



## The God of the Living Luke 20:27–40

**Intro:** In this chapter,

- 1-8 – The chief priests, scribes and elders questioned his authority
- 9-18 – Jesus told the parable of the wicked tenants
- 19-26 – Tried to arrest him and asked him about taxes
- 27-40 – Ask about life in the resurrection

The question of the Sadducees should be connected to the two previous questions in this chapter. It's almost as though the religious authorities—despite their own differences of opinion among themselves—are taking a tag-team approach to tripping Jesus up with clever questions.

Of course, all of it is bogus. Luke narrates their insincerity. But Jesus uses each opportunity to teach them the truth about himself, the world and the one to come. This is the same kindness we should extend to those who mock Christianity. We should not be angry with them but pity them. 'Time will tell' who is on the wrong side of history, *His story*.

In this passage, Jesus helps us understand the resurrection.

### First: Setting the Scene (v. 27)

- a) Jesus is in Jerusalem, teaching in the temple during Passion Week.
- b) The Sadducees, a wealthy, priestly, aristocratic group approach him.
  - 1 - They deny resurrection, angels, and the afterlife (cf. Acts 23:8).
  - 2 - They base doctrine only on the Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy).

They should have kept reading –

*Job 19:25-27- As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!"*

*Psalms 16:9-11 - Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*

*Psalms 73:24 - With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.*

*Daniel 12:13 - But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.*

c) The Sadducees know Jesus believes in the resurrection

*Luke 14:13-14 - But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.*

*Luke 18:29-30 - And He said to them, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.*

d) Their approach: not an honest question but a trap with a "gotcha question."

It's actually sinful to ask silly questions in an effort to demonstrate someone else's lack of knowledge or hope to catch them in wordplay.

**III:** Think of a courtroom where a lawyer doesn't want truth, but to trap a witness with a trick question. The Sadducees treat Jesus this way.

**APP:** You and I can expect that when we affirm Bible truths, skeptics may ridicule us and the truth, rather than try reason about it.

## Second: The Sadducees' Riddle (vv. 28–33)

**Note:** A quick AI overview of the [Pharisees and Sadducees](#) –  
See a more in-depth look [here](#).

They tell a hypothetical story about a woman who marries seven brothers and ask whose wife she will be in the resurrection.

- a) The story is in vs 28-33.

The Sadducees, of course, thought the idea of resurrection to be silly and construct an equally silly scenario.

**ILL:** In logic, it's called *reductio ad absurdum*. You take an idea you disagree with and push it too far. By pushing it too far, by taking it to the extreme, you lead people to question the idea itself. Essentially, it shows that if a statement was true, it would lead to an unreasonable or impossible conclusion; thus, proving the original statement false.

Consider, responding to people who don't believe in absolute truth by saying, "You're right. The truth cannot be known." Well, if the truth cannot be known, then it cannot be known whether the statement 'the truth cannot be known' is true.

Whatever their rationale, they thought it would be fun and instructive to publicly prove their point about the resurrection while publicly humiliating Jesus.

- b) They appeal to Levitical marriage law (Deut. 25:5–10) in which a brother is responsible to marry a widow in order to raise up offspring.
- c) Vs 28-33) One wife, seven brothers, seven failures, seven deaths and the question, "*In the resurrection, whose wife will she be?*" (33)
- d) Their goal is to make resurrection look absurd.

**III:** The point isn't sincere curiosity. It's mockery. It's like asking, "*If an airplane crashes on the TN/VA state line, where do they bury the survivors?*"

**APP:** Don't be intimidated by mockers or mocking questions. God's truth holds up under scrutiny. Such questions provide us the opportunity to speak to real issues. That is what Jesus does with this question.

### Third: Jesus' Correction (vv. 34–36)

Rather than follow their train of thought, Jesus invites the Sadducees to follow Him. If the resurrection was just a repetition of this world, then it would be ridiculous, indeed.

So, Jesus turns the question on its head and asks, "Who ever told you marriage would be part of the life in a post-resurrection existence?" This is how he does it.

#### a) Two Ages: This Age vs. That Age

1 - This age: marriage, family, and death.

v 34 – "...*this age*...". Think about this age –

- The age of no objective truth
- The age of self-identifying
- The age of selfies

The children of this age marry because marriage is it is a normal and wonderful thing to do. It is the apex of human-to-human relationships. It's also God's answer to death. But...

2 - That age (resurrection life): no death, no marriage,

V 35 – "...that age...". Think about that age –

The resurrection age is entirely different from this one.

**IMP:** Think about why the woman remarried 7 brothers? To have children. That's one of the reasons why God created marriage.

*Genesis 1:27-28 - God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." God put natural man and natural woman in a natural world and told them "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."*

God's means of creating humanity and populating the earth was marriage. But heaven is not populated in that way.

