

Question of the Resurrection (Luke 20:27-38)

The Sadducees, who do not believe in the resurrection or angels, ask Jesus a question about marriage in heaven. Let me pause here for a second to help you remember who the Sadducees are. They do not believe in resurrection or angels and that is, **sad-you-see**. Sorry about the pun, but I think you will now remember who the Sadducees are; won't you?

Back to the sermon. The Sadducees ask a question about marriage in heaven. And they make the same mistake that most people do—they think that life in heaven will be essentially the same as life is on earth, only better and longer. In effect, Jesus is saying that you cannot tell what life in heaven will be like by looking at life in this age. By illustration, we might say that you can't predict what a butterfly would look like by looking at a caterpillar.

Jesus used the attack of the Sadducees to discuss the difference in this world and the other world, which is earth and heaven. The Sadducees were the religious and political liberals of Jesus' day. They were the wealthy, aristocratic, and governing class of leaders in Israel. So,

the Sadducees tried to discredit Jesus with **three** points. **First**, they referred to the Levrite marriage, where a husband died without a son and the law said that his brother was to marry his wife and bear a son.

Second, they presented a logical situation: there were seven brothers. The first brother died without having children. Each of the older brothers obeyed the law, but each brother died before having children. Finally, the woman died also. The point was logical, but most unlikely.

Third, they asked an egotistical and blind question. The question was logical, but note these **two** things: **first**, the spirit that lay behind the questioning. The situation was absurd; the spirit was cold and coarse, egotistical, and unbelieving, regrettable, and revolting. The unbeliever's spirit is often self-incriminating and self-condemning. The **second** thing to note is the blindness and human frailty of the question. The human mind cannot know the spiritual world apart from revelation. The Sadducees were thinking that the spiritual world would be just like the physical world, that it would be nothing more than a

continuation of this world in both its nature and in its relationships.

Marriage differs in the two worlds. In this world, there is marriage, but in the other world there will be **no** marriage. There is a very special and wonderful reason why there is no marriage in the other world: love is perfected. Future life and relationships will exceed earthly relationships, even the bond of marital relationships. The strong union and bond of earthly marriage will not be less, it will be greater and stronger in heaven, but so will all other relationships.

In heaven, our relationships will cease to be as they are on earth. They will be changed in an absolute sense: selfishness and sin will not affect our love and lives. Our love will be perfected; therefore, we will love everyone perfectly. A wife on this earth will not be loved as she was on this earth—imperfectly. She will be loved more, loved perfectly. Everyone will love everyone else perfectly. God will change all relationships into perfection, even as the relationships between angels and God are perfected.

Entrance into the two worlds is different. A man has nothing to do with his entrance into this world. He is conceived and born by the act of a man and a woman. But note these **three** facts about the next world.

First, only those who are considered, or accounted worthy shall obtain that world. This is significant. A man does not work or earn his way into the next world. He is not worthy; he is only counted worthy. Worthiness is accounted to him, merely laid to his account. Scripture says that it is faith that is counted as making him worthy. God takes a man's faith and counts it or credits it as "righteousness." We find this in scripture in **Romans 5:1**, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Second, Jesus was speaking of the resurrection of believers only. He did not say "the resurrection of the dead" which would mean all the dead, but he said "the resurrection **from** the dead" which means the resurrection of believers from among the dead. This we can find in **John 5:25**, "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the

voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.” **Third**, every man continues to exist after this world, but all will not enter “that age,” that is, heaven. Those who have not lived a life of faith in Christ, who are not counted worthy, will enter hell. Which is what we heard several weeks ago in **Luke 16:24**, “So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire’.”

Death differs in the two worlds. In the next world, there is no death. A man is locked in, given an incorruptible body and existence, living forever with God. In addition, man’s nature or personal being differs in the two worlds. **Two** things are said about believers. **First**, believers shall be “like the angels.” The Greek word (isangelloi) means that believers shall have a nature like the angels: be glorified, by their peers, live in the joy of working and serving God just as the angels do. It means believers will have all the glorious being and privileges and responsibilities that angels have.

Second, there is even more for believers than what the angels have. Believers are the children of God, the adopted children of God. Which is what we are told in **Titus 3:7**, “So that, have been justified by his grace, we might become heirs have the hope of eternal life.”

Life also differs in the two worlds. In the other world, there is a resurrected life, a real life, a life that is more real than the life of this world. It is a perfect life that lives for God perfectly. Note **three** facts. **First**, God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus meant at least two things in this point. **#1**, God’s relationships are active relationships, not inactive. God says, “I am the God of...” not, “I was the God of...” His relationships with His subjects are maintained even after departing this world. God is eternal; therefore, he creates and maintains eternal active relationships. God’s subjects enter into the spiritual realm of His presence and actively relate to him. **The resurrection is a fact.** The second thing Jesus meant in this point is that God’s relationships are good and rewarding. The patriarchs of old were

promised very personal rewards. There has to be a resurrection if our

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relationship with God is good and rewarding. To die and to be left dead as a decayed corpse is not good nor rewarding. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have a good and rewarding relationship with God. They are more alive today than they were while on earth, for they are perfected and eternal. They are with God himself, and so shall we be. **The resurrection is a fact.**

The **second** fact to be noted is that God is—God exists. Note the two simple words in verse 38. The fact that *God exists*, proves the resurrection. The Greek (ego eimi) means the self-existent, eternal one. Since God exists, he is God with omnipotent power—power that is perfect and eternal. God can do anything and all things, perfectly and eternally. He can call the elements of a decayed body back together again and raise it up to live in the spiritual dimension, both perfectly and eternally.

Note carefully: *God exists* and lives, the argument is irrefutable. Note carefully the great passage in **Ephesians 1:11-12** dealing with the spiritual blessings

that are ours in Christ. “In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out

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everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.”

The resurrection is a fact. It will be experienced by all men of all ages because God is. God has willed to give us an inheritance—and inheritance to be, that is, to live eternally with him. We will undergo a transformation of nature, a transformation of perfection and permanency. For this reason, we need to pay close attention to what Scripture says. For example, in **Hebrews 11:6** it says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he [God] exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. We must believe that God is and the he rewards those who earnestly seek him; that is, he rewards all of us who seek him to live earnestly with him.

The **third** fact that needs to be noted is that God is not God of the dead but of the living. God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not the God of dead and decaying corpses. When Moses wrote these words, the three patriarchs had been dead for centuries. If they were

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dead, God was not their God. Since he was their God, they were alive; they were living in God's presence and in a relationship that was perfect and eternal. There is to be a resurrection.

One simple fact comes to the forefront ever so clearly in these points made by Jesus: *since God is*, God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Which is what we can find in **Acts 24:15**, "And I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked."

Note also that all believers live. They live unto God, for God is the God of the living. Death cannot break the believer's relationship to God. The believer goes to live with the Lord forever.

So, what are some of the lessons we can learn from this Scripture reading in Luke?

From this scripture reading in Luke, we can learn that resurrection is a different kind of life, not a continuation

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of our current earthly one, and that God is the God of the living, not the dead, meaning all who live in him are alive. This passage teaches that earthly concerns like marriage and status do not define eternal life, which is characterized by a more direct relationship with God. Unfortunately, it emphasizes that this new life with God begins now, not just in the afterlife.

Please bow your heads as I pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the promise that you are not the God of the dead, but of the living. We claim that promise today and declare that all who have passed

away are alive to you. We trust your power to bring new life and hope to those who have gone before us. Help us to live each day with the assurance that you are with us, guiding us, and giving us strength. Thank you for your love and grace that never fail. We ask this in the name of your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**