

Whose Wife, Whose Life

Intro. Another way to look at the Sadducees' question is, "Which of the seven men would the *woman choose* as her husband?" But as we look at the full story, it isn't any more important than the question of whose wife will she be. In Luke's gospel this year, we have followed the Lord as he kept moving to his ultimate destination, Jerusalem. We skip over his glorious welcome because we will read it in the context of Holy Week's Palm Sunday next Lent. The Lord's opponents thought they were prepared for his arrival. The first place he went was to the temple to pray. What he found were the buyers, sellers and money changers who, in his words, turned his Father's house into a marketplace. The Lord proceeded to chase them away. That did not go down well for the Pharisees and others who

had a nice deal going. The Pharisees questioned his authority to teach in the temple. He quickly outwitted them. Then they sent an undercover team in an attempt to trick him about whether to pay taxes to Caesar. They also lost the argument. Another group quickly stepped up for the challenge.

I. The Sadducees were different from the Pharisees. They believed only in the writings ascribed to Moses in the first five books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah, in which there was no clear mention of resurrection. That belief evolved in later Old Testament books like Maccabees and became accepted belief. The Sadducees' riddle was based on an interpretation of Deuteronomy 25:5 that a family name should be passed on through a man's children, even to the point of a man marrying his brother's widow to raise children in his name. Rather than

get involved in a ridiculous argument, the Lord explained that life is *changed, not ended*. When a person is resurrected there is no need to perpetuate the name because in heaven one never dies. Resurrected life is not like life in this world. Our focus can often be about *making a name* for ourselves here on earth rather than in heaven. Too much of our time, energy and money can be spent assuring ourselves and others how great we are. All that ends in this life. The story of the brothers in the reading from the book of Maccabees shows the true focus of our living in this world. The mother and her sons could not have endured such persecution for their faith unless they believed in God and his promises. They were able to support each other in their suffering because they knew resurrection awaited them.

Concl. At our bible study a wife asked the obvious question: would she and her husband still be spouses in heaven? Or be free? That is another question. The short answer from the Lord is that they would be even better; they would be *angels together!* The ties that bind us may not end but the worries we have will. The Lord could have said the Sadducees, “Funny you should ask me about resurrection. As a matter of fact that’s why I’m here in Jerusalem.” If they were still around later, they would learn the answer about resurrection. The only thing that will really matter at the end is knowing the joy of God’s presence forever. If we are “deemed worthy” of resurrection, none of the worries of this world will matter. We get wings.

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