

The God of the Living

Scripture: Matthew 22:23–33

Code: 2357

INTRODUCTION

A. The Resurrection in General

1. The anticipation

It has always fascinated me that mankind has such an anticipation of resurrection. Built within the heart of man is the feeling that there must be a life beyond this life. Nineteenth century Yale professor James Dwight Dana once said he couldn't believe God would create man and then desert him at the grave. Dana captured in that statement the essence of everyone's future hope.

a

) By the ancient Egyptians

If you were to read the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, you find it is filled with the hope of life after death. A sun boat was sealed in the tomb of Pharaoh Cheops nearly five thousand years ago so he could sail through the heavens in his next life.

b

) By the ancient Greeks

Resurrection was a major emphasis in the ancient Greek religion. A coin was often placed inside the mouth of a corpse so he could pay his fare across the mystic river of death into the land of immortal life.

c) By the American Indians

Many American Indians used to bury a pony, bow and arrow with their warriors so they could ride and hunt in the future happy hunting ground.

d) By the ancient Norsemen

The ancient Norseman often buried a horse with their dead heroes so they could maintain their triumphant rides throughout immortality.

e) By the Greenland Eskimos

Deceased Eskimo children in Greenland are buried with a dog so they won't have to find their way through the cold wasteland without a guide.

f) By Benjamin Franklin

As a young boy I saw Benjamin Franklin's epitaph at Christ Church in Philadelphia. Although he may not have been a Christian, Franklin wrote the following and had it placed over his grave:

The body of Benjamin Franklin, printer
(Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents worn out,
And stript of its lettering and gilding)
Lies here, food for worms!

Yet the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear once more
In a new
And more beautiful edition,
Corrected and amended
By its Author!
2. The affirmation

Man feels the pull of the afterlife. The Jewish religion is no different. In studying the Jewish writings around the time of Christ, we see the idea of a resurrection affirmed.

a) Extrabiblical writings

(1) 2 Maccabees 14:37-46--Written around the end of the second century [SC] B.C. 2 Maccabees gives us great insight into Jewish thinking about resurrection. An elder named Razis was greatly upset about the domination of the Greeks. Rather than fall into their hands, he decided to kill himself. Standing on a rock in front of a huge crowd, he took his sword and proceeded to disembowel himself. 2 Maccabees 14:46 says that as he died he was "calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to give [his bodily parts] back to him again." Razis thought that by taking his own life, he would escape this life to receive new life in a better situation.

(2) The Apocalypse of Baruch 50:2--51:10--Written between [SC] A.D. 70-100, the apocalyptic book of Baruch expresses the same Jewish hope of resurrection. It says, "The earth shall then assuredly restore the dead, which it now receiveth in order to preserve them. It shall make no change in their form, but as it hath received, so shall it preserve them, and as it delivered them unto it, so shall it restore them.... For then it will be necessary to show to the living that the dead have come to life again, and that those who had departed have returned.... they shall respectively be transformed ... into the splendour of angels ... and time shall no longer age them. For in the heights of that world shall they dwell, and they shall be made like unto the angels, and be made equal to the stars, and they shall be changed into every form they desire, from beauty into loveliness and from light into the splendour of glory." That expresses the Jewish belief that when you died, you would come to life in the same form in which you died.

(3) The Talmud--The Talmud is the codification of Jewish oral and written tradition. The resurrection of the body is a very common teaching in the Talmud. It is one of the primary eschatological teachings of Judaism.

b) Biblical writings

God affirmed the truth of the resurrection in the Old Testament.

(1) Psalm 16:9-11--David said, "My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in

hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol, neither wilt thou permit thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life." David's hope was that there would be no ultimate corruption or death, but that eternal life would follow this life.

(2) Psalm 49:15--The psalmist said, "God will redeem my soul from the power of sheol; for he shall receive me."

(3) Psalm 73:24--The psalmist said, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

(4) Hosea 6:1-2--Hosea said, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

(5) Daniel 12:2--Daniel said, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This is perhaps the clearest statement in the Old Testament concerning resurrection.

