

## **The Gospel According to Luke**

Luke 20:27-40

**Reading:** Mark 12:18-27

**Parallel Passages:** *Matthew 22:23-33 and Mark 12:18-27*

Sermon #86  
August 2, 2020

## **The Glorious Age To Come**

### **Introduction**

I am always amazed when opponents to Christianity bring up hypothetical questions in order to disprove the Bible or Jesus as the Christ or a vital doctrine of Christianity. If all a person has is some extreme hypothetical argument, they are on shaky ground to begin with. As I considered this, I thought of one of the most glaring examples of society being oblivious to sin and evil and using hypotheticals instead of science and fact. I am amazed how hard society tries to make acceptable the act of abortion. To be clear, I am prolife because God is prolife. The simple truth, apart from political agendas, is that whenever an abortion takes place, the baby, regardless how many months along in the pregnancy, who was once alive and is now dead. A human heart was alive and beating and healthy and by the brutal act of abortion is dead and lifeless. There is no getting around the fact that abortion is killing another human, a person that is completely innocent and helpless. Moses spoke to the people with the words of God saying, **“Cursed be anyone who takes a bribe to shed innocent blood.”** And all the people shall say, **“Amen.”** (Deuteronomy 27:25) Amen is a declaration meaning “let it be true” or “so be it”. God curses abortion providers for they take money to kill the innocent.

Today, these brutal murders are clothed in society’s language intentionally used to conceal the reality of the process and in an attempt to hide sin. The term pro-choice is used, arguing that it is somehow the right of the mother to do whatever she chooses with her own body and to the separate unique life within her.

When pressed to justify abortion, the pro-abortion side will offer extreme hypothetical arguments. They will say, “*Well, what about in the case of a pregnancy that came about through rape?*” They think, aha, we have got you there! What is your answer to that argument? Surely you have to agree this is a reason to abort. They are not interested in nor will they accept an answer based on science or facts.

Pro-abortionists promote the idea that almost all rape victims who become pregnant would naturally want abortions, even though there is no evidence to back this up. Here are the facts; in the only major study of pregnant rape victims by Dr. Sandra Mahkorn in 2013 found that about 5% of raped women become pregnant and 75 to 85 percent did **not** have abortions. This one finding alone should cause people to pause and reflect on the presumption that abortion is wanted or even best for sexual assault victims. What was also interesting is that those who received counseling after their rape, by both Christian and non-Christian counselors, the abortion rate dropped even lower.

I bring this to your attention because this is a common argument of the pro-abortion advocates even though only 5% of rape victims end up pregnant and of those 15 to 20% choose to abort and fewer than that number if they receive counseling. These pro-abortion groups want you to think this a most common need and grounds for making abortion acceptable. However, even in this example the argument falls flat on its face because 4 out of 5 women who are pregnant from a sexual assault do not want to get an abortion in the first place. The issue is that abortion is always murder in 100% of the cases and it is never the godly answer even in cases when the pregnancy occurred as a result of a violent act. The old saying holds true; two wrongs never make a right. The abortion arguments are often emotional and lack truth and facts. In order to make one’s point for the need

for abortion they present extreme hypothetical situations because they cannot support their argument for murder with logic or facts.

I mention this illogical approach to abortion because it is the clearest example, I thought of, happening in our time, that compares to what the Sadducees tried with Jesus by asking Him an extreme hypothetical question. In our text today, Jesus is presented with an extreme hypothetical question supposedly biblical, but in truth without biblical foundation. Like in the abortion example, His opponents do not even have their initial premise correct. Their argument is senseless because what they are arguing for cannot happen in the first place. Yet, their goal is not to look at the facts, but to embarrass Jesus theologically.

I want you to notice with me as we work our way through this passage found in chapter 20 of Luke that Jesus shows His opponents and us just how vital it is to read and study for understanding God's Word. Our eternal future depends on an accurate understanding of basic Bible doctrines. If one does not believe God's written Word, then they cannot understand or believe God's Living Word; Jesus Christ. There are many religions with false Christs and the followers are eternally lost. In this case, the Sadducees reject the Word of God and its doctrine of the resurrection. We will also notice that Luke makes a point to show us the fact that the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection and that this wrong belief or lack of a true belief is the grounds for their lack of salvation. If one is to be admitted entrance into the Kingdom of God, one must believe the doctrine of the resurrection.