Heaven is populated by grace through faith in Jesus and a simple one-time resurrection.

- Because no one can die there, there is never a need to procreate.
- All of the angels were created at one time.
- Angels cannot die.

So simply put, there is no need for marriage in heaven.

- Not for procreation.
- Not for evangelism (marriage is a picture on earth)
- Not even for fulfillment since Heaven is the fulfillment of all God has promised.
- So, God's new creation doesn't just continue life as we know it. It transforms it.

III: C. S. Lewis called it the difference between a Belfast dirt-street mud puddle and a vacation at the ocean.

III: A child who loves building sandcastles can't imagine the strength of a real fortress.

*Job 42:4-5 - I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

In the resurrection, earthly joys are not erased but fulfilled in greater ways. So, there will be no woman with 7 husbands in heaven because no one is getting married in Heaven.

The problem isn't with the question. It's the Sadducees' hearts. They are so set on what they believe to be true, they won't see the truth. It's the spirit of our age. "That's your truth. This is my truth." But there is only one truth and Jesus claims to be it (John 14:6).

#### b) Children of the Resurrection

- v 36 - Believers are called "*sons of God*" and "*children of the resurrection*."

Do you hear that gospel promise? The children of the resurrection can't die anymore.

*John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

- v 36 - They are "*like angels*" in immortality alone, not in identity. In Heaven we are still truly human but glorified.

**III:** Think of a caterpillar trying to imagine life as a butterfly. It's the same creature yet transformed into something greater.

**IMP:** Resurrection life is not less real, but more real than this one.

**APP:** Trust that God's future is better than your best imagination.

**Gospel:** Just before we leave this point let's talk about who is worthy to enter Heaven (v 35). Who is worthy according to Ps 15 and 24? Only Christ. This is why God places you in Christ and Christ in you. Only he can make you worthy. This is why it is imperative to repent, turn from yourself, and turn to Jesus for your righteousness (2 Cor 5:21). Only his is sufficient.

#### **Fourth: Jesus Grounds Our Resurrection in Scripture (vv. 37–38)**

The Sadducees' question really wasn't the issue. They weren't worried about how to assign husbands in heaven. Their real point was to deny the resurrection altogether. And Jesus knew that. But he uses the opportunity to point them to Heaven,.

**IMP:** Think about what Jesus is doing here. He's entertained their ridiculous question to offer them eternal life.

- Jesus quotes Exodus 3:6, when God was talking to Moses in the burning bush: "*I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*"

1 Present tense "*I am,*" not "*I was.*"

2 - If He is their God, they must be alive to Him.

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him.

Although God gives laws through Moses to preserve life in this world, He gives a promise to Moses about life in another world when this world ends. It's a world that never ends and in which Abraham, Isaac, Jacob are still alive.

**APP:** Because God bound Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, death could not sever that relationship. The same is true for you in Christ. God has bound himself to you in his promises and then placed you in Christ who is life (John 14:6).

This means that Heaven is the place where you enjoy one main attraction, God, to a degree that you were never able to enjoy on earth because sin blurred your vision and divided your heart and distracted your mind.

#### **Fifth: The Audience's Response (vv. 39–40)**

a) Some scribes (likely Pharisees who believe in the resurrection) affirm Jesus:  
*"Teacher, you have spoken well."*

b) The Sadducees retreat, silenced by His wisdom.

c) Jesus' authority in handling Scripture is final.

III: Like a master chess player ending the game with one brilliant move, Jesus' use of Scripture leaves no counter-play.

God's Word silences scoffers. Our job is not to outwit people with cleverness but to speak God's truth faithfully.

#### **Sixth: Conclusion: The God of the Living**

Jesus shows that resurrection is:

1. Logical – death does not define God's people.
2. Biblical – grounded in Scripture's covenant promises.
3. Practical – changes how we view death, suffering, and hope.

III: Because of Christ's resurrection, at a funeral, we don't just say, "They lived a good life." We say, "They *live* a good life." That's resurrection hope.

Our God is the God of the living. Because He raised Christ, He will raise us also.

#### **Seventh: Applications for the Church**

1. Face skeptics with confidence – God's truth answers mockery.

Like Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26), we can testify calmly before doubters.

2. Live with hope – your future is secure in the resurrection.

Don't ever be afraid to trust your unknown future to a known God.

3. Reframe relationships – marriage and family are precious now, but they point to a greater eternal reality: union with Christ.

Wedding rings are symbols; in heaven, we have the reality—the bride united to Christ.