B. The Jewish leaders in Particular

1. The major sects of Judaism

a) The Essenes

The Essenes were hermits that lived in the desert and spent most of their time copying scrolls. It is probable that they copied the famed Dead Sea Scrolls, which have a major help in studying ancient Biblical manuscripts.

b) The Zealots

The Zealots were political activists who were nationalistic in nature. They were terrorists who tried to end the Roman occupation of their land.

c) The Pharisees

The Pharisees were the religionists of their day. They held vigorously to an external, legalistic view in interpreting God's law. When they didn't want to follow the guidelines set forth in the law of Moses, they invented new standards to accommodate their sinfulness.

d) The Sadducees

Every one of the major sects of Judaism believed strongly in the resurrection of the body. One group, however, did not: the Sadducees.

2. The major tenants of the Sadducees

a) Their position

Every time the Sadducees are defined in Scripture, they are identified as disbelieving in resurrection. Luke declares in Acts 23:8: "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both." They were in a continual theological debate with the Pharisees, were more popular with the people because they believed in a resurrection.

b) Their power

Although the Sadducees were small in number, they were wealthy and very influential. They were the aristocratic, ruling class of Judaism. All the high priests and chief priests in Judaism were Sadducees. The majority of the members of the Sanhedrin--the ruling body in Israel--were Sadducees.

c) Their profits

The Sadducees were rich because they ruled all the buying and selling of merchandise in the Temple. They were very unpopular with the people because they gouged them with the exorbitant rates of their money changing. Also they forced the people to buy high-priced Temple sacrifices instead of allowing them to bring their own sacrificial animals.

d) Their politics

The Sadducees were pro-Rome, which further added to their unpopularity. They liked the Roman rule because they prospered under Roman tolerance. The Romans gave the Sadducees the right to operate as they saw fit. The people resented their courting Rome and chafed under their leadership.

e) Their passing

The Sadducees went completely out of existence in [SC] A.D. 70 when the Temple was destroyed which was the source of all their power. They could no longer profit from the people and therefore dropped from the scene.

f) Their preaching

(1) Their literal interpretation of the Scriptures

The Sadducees were very literal in interpreting the Scriptures. Josephus said that in rendering a judgment for the people, they were more vicious than any other sect of Judaism (*Antiquities* XX.ix.i). They were more narrow-minded and cruel than the Pharisees, who were more lenient in their application of the law. The Pharisees in fact frequently circumvented the law. For example, they permitted divorce in many situations.

The Sadducees refused the oral law, traditions, and scribal laws of the Pharisees. They refused everything but the Old Testament and gave primacy to the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. They prided themselves on guarding the pure faith of their ancestors.

(2) Their denial of the resurrection

The key focus of the Sadducees' doctrine was a rigid denial of the resurrection of the body. But if they believed the Old Testament, which in many places speaks of a resurrection, how could they deny the reality of a resurrection? Because they gave primacy to the Pentateuch. They thought the rest of Scripture merely commented on the five books of Moses. Since they didn't think the resurrection was taught in the five books of Moses, they didn't believe in it.

They believed that the body and soul went out of existence at death, with no penalties and no rewards. Since they thought this life is all there is, they filled their lives with anything they could to fulfill their desires. Because they were limited by their strict, literal interpretation of the Scripture, they used their religion to justify license and gain profit.

The Sadducees mocked the Pharisees and confronted them continually about this particular issue. They would force them to come up with a verse from the Pentateuch that validated the resurrection. The Pharisees made a noble effort to respond, but they had a difficult time backing up their position. They usually cited the following to answer the Sadducees' claim that Moses never talked about resurrection.

(a) Numbers 18:28--Moses said, "Ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest." The Pharisees' reasoned that the verb is in the present tense and meant that Aaron had been resurrected. That, however, is a very weak argument.

(b) Deuteronomy 31:16--Moses also said, "This people shall rise up." That verse didn't convince the Sadducees either because it was taken out of context.

(c) Deuteronomy 32:39--The Lord says, "I kill, and I make alive." But all that means is God is the author of life and death. The Pharisees were stymied in their attempt to find a reference in the Pentateuch concerning the resurrection of the body.

Although the Pharisees and the Sadducees disagreed violently about the resurrection, Rome, and their social status, they agreed on one thing: the necessity of killing Jesus Christ. But why did the Sadducees desperately want to eliminate Jesus Christ?

LESSON

I. THE APPROACH OF THE SADDUCEES (v. 23)

"The same day came to him the Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, and asked him."

A. Their Intent (v. 23a)

"The same day."

It is Wednesday of the week that our Lord was crucified. Jesus had been teaching in the Temple and was stopped by the religious leaders, who asked Him a series of questions. The first question came from the Pharisees and Herodians who wanted to get Him in trouble with the Roman government. He answered their question in a marvelous way and indicted them instead (vv. 15-22). Verse 22 suggests that they abandoned their idea of getting Rome to execute Him for insurrection.

