

THE SIMPLE ANSWER

IN TODAY'S READING THE SADDUCEES WERE ASKING JESUS A THIRD QUESTION. THE FIRST QUESTION ASKED WAS VERSE 2 OF THIS CHAPTER, THE CHIEF PRIESTS, SCRIBES OR LAWYERS, AND ELDERS ASK, "Tell us: by what authority do you do these things? or who is giving you this authority?" THE SECOND QUESTION ASKED IN THE CHAPTER WAS IN VERSE 22, THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES ASKED, "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" THE FINAL AND THIRD QUESTION ASKED BY THE SADDUCEES IN VERSE 33 OF OUR GOSPEL LESSON TODAY, WAS, "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them will she be? For the seven had her as a wife" NONE OF THESE THREE QUESTIONS WERE SEEKING "HONEST" INQUIRIES FOR INFORMATION. ALL THREE WERE ATTEMPTS TO CATCH JESUS—TO QUESTION HIS AUTHORITY. WHY CAN WE SAY THE SADDUCEES WERE NOT REALLY LOOKING FOR ANSWERS TO THEIR QUESTIONS?

THE SADDUCEES WERE FEW AND WEALTHY. THEY WERE THE GOVERNING CLASS AND WENT ALONG WITH ROME UNWILLING TO LOSE THEIR WEALTH, COMFORT AND POSITION. THE SADDUCEES ONLY ACCEPTED THE WRITTEN LAW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, THAT OF MOSES. THE SADDUCEES ALSO BELIEVED IN FREE-WILL, BUT DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE COMING OF A MESSIAH FOR THAT WOULD TURN UPSIDE-DOWN THEIR WELL ORDERED LIVES. THIS THIRD QUESTION THEY WERE ASKING HOWEVER REALLY EXPOSED THEM BECAUSE THE SADDUCEES DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION.

COMPARED TO THE SADDUCEES, THE PHARISEES WERE A RELIGIOUS BODY AND ONLY WANTED TO CARRY OUT THE LAWS. THEY ACCEPTED THE ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT INCLUDING THE PROPHETS AND SO BELIEVED IN THE RESURRECTION AND THE COMING OF A MESSIAH. THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE EACH GROUP WAS COMING FROM IN THIS ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS.

LIKE TODAY, QUESTIONS ARE ASKED OF PEOPLE AND MANY TIMES THE PEOPLE ASKING ARE NOT WANTING AN ANSWER. THEY HAVE AN AGENDA. LIKE THE SADDUCEES, TRYING TO CATCH JESUS IN HIS OWN WORDS. THEIR RESURRECTION QUESTION WAS A CRAFTY ONE THOUGHT UP BY CRAFTY MEN. THIS WAS A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION TO "BOX IN" JESUS AND QUESTION HIS AUTHORITY.

TODAY PEOPLE WILL ASK US QUESTIONS TO PUT US IN A BOX TOO. THE QUESTION MAY NOT EVEN BE ONE OF RELIGION. THEY MAY ASK, ARE YOU CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL? ARE YOU PRE-RAPTURE OR POST-RAPTURE? ARE YOU AN EVANGELICAL? DO YOU BELIEVE IN BIBLICAL INERRANCY? WE MAY BE INCLUDED OR EXCLUDED BASED UPON OUR ANSWER.

AN IMPORTANT POINT HERE IN THESE VERSES IS THAT JESUS USED WORDS OR LANGUAGE THAT THE PEOPLE HE WAS TALKING WITH COULD UNDERSTAND. JESUS IN NUMEROUS ENCOUNTERS WITH PEOPLE, WHETHER IT WAS THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DAY OR PEOPLE LIKE THE WOMAN AT THE WELL, HE TALKED IN THEIR LANGUAGE ON THEIR “TURF” AND WITH THEIR IDEAS.

AN EXAMPLE WOULD BE IF SOMEONE CAME UP AND ASKED ME “WILL IT RAIN?” AND I USED WEATHER TERMS TO EXPLAIN WHY IT WAS NOT GOING TO RAIN. *WE WERE ALL IN JOBS THAT HAD THEIR OWN VOCABULARY. WELL, IT IS TRUE TOO WHEN WE TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT JESUS. WE HAVE TO TALK IN WORDS WHERE THE PERSON IS RIGHT NOW.* IF WE BEGIN BY TOSSING AROUND WORDS LIKE SANCTIFICATION, PREVENIENT GRACE OR OTHER “CHURCHY” TERMS THAT INDIVIDUAL MAY JUST WALK AWAY CONVINCED *THEY WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND IT.* **JESUS NEVER DID THAT EVEN IN HIS ENCOUNTER HE HAD WITH SADDUCEES. HE TALKED TO THEM USING WORDS FROM THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WHICH IS ALL THE SADDUCEES BELIEVED IN.**

THE SADDUCEES HAD NOT REALLY STUDIED THE SCRIPTURE AND WERE MISUSING IT TO MAKE A POINT. **REMEMBER THE PHARISEES WERE THE RELIGIOUS CLASS, BUT THE SADDUCEES WERE A POLITICAL CLASS AND REALLY HAD NOT TAKEN TIME TO EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES.**

