

To better understand the upcoming portions of tonight's lesson, I feel I need to provide you with more insight into the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Pharisees – The Pharisees were the largest of the religious groups Jesus often interacted with over religious matters. They numbered approximately 6000 and were known for their zealousness for ritualism and religiosity. In other words, they focused all their efforts on upholding what they deemed the purity of the OT laws by creating additions they felt were necessary to stay close to God. The word “Pharisee” comes from a Hebrew word meaning, “to separate”. They believed they were “set apart” and better than all the other Jewish religious sects. Jesus constantly rebuked them for using human tradition to override the Scripture.

Sadducees – The Sadducees had very little in common the Pharisees, even though we tend to lump them together. They rejected all things considered supernatural and considered only the Pentateuch as authoritative. They didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead. They denied the existence of the angels, which by the way, are created beings that will never experience a physical death. They rejected all forms of legalism and ritualism. They were usually wealthier than the Pharisees because of their aristocratic membership in the priestly tribe. When Herod was king, they controlled the temple. They were known compromisers and political opportunists.

Vss. 23-33: The Sadducees

Since the Herodians were unsuccessful at trapping Jesus, step two of the Pharisees plan included their biggest rival. And, true to form, the Sadducees jumped on the opportunity. What was their question of entrapment? “Whose wife shall she be?” Basically, they were referring to one of the laws concerning the ancient marriage custom known as the levirate, which is taken from the Latin “*levir*”, which means “husband's brother.” Let's look quickly in **Deuteronomy 25:5-10**. The law was about preserving family lines and making sure the widows were taken care of. Jesus, called them out on two things. They were ignorant of the truth of the Scriptures and failed to acknowledge the power of God.

Jesus is not telling them that they are angels. He is informing them that they will be like angels in terms of marriage. This law they used as their trap doesn't fit in heaven. Why? Angels do not marry and do not propagate. In heaven there is no longer a need to continue family lines. Then Jesus teaches them about something supernatural that they do not believe in. His statement, which was taken from Exodus, drew their attention to the fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead. They are alive and in heaven because of the resurrection of the dead, or as mentioned, the supernatural power of God. Jesus silenced them quickly.

Vss. 34-40: The Pharisees

When the plan didn't work, the persistent Pharisees, who seem to never learn and never give up, send in one of their own. This time, a lawyer. One of the scribes who would be an expert in the Mosaic Law. At this point, I think Jesus was getting tired of all the questions and responded to this man in a straightforward manner. Jesus looks at this man and says, "You want to know which is the greatest commandment? It's to love God first and then love your neighbor as yourself. Then in verse 40, He really sets the lawyer straight. He informs him that all the Mosaic law is summarized by these two laws.

Vss. 41-46: Jesus asks His own question

Now, it was Jesus' turn to ask a question.

Their response was completely expected because the Pharisees believed in the most common Messianic title associated with the coming Messiah. They believed the Messiah would only be a common man, born out of the line of David, therefore making him the "son of David." Jesus' reply once again asserted His deity into the moment. Jesus uses Psalm 110 and points out that David would never address a common human descendant as "LORD". Jesus wasn't refuting the prophecies calling the Messiah "son of David". He was pointing out that the messianic title was much more than what they knew. He wanted them to know He was also the "Son of God", which is so much more. I love how it all ends.