The Sadducees then came on the same day--Wednesday--with the intent of discrediting Him among the Jewish people. They wanted to make Him appear foolish in what He believed and taught.

1. The hopelessness of the Sadducees

What motivated the Sadducees to feel that way toward Jesus? The Sadducees had no real Messianic hope because they did not believe in life after death. As far as they knew, they were living the good life in the here and now because they were prospering with their Temple business. But the day before, Jesus had disrupted the Temple (cf. Matt. 21:12-17). He had invaded their territory and they wanted Him dead.

2. The hostility of the Sadducees

The Sadducees watched on Monday as Jesus rode into the city and the people threw palm branches and garments at His feet. When the people hailed Him as the Son of David, Messiah, Savior, and King, they feared He would lead the nation into starting a riot that the Romans would have to stop. That would topple the delicate arrangement they had with the Romans.

a) John 11:47-53--John said that at this time "gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spoke he not of himself; but, being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together to put him to death." They were afraid Jesus would start a revolution that would effect their power, prestige, and wealth.

b

) Mark 14:1-2--Mark records, "After two days was the feast of the passover, and of the unleavened bread; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people." The Sadducees joined with the Pharisees, their hated rivals, for mutual protection.

B. Their Indignation (v. 23b)

"The Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection."

The Sadducees wholeheartedly rejected Jesus' teaching on the resurrection. They despised it not only because of their theology but also because of their godless lifestyle. If you want to live it up with a total disregard for the future, you don't want anyone teaching that you have to give an account of your life in the next.

1. The hatred in the Sadducees

a) Acts 4:1-2--As the disciples "spoke unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

b

) Acts 5:17, 28--"The high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and were filled with indignation ... saying, Did not we strictly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

2. The hardening of the Sadducees

The heat was on the Sadducees because they knew the issue of resurrection would cause the crowds to turn against them. And if everyone began to believe in a resurrection, they would be teaching doctrines no one listened to. The people did begin to turn away from the Sadducees and began to listen to Jesus and to the apostles after His earthly ministry. Josephus claims that the Sadducees were the ones who murdered James, the brother of the Lord (Antiquities XX.ix.i). So the Sadducees now attempted to discredit Jesus in front of the people.

II. THE SUPPOSED ABSURDITY OF THE RESURRECTION (vv. 24-28)

"Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, died and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother; likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her."

The Sadducees approached Jesus with what is called in Latin a reductio ad absurdum--a logical absurdity. They asked Jesus the same question they no doubt had asked the Pharisees on myriads of occasions. By calling Jesus Master, they were speaking in a very condescending and flattering way. John Broadus, in his commentary on Matthew, referred to this as "polished scoffing" ([Valley Forge: Judson Press, n.d.], p. 454).

A. The Levirate Law (v. 24)

"Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto

his brother."

The Sadducees were referring to the Levirate law in the Mosaic covenant. The word comes from the Latin word levir, which means, "husband's brother."

1. Deuteronomy 25:5-6--Moses said, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry outside the family unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him as his wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the first-born whom she beareth succeed in the name of his brother who is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." God gave this law to maintain the twelve tribes of Israel and the a Messianic line.

2. Genesis 38:8-10--Here we see the Levirate law applied before it was even given. Judah said to Onan, "Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to he brother."

Onan refused to comply with God and raise up a child with his dead brother's wife, so God killed him (v. 10). God instituted that practice so names and families could be passed on and the Messianic line remain intact. The brother had to be single however, because God did not command any polygamous relationships. The law was first given in patriarchal times to maintain the name, honor, and estate of a family.

3. Ruth 4:10--Boaz said, "Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place."

Elimelech had two sons and Ruth the Moabitess had married one of them. Both died and there was no child to continue his name or inheritance. Boaz came into Ruth's life and took her as his wife and raised up a child. God's providence clearly presided over this relationship because the line of Elimelech was the line of the coming Messiah of Israel. Boaz was a kinsman redeemer. His taking the place of a dead husband and raising up a godly seed fit right into the Messianic line.

B. The Leading Question (vv. 25-28)

"Now there were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, died and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother; likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her."

