

# What About The Pharisees?

Last week we looked at the Sadducees, this week will turn our attention to the Pharisees.

Our first question should be where did this group originate. To the best of my ability, it appears that they originated around 260 B.C. Several sources accredit Zadok as the originator of this sect.

There is no doubt that they existed during the time of Jesus, as the New Testament speaks of them at least fourteen times. We are not in doubt as to what they believed; Acts 23:8--For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. History tells us that Antigonus Sochaeus was his teacher. Their teaching was to serve God disinterestedly--that is, without hope of reward or punishment. What this allowed them to do was to have a freer social intercourse with the pagans, and thus sought to break away from every restraint which prohibited this free intercourse. They did not throw God's Word away, they consented to no other restraints than the Scriptures themselves imposed, and they interpreted these as loose as they could. If we were to put them in today's society we would simply call them Materialist.

At the time of Jesus, the Sadducees were far fewer in number than the Pharisees. They were greater in wealth, they held the high-priesthood, they held political office's, their freer intercourse with the pagans allowed for greater favor with the Romans, and it appears that they courted this by their consenting to foreign rule, and pagan customs. This also made them a body to be feared.

Now keep in mind, these were JEWS, they were awaiting the coming of the Messiah.

If one has the knowledge of the coming of The Messiah, and knew from the Scriptures, from the prophecies of their own prophets, that certain events would take place, and their would be things that only He would be able to do, one would think that they would be ready. Look at Matthew 22:23-24 On that day there came to him Sadducees, they that say that there is no resurrection: and they asked him, 24 saying, Teacher, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his

brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. This custom goes back further than the Law of Moses, Gen. 38:6-11, it was to preserve families. Now this must have been their favorite argument against the resurrection, one that their arch rival could not answer. This, like any other argument than mere man can arouse from his inner being is based on a false premise. That is, that the marital state is to continued after the resurrection, thus it would make the doctrine of a resurrection appear ridiculous, because, seemingly, it involves difficulties which even brothers could hardly settle amiable, and which God would have in a sense to settle arbitrarily. Look at how they tried to trap Jesus. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first married and deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his brother; 26 in like manner the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And after them all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. It is important for us to see how Jesus handled this question. 29 But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. We need to get the magnitude and force of this encounter of Jesus with the Sadducees, He was dealing with a most powerful force, not only within the Jews, but we must remember their influence with the Roman government at this time. Do you see how Jesus relies only on the Scriptures, can you see this? Remembering that He is our example in all things. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 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. 33 And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching. Jesus is using the Scriptures that the Sadducees twisted, He simply shows them that they have not rightly divided the Word of God. It also shows us the confidence that Jesus had in every word that God has given. How could they have known about the resurrection from Exodus 3:2-6, Jesus says, "God is not [the God] of the dead, but of the living." Jesus uses Moses to show that God is the God of the living.

We need to see plainly, that just one false premise can lead to a multiplicity of error. Notice how Jesus cuts right to the quick of the matter. The Sadducees believed in Moses and the Pentateuch and Jesus has just shown them that God was spoken of and spoke of Himself as the God of those who were, humanly speaking, long since dead. But look at what this does to their interpretation. The Sadducees held that a dead man had ceased to exist, that he had vanished into nothingness. Now according to their view, therefore, God had styled Himself the

God of nothing, which is absurd. The Saducees could not of thus erred had they known or understood the significance of this Scripture, and they could not have doubted the resurrection had they known the absolute power with which God deals with material such as that which the body is formed.

What does this teach us today? We have the Scriptures. We too must heed the warning that Jesus gave unto the Sadducees, that is to know what the Scriptures say.....Not what we want them to say! Jesus' warning is repeated by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:15--Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.

The disbelief of the Saducees was a misunderstanding of the Scriptures, they did not believe in spirits, or angles, nor the resurrection. Beloved, we are capable of misapplication of the Scripture as were the Sadducees... We need to give proper time to meditate on God's Word, to study and to share what God's Word declares.

Why? Because, it declares it to all of mankind, and we are commanded to do so!