THERE IS AN ANCIENT METHOD OF STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES CALLED *LECTIO DIVINA*. THIS METHOD IS BOTH REFLECTIVE AND PRAYERFUL. WE CAN TAKE A VERSE OR TWO, READ IT, REFLECT ON IT AND WAIT ON GOD TO SHOW US WHAT LIES WITHIN THE PASSAGES. REMEMBER THE VERSE IN PSALM 46:10 *“Be still, and know that I am God!”* NOW WHAT MAY COME AT FIRST IS THE USUAL “NOISE AND CLUTTER” THAT INHABITS OUR MIND, BUT THEN THERE WILL BE A TINY “NUGGET” OR GIFT FROM GOD FOR YOU. USING THIS METHOD HELPS US TO USE THE BIBLE, NOT AS AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL, BUT AS A MAP SHOWING US THE WAY ON OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, THE WAY FORWARD. **THIS IS THE VERY THING JESUS WAS TRYING TO SHOW TO THE SADDUCEES.** THE ODD THING IS AT THE END OF THE DISCUSSION WITH THE SADDUCEES AND THE SCRIBES, WHO DID NOT LIKE THE SADDUCEES, COMPLIMENTED JESUS BY SAYING *“TEACHER, YOU HAVE SPOKEN WELL”*.

WHAT DID JESUS SAY TO THE SADDUCEES THAT THE SCRIBES THOUGHT THAT JESUS HAD “SPOKEN WELL” OR AS OTHER TRANSLATIONS PUT IT - “A FINE ANSWER” OR “A GREAT ANSWER”. IN FACT IN THE NEXT VERSE WE ARE TOLD “THEY, THE SADDUCEES, DID NOT HAVE THE COURAGE TO QUESTION HIM ANY LONGER ABOUT ANYTHING”.

WE MAY NOT BE JESUS, BUT WE ARE PROMISED IN LUKE IN THE CHAPTER 21, VERSE 15 “ for I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you!” **THAT IS A PROMISE FROM JESUS HIMSELF!!!** IN MATTHEW 10:20 JESUS PROMISES “*For it is not you who will be speaking--it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*” OF COURSE, **JUST LIKE JESUS, WE TOO MUST RELY ON THE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE WITH THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

FIRST PART OF THE FINE ANSWER, **JESUS TOLD THE SADDUCEES THAT GOD IS “A GOD OF THE LIVING”.** **THIS WENT AGAINST ALL THEY BELIEVED.** HOWEVER, BY VERSES FROM THE THIRD CHAPTER OF EXODUS THAT THIS WAS TRUE.

SECOND PART OF THE FINE ANSWER, **JESUS TOLD THEM THAT AFTER THE RESURRECTION HEAVEN WAS NOT LIKE EARTH AND THINGS LIKE MARRIAGE DID NOT HAPPEN THERE AS IT DID ON EARTH.**

THIRD AND LAST PART OF THE FINE ANSWER WAS, JESUS TOLD THE SADDUCEES THAT WITH GOD BEING THE GOD OF THE LIVING WE SHOULD LIVE FOR HIM. *THE SADDUCEES LIVED WITH A DEATH-CENTERED LIFE. THEIR QUESTION BEGAN THAT WAY, BUT JESUS TURNED THAT AROUND.* **EVEN TODAY WE SHOULD LIVE A LIFE WITH “RESURRECTION EYES”, MEANING WE LIVE SEEING SITUATIONS AND PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY.** INSTEAD OF A PROBLEM, WE SEE OPPORTUNITY. WE SEE AN INDIVIDUAL AS A CHILD OF GOD AND TREAT THEM THAT WAY. **REALLY THAT IS THE WAY WE WANTED TO BE TREATED AND LOOKED AT AS A CHILD OF GOD.**

IN CLOSING, THE “**SIMPLE**“ **ANSWER ARE THE WORDS JESUS SPOKE SO MANY YEARS AGO, A TRUTH. WE SERVE A LIVING GOD, A RISEN SAVIOR AND EACH DAY WE GO OUT WITH “RESURRECTION EYES” SEEING PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS THROUGH THE EYES OF CHRIST AND LIVING FOR HIM! AMEN.**

WE SUFFERED THROUGH YET ANOTHER TRAGIC EVENT, THE AMBUSH SHOOTING OF TWO POLICE OFFICERS. I FOUND THIS POEM, A MESSAGE FROM THE FALLEN OFFICER....Messages from a Fallen Officer

To My Spouse

Don't think me gone, but away, though I wish I could stay, I'm not there, but our love did not end.
We had faith, we had love, sure as God is above I feel your love from here that you send.

To My Children

I know for you it is hard to be alone in the yard
In that place where we laughed and we played.
My girl, my boy, know you still give me joy,
Live your life as I did, unafraid.

To Officers Left Behind

Each day you hit the street to cover your beat, Prepare for the dangers you face.
Train hard, wear your vest - you'll be put to the test. Each day with your family embrace.

To the Criminals

Now that I'm here and God's plan is so clear To you there is but one thing to say.
You steal, rape and kill and abuse your free will Your time will come, when there's Hell to pay.

To All

I seem gone from you now, but I know that somehow We will reunite in another place.
For "The good they die young," is a song often sung, But this verse is flawed on its face.
You see the good don't die young, but instead they live on, In memories, and many a heart.
The good that you do does not die when you do. For the good, death's not an end, but a start. AMEN.

Today when I heard the news My heart broke in two, For nobody knew just what to do.
An Angel of God sent him here To protect and to serve, Everyone near and dear.
Now his life on Earth is done We will miss him True, But, his life in Heaven has just Begun.
May God bless him and all Officers and their family's from now Until the end of time!