It is uncertain if the phrase "there were with us seven brethren" meant personal acquaintance, or that the Sadducees were simply referring to a common illustration. Because the Pharisees taught that you would return in the same form and in the same clothes in which you died, the Sadducees demanded to know if the woman would then be the wife of all seven. If so, then you have polygamy in the eternal, resurrected state. This question must have stumped the Pharisees more often than they cared to acknowledge. The Sadducees must have thought they had Jesus in a bind because He, like the Pharisees, taught the reality of the resurrection of the body.

1. John 11:25-26--Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."
2. John 5:28-29--Jesus also said, "The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear [My] voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

III. THE ANSWER OF SCRIPTURE (vv. 29-32)

"Jesus answered and said unto them, ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

A. The Direct Approach (v. 29a)

"Jesus answered and said unto them, ye do err."

Jesus didn't vacillate in His response to the Sadducees. He in effect said, "You are wrong. You have just placed your ignorance on display." Commentator R.C.H. Lenski said, "The bubble blown by the folly of the Sadducees is punctured" (The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961], p. 871). The Greek word used for err is planao, which means "to cause to wander" or "to lead astray." Planao is the word used to derive the English word planet. The Greek word occurs in the middle reflexive voice, which means "you are causing yourself to wander" or "you are leading yourself astray from the truth."

1. Jude 13--Jude said false prophets are like "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." The Sadducees were much the same.
2. 1 Corinthians 15:35-42, 50-53--According to Paul, "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not made alive, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.... Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

The apostle Paul had to deal with the same false teaching about the resurrection that Jesus did. The Corinthians were asking what kind of body were they going to have. Paul reminded them that God has made all kinds of different bodies. There are bodies of birds, creeping things, animals--terrestrial bodies-- along with celestial bodies, those of mankind in the resurrection. God has one type of glory for the sun, one for the moon, and one for the stars. Everything that is made is different. Paul was telling the Corinthians not to think of God as being confined or limited. If He can produce variety here, infinite variety will be seen in the resurrection.

B. The Deadly Accusation (v. 29b-32a)

1. The accusations in general (v. 29b)

"Not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

If there were two things the Sadducees thought they knew about, it was the Scriptures and the power of God. However Jesus was saying, "You don't understand God's Word and you don't understand God's power. Had you known the Scriptures, you would have known that God promises a resurrection. Had you know the power of God, you would have known that God wouldn't recreate people with the same problems here on earth."

2. The accusations in specific (vv. 30-32a)

a) Ignorant of the power of God (v. 30)

"In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven."

The phrase "in the resurrection" simply refers to the state of life after death, or the experience of resurrection life. This verse does not say believers are angels, but says they are like angels. We will be spiritual, eternal beings who will not marry or procreate in heaven. Why don't the angels procreate? Because they don't die, so there is no need to replace them. However all human beings die. Marriage and reproduction are necessary for the perpetuation of the race. They are for this life only. The Sadducees knew nothing of the power of God, who could create a body in the resurrection that would be greater than the one He created for this world. They had an inadequate view of God. Many Jewish teachers including famous medieval rabbi Maimonides taught that there would be childbirth in the resurrection.

(1) Marriage is only for this life

There will be no marriages in the next life. That reality often hurts many people. However others say, "Hallelujah! I have all the problems in marriage I can handle right now!" Some people are in a hurry to be married before the rapture because they're afraid they will miss something! In comparative terms, however, we need to realize that the best this life can offer, including marriage, can't begin to compare to the life to come. There will be no two people who have an exclusive, marital relationship in heaven. We will have a special relationship with everyone! Luke says this in the parallel gospel account: "They are equal unto the angels, and are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36). Man will be equal to the angels in the sense of equally free from death, equally spiritual, equally glorified, and equally eternal. Therefore there is no need to reproduce in heaven.

(2) Friendships are only for this life

This divine truth extends to friendships. No one will be closer to anyone else because all believers will be perfectly close to each other. And all believers will be perfectly intimate with the living God Himself.

b) Ignorant of the Scriptures (vv. 31-32a)

"As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"

Jesus was saying they were ignorant even of the Pentateuch. When Jesus said, "Have ye not read," He was being very sarcastic, saying, "Haven't you been reading your own favored Scriptures about the resurrection?"

(1) Exodus 3:6--God said to Moses, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." This according to Jesus is a statement about the resurrection. And He quoted from the Pentateuch because that was what the Sadducees demanded. The Greek verb ego emi in Matthew 22:32 is in the present tense and is the main argument of the passage. God doesn't say He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but that He is their God! Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were already dead physically at the time of the incident recorded in Exodus 3:6, but the verse implies that they were not dead.

