Finally, Paul makes a fascinating comparison
 - Our first man was Adam, made of the earth, natural, fleshy, earthy
 - The human race started over with Christ
 - He was not born of the same seed but rather of the seed of the Holy Spirit
 - His body was different in the sense that it was without sin in the flesh
 - And just as our original bodies were copies of the first man, Adam
 - Our new heavenly bodies will be copies of Jesus' body at least in the sense that they will be sinless and eligible to enter Heaven
 - But here's the irony
 - Jesus' original body was never corrected by sin
 - He didn't need to have it replaced when He was resurrected
 - When Jesus was resurrected, He had the same body that He had before His death
 - Thomas placed his hands in the wounds remember
 - So while we will have new bodies, perfect in the nature of the body Jesus has
 - Jesus will still bear the marks of his crucifixion in the new kingdom
 - He will be the only resurrected body to bear marks from His time on Earth
- Now Jesus turns to the first reason the Sadducees had been mistaken in their thinking – they didn't understand scripture
 - Jesus bypasses the topic of marriage altogether

- Jesus moves to a general discussion of the truth of resurrection from scripture

[Luke 20:37](#) “But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the *passage about the burning bush*, where he calls the Lord THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB.

[Luke 20:38](#) “Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him.”

- Jesus gets to the heart of the issue by attacking the Sadducees lack of understanding of the scriptures and especially the Torah
 - He says that even Moses wrote that resurrection was true
 - Now the Sadducees would have been a little surprised to hear that, because there is no verse written by Moses that directly references resurrection of the physical body
 - But Jesus makes clear that Moses’ writings were built on an expectation of resurrection
 - First, Jesus says that when God appeared before Moses, He described Himself as the God of three men
 - Abraham Isaac and Jacob
 - God choose to describe Himself as the God of three men who had died by the time Moses heard those word
 - This tells all we need to know about how God views the issue of resurrection
 - He wouldn’t describe Himself as the God of dead people unless those people were to be alive again and He were to continue being their God
 - He was describing Himself as presently the God of those men, indicating they were still before God
 - Just as “all men live before God”
- But Jesus answer here goes another step even deeper
 - Jesus isn’t just saying that God is a God who describes Himself in terms of living relationships

- God is a God who describes Himself in terms of promises fulfilled
 - And that's the deeper meaning implied here
- Anytime the three patriarch names are used in combination in this way, it always one specific thing – the Abrahamic Covenant
 - If Jesus had merely wanted to show the Sadducees that God described Himself as a God of living relationships, Jesus could have stopped at one name, right?
 - He could have said remember God said He was the God of Abraham
 - But Jesus included all three names because it immediately evoked a reference to the Abraham covenant
- The Abrahamic Covenant was the unique promise that God made to Abraham and repeated to Issac and again to Jacob
 - And in that promise, God assured them that their offspring would be a great nation of people
 - And He promised that all three of these men would inherit and inhabit the promised land

[Gen. 17:8](#) “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

[Gen. 26:3](#) “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.

[Gen. 28:13](#) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.

- But in their lifetimes, the closest any of these men actually got to owning any of the promised land was a well and a few acres of land for a family burial plot
 - So God has still a promise to keep with these men
 - They are still owed an inheritance in this land

- God never said they would have it in their first earthly bodies
- And it's evident now that His plan was to give it to them when they could enjoy it in their resurrected bodies in some future day
 - God's promises are sure regardless of the calendar
 - Unlike men, time has no effect on God nor on the surety of His promises
- So the only way that God could be a covenant keeping God is if resurrection were true
 - For without it, God would have to be made to be a liar
 - Because these men have never yet received what was promised
- So when Jesus mentions Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He is using shorthand to remind the Jewish leaders that God has made promises to men of the past
- And keeping those promises required resurrection

[Luke 20:39](#) Some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well."

[Luke 20:40](#) For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.

- And so Jesus succeeds in answering the final inspection as the Passover Lamb
 - The scribes themselves at this point say Teacher you have spoken well
 - This is an important statement, because it means that the leaders can't bring a charge against Him for anything He has said
 - This doesn't mean the scribes have become believers
 - They only address Him as Teacher, not Lord
 - But their statement remains proof that Jesus has not been found guilty of any offense before the people
 - He was truly innocent of any possible charge...He was spotless
- Now Jesus takes the offensive

- He wants to leave the discussion with a pointed attack on the leaders' for their failure to appreciate the true nature of the Messiah's ministry
 - Rather than a man who would be a conquering king
 - Or perhaps a man in the mold of the self-serving rule enforcing Pharisees,
 - Jesus wanted them to know that the true Messiah was someone that scripture described as God Himself

[Luke 20:41](#) ¶ Then He said to them, "How *is it that* they say the Christ is David's son?"