4. Take comfort in loss – your loved ones in Christ live even now.

*When you go to the cemetery, remember  
you are not going to God's prison but to God's garden.*

- Charles Spurgeon

**Conclusion:** Friends, this is the promise Moses heard at the burning bush. This is the promise Jesus is sharing again. There is eternal life in him, life without end. This promise will be reduced to absurdity when Jesus is crucified. The One who brings life will be dead on a cross. But Jesus will rise from the dead to lead us from what is often a ridiculous life to a magnificent one beyond description. At Calvary, he defeats death and gives life to all who trust in Him. Eternal life is yours in Christ. And that is not a reality to reduce into absurdity. It is a promise to live in forever.





## CG Questions: Luke 20:27–40

### Observation

(What does the text say?)

1. Who approaches Jesus with a question in verse 27, and what do we learn about their beliefs?
2. What scenario do the Sadducees present to Jesus in verses 28–33?
3. How does Jesus initially respond to their question in verses 34–36?
4. What does Jesus quote from Scripture in verses 37–38 to support His teaching?
5. What is the reaction of some of the scribes in verse 39?
6. How does the passage conclude in verse 40 regarding the Sadducees' ability to respond?

### Interpretation

(What does the text mean?)

7. Why is it significant that Luke notes the Sadducees "say there is no resurrection" (v. 27)?
8. What was the Sadducees' intention in presenting such an unlikely scenario (vv. 28–33)?
9. How does Jesus redefine the nature of life in the resurrection compared to earthly marriage (vv. 34–36)?
10. Why does Jesus quote from Exodus 3:6 ("I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob")? How does this support resurrection hope?
11. What does Jesus mean when He says God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (v. 38)?
12. Why might the scribes have approved of Jesus' answer (v. 39)?
- 13.

**Correlation**  
**(How does this text connect with the rest of Scripture?)**

14. How does Jesus' teaching about resurrection here compare with His words in John 11:25–26 ("I am the resurrection and the life")?
15. In what ways does Paul expand on the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15? How does this complement Jesus' teaching in Luke 20:34–36?
16. How does Exodus 3:6, quoted by Jesus, connect with the larger biblical theme of God's covenant faithfulness to His people?
17. How does the Sadducees' denial of resurrection parallel modern skepticism about life after death?
18. Where else do we see Jesus correcting misunderstandings about the resurrection (e.g., Matthew 22:29, John 5:28–29)?

**Application**  
**(How should this change us?)**

19. How should Jesus' teaching about resurrection reshape the way we view marriage, relationships, and eternity?
20. In what ways can belief in the resurrection give us hope in times of grief and loss?
21. How does Jesus' affirmation that "all live to Him" (v. 38) affect your view of those who have died in faith?
22. What false assumptions about heaven or eternal life might we carry today, similar to the Sadducees' misunderstanding?
23. How does this passage challenge you to trust God as the "God of the living" in your present circumstances?
24. If resurrection life is real, how should that reality influence your daily priorities, choices, and worship?



**Mon. Read Luke 20:27.** The Sadducees dismissed the resurrection because it didn't fit their worldview. Skepticism still lives today, sometimes in the culture around us, sometimes in our own hearts. Jesus patiently but firmly confronts doubt with truth, showing that God's Word confirms life beyond death. Faith trusts what God has spoken, even when it stretches our understanding. Are you worried about death? Wondering about the resurrection. Read on and let Jesus' words comfort you. Then share his teaching with someone else.

**Tues. Read Luke 20:35.** The Sadducees assumed that resurrection life would simply continue earthly realities like marriage. But Jesus points to a greater hope: resurrection life is not a repeat of this world but a transformation into something far more glorious. Our hope is not in preserving what we know but in receiving what God has prepared. How does this personally thrill your heart? Is there someone in your life you can encourage with this truth?

**Wed. Read Luke 20:36.** In the resurrection, death is forever defeated. Believers will share in a life that death can no longer touch. Jesus assures us that resurrection life is not fragile or temporary. Instead, it is everlasting, secured by God's power. That truth should give you strength for today and courage for tomorrow. Our present lives are secure in God and every day is determined by his wisdom. Let this truth give you confidence today and encourage someone else with this thought.

**Thurs. Read Luke 20:37-38.** The Sadducees tried to trap Jesus with a tricky question, but Jesus turned their challenge into a reminder of God's covenant faithfulness. He is not the God of people who are gone and forgotten. He is the God of the living, those who belong to Him forever. What promises has God recently fulfilled in your life? What promises are you still waiting for fulfillment. Let this text give you hope in God and use it to encourage someone else.

**Fri. Read Luke 20:38.** "For all live to him." If God is the God of the living, then we live before his face every day (Coram Deo). Eternal life is not only future. It has already begun and includes now. To "live to Him" is to walk in faith, obedience, and hope today, with eternity always in view. Our daily choices, words, and loves are shaped by the reality that we belong to the God of the living and will one day forever live with him. How does Heaven shape your daily life? Help someone else see this truth.