(2) Genesis 26:24--"The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "I am the God of Abraham."

(3) Genesis 28:13--The Lord said to Jacob, "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac."

C. The Decisive Answer (v. 32b)

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Since God says, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they must be alive! God is not worshiped by corpses. He is not the God of people who don't exist.

1. The personal relationship

Why did God single out the patriarchal fathers by saying He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To emphasize that He has a personal, intimate relationship with each one of them. The Greek use of the possessive phrase "the God of" could mean "the God to whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob belong" or "the God who belongs to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." I believe it is emphasizing both. God in effect is saying, "I am the God who continues to have a personal, intimate relationship with these men. They are mine and I am theirs!"

2. The permanent covenant

The eternal, unchanging, covenant-keeping God made promises to His chosen ones and will bring them to fulfillment. One day He will give them new bodies, yet even now they are enjoying fellowship with God.

Jesus devastated the Sadducees. He had done what the wisest rabbi had never been able to do. He had done what all the Pharisaical masterminds could never do: showed the Sadducees passages right out of the Pentateuch to dispute their claims that there is no resurrection. Instead of making Jesus look foolish, the Sadducees succeeded only in making themselves look foolish. And they would soon see the most monumental resurrection of all: the resurrection Jesus Christ Himself from the dead!

IV. THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE CROWD (v. 33)

"When the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine."

The Greek word translated "astonished" is ekplesso, which means, "to strike out one's wits" (cf. Matt. 7:28, 13:54). In the vernacular, what Jesus said blew their minds! Luke adds that some of the scribes said, "Master, thou hast well said" (Luke 20:39). This new rabbi from Galilee had answered the supposedly unanswerable question and came up with a devastating argument that had been overlooked for centuries.

Conclusion Jesus was confronted by hate-filled religious leaders who wanted Him dead. However He was unaffected by their pecking assaults. They served only to manifest His greater glory and confound His enemies. Matthew 22:23-33 points to three great realities:

A. Christ's Majestic Deity

It is exciting to see Christ come up with answers no one else could ever come up with. Why? Because that proves Jesus is truly God in human flesh. The apostle Paul said, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

B. Christ's Commitment to Scripture

Jesus knew and loved the Word of God. He always had the right passage for the right situation. He put His entire confidence in the Word of God. And if Jesus relied on the Word, how much more should we!

C. Christ's Affirmation of the Resurrection

Whenever I am prone to doubt the resurrection, I am reminded that Jesus never doubted it for a moment. Our text affirms that believers who are dead physically are still alive because God is the God of the living!

Focusing on the Facts

1. What is the essence of everyone's future hope?
2. What was Benjamin Franklin's view of death?
3. What is the Talmud?
4. Prove that the resurrection is taught in the Old Testament.
5. Give the four major sects of Judaism and explain each.

6. True or False: The Essenes did not believe in the resurrection of the body.
7. What major sect of Judaism controlled both the Sanhedrin and priestly functions in Palestine?
8. True or False: The Sadducees were much more popular with the Hebrew people than the Pharisees.
9. Why did the Sadducees go completely out of existence by the year [SC] A.D. 70?
10. What was the key focus of the Sadducees' doctrine?
11. What was the one issue the Pharisees and Sadducees agreed upon?
12. What motivated the Sadducees to feel the way they did toward Jesus?
13. What is the Levirate law? Explain your answer from Scripture.
14. How did the apostle Paul deal with the question of resurrection?
15. The two things the Sadducees were ignorant of were the _____ and the _____ of God (Matthew 22:29).
16. What does Matthew 22:30 teach us about what life in heaven will be like.
17. Explain the significance of God saying, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob".
18. Why did God single out the patriarchal fathers by name in saying, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Matthew 22:32)?
19. Why was the multitude astonished at Jesus' doctrine (Matthew 22:33)?
20. What three great realities do Matthew 22:23-33 point to?

Pondering the Principles

1. The skeptical Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. There are many today who are like them, thinking that when you die, you simply go out of existence or sleep forever in the grave. Based on your study of Matthew 22:23-33, is that true? Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead? Read the following passages and trust what the Word of God says about a future resurrection: Acts 26:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-16; and 2 Timothy 1:10.

2. Matthew 22:23-33 shows that Jesus Christ was truly God in human flesh. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God? Can you locate other verses in Scripture that prove Christ's deity? Find three passages and then share your findings with others.

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