[Luke 20:42](#) "For David himself says in the book of Psalms,

'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,

"SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

[Luke 20:43](#) UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'"

[Luke 20:44](#) "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?"

- The question Jesus asks the leaders to answer comes from language found in Psalms 110
 - Now like we said about Psalms 118, Psalms 110 was widely understood then as now to be a Messianic Psalm
 - Full of references to the Messiah and His power and reign
 - And it was also widely known and accepted that this was a Psalm of David, as it is titled
- So Jesus asks, how is it the Messiah would be the son of David, a descendant of David in other words
 - This is a reference to the Messianic descriptions found by Isa 9 and Jer 33 that tell us the Messiah would be a descendant of David.
 - But knowing that the Messiah would be born in David's line, how is it that David Himself speaks of the Messiah and calls Him Lord
 - If the Messiah were merely a man, David could never talk about him in that way
 - In Jewish and eastern culture generally, a father would never dream of calling his own son or descendant by such a title

- That would be like the President turning to one of his lowest aids and calling him sir
- It would never happen
- The only way it would happen is if this person were someone much greater than merely another man
 - As Luke has been emphasizing all along in his gospel, Jesus would be the God Man
 - Something and someone completely different than what the leaders expected
 - Which is why they rejected Jesus out of hand despite the mountain of proof He gave them
- And now Jesus makes the application to the crowd and more specifically to the disciples

[Luke 20:45](#) ¶ And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples, [Luke 20:46](#) “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, [Luke 20:47](#) who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

- These men are the problem, Jesus says
 - Beware these men, be on guard against them
 - And to know why they should beware these men, Jesus lists their chief sins
 - First, Jesus lists four characteristics of the first sin
 - They walk around in long robes
 - They love the respectful greetings
 - They love to sit in the honored places in the synagogues
 - They love the places of honor at banquets
 - All of these are symptoms of pride

- They are taking pride in their earthly, fleshing, religious accomplishments
- They are not men serving the people nor seeking after God's righteousness
- They are men seeking the praises of the people and a righteousness they earn for themselves
- Avoid them because of their pride
- Secondly, they devour widow's houses
 - While we don't have a lot of background on this, it's not too hard to see what Jesus is talking about
 - In ancient cultures, a widow was a particularly vulnerable member of society
 - There were few social structures to support her, so she was often depended on the generosity of religious leaders to care for her
 - Jesus is indicating here that these men would so greedy they would even take money from vulnerable defenseless widows
 - So avoid these men because of their greed
- Finally, they offer long prayers for appearance sake
 - It had become common among the scribes and religious leaders generally when asked to pray publicly to memorize these long, elaborate prayers
 - They were detailed in their content
 - They included plenty of scripture references and poetic language
 - The list of prayer needs when on and on
 - And the whole event was orchestrated to impress the people, never to reach God
 - It wasn't a prayer so much as a performance

- SO avoid these men for their hypocrisy
- And the real lesson here is to the disciples
 - Don't become like these men
 - Don't think that your coming role as ministers in Christ's church would mean they take the roll of scribe
 - They weren't to model themselves on these men
 - And in a few short hours, Jesus would teach these men what it really meant to be a leader in the church
 - As He washes their feet at the Passover meal, Jesus teaches the servant roll of a leader
- What kind of leader do we look for in ministry?
 - Do we understand that a man leading in God's church should not carry pride in that accomplishment, but humility?
 - He should not seek the praises of men, but God
 - He should reduce his calling in ministry into a financial pursuit
 - Much less be willing to take advantage of those under his charge for personal financial gain
 - He should not teach and say one thing while doing otherwise
 - Turning his ministry into nothing more than a performance
- Yet how often do we seem to elevate men like that into leadership positions within the church?
 - It seems we might be guilty at times of the same sin as the Sadducees
 - We do not know scripture and we do not understand the power of God
 - We forget the clear expectations found in scripture for who would be qualified to lead in the church
 - And we forget that God is the one doing the work through men in any case

- Such that any man's individual qualifications for ministry are of minimal importance compared with his wiliness to yield to God's power working through him
 - If we remember scripture and if we remember God's power, then we will follow godly men who have a true heart to serve God and God's people
 - While trusting that God can and will work great things through that kind of man
- And that's the kind of men Jesus needed to follow after Him.