Our Lord's opponents came from various groups; the Herodians and Pharisees and this time they are the Jewish leaders known as the Sadducees. They were the aristocrats of the Jewish religious leaders. They were the elite of the

day. The Sadducees were made up of the High Priest, Chief Priests and the Sanhedrin. They were small in number but very powerful politically and controlled the temple; its ritual and business.

Usually, the Sadducees and the Pharisees were at odds with each other over various issues related to doctrine. The Sadducees, for example, denied the resurrection. They accepted as God's Word only from the Pentateuch or the Five Books of Moses. The Sadducees believed Genesis to Deuteronomy were God's only true words. According to them, the rest of the Old Testament was simply a commentary on the Pentateuch. On the other hand, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection and the entire Old Testament. This led to constant theological debate and friction between the two groups. Part of that debate was the foundation for the question now presented to Jesus. The question about a woman who had seven husbands and the doctrine of the resurrection.

A key principal seen in our passage this morning is; **the glorious age to come is nothing like this present earthly age.** We need to drink in God's Word in order to make the shift from the earthly to the heavenly. Many, as they think of heaven and God, do so in terms they are familiar with – their earthly surroundings. They think eternity is basically the same as this world and this life - they think of God and heaven in human terms. This is what the Mormons do; they believe in 3 levels of heaven and no hell. The lowest level of heaven, the "*telestial*", which is a word made-up by Mormons, is exactly like the present earth with pleasure and pain, and happiness and disappointment - but no death. However, the Bible teaches that the age to come is most glorious and should not be compared to this present age at all.

Let us now turn from man-made thoughts and hear God's Word. Please stand for the reading of God's eternal Word by brother Ivan

Let me pray for our understanding and enlightenment as we begin our study of Luke, chapter 20, verses 27 to 40.

### **Marriage Is For This Age** (v. 27-28)

We begin by traveling back to Deuteronomy, reading from chapter 25, concerning the law of “Levirate” (*'le-və-rət*) marriage. The word comes from the Latin “*levir*” meaning brother-in-law. Reading at verse 5, “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. <sup>6</sup> And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.’ <sup>8</sup> Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, ‘I do not wish to take her,’ <sup>9</sup> then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.’ <sup>10</sup> And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.’” We are to understand the purpose of this law was that a widow would be cared for and the dead husband's name would continue. Women could not own property and without this provision the dead husband's property would become someone else's. So now, the Sadducees approach Jesus with an agenda, a

perversion of God's wonderful provision for widows. Reading verses 27 and 28, "There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection,<sup>28</sup> and they asked him a question, saying, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.' " Their desire is to discredit Jesus in front of the people. However, as we have seen before, in the end, it is they who are discredited.

Here Luke wants us to understand the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection, which is a key point. From the Book of Acts, we understand they did not believe in several things from God's Word, "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all." (Acts 23:8) In verse 28 of today's passage, they say "Teacher", I do not know about you, but I can hear their condescending attitude, for they do not respect Jesus and use the title with sarcasm. They are saying to Jesus, by our question, let us teach you the truth from God's holy Word, from the Books of Moses. They are positioning themselves as the real authorities and they are going to take Jesus to task.

The foundation of their trap is built on Deuteronomy as we just read and also on Genesis chapter 38, "Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death.<sup>8</sup> Then Judah said to Onan, 'Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.' " (Genesis 38:7-8) We also see this principle played out in the Book of Ruth, although the Sadducees did not except Ruth as the Word of God,<sup>9</sup> "Boaz said to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses this day ...<sup>10</sup> Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place.' " (Ruth 4:9-10)

Let me pause here, so we may consider the Sadducees' dilemma. These Old Testament scholars were mistaken on how they understood the Levirate marriage. They felt that because Moses commands this practice, there cannot be a resurrection of the dead because the woman would find herself married to multiple men. In their thinking, either the writings of Moses are true or the resurrection is true, but you cannot have both. What they failed to understand is that this type of marriage is only for this present age, it does not continue in the age to come. The Levirate marriage is a means whereby offspring would legally continue for the dead husband so that his name would continue and the children would receive their inheritance.

### **The Folly Of This Age Exposed** (v. 29-33)

The foolish Sadducees try making themselves the authority instead of God and they do not recognize the authority of the Messiah, God's only begotten Son. By their self-imposed authority they demand an answer from Jesus. They attempt to lay the trap, saying to Jesus, "Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children.<sup>30</sup> And the second<sup>31</sup> and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died.<sup>32</sup> Afterward the woman also died.<sup>33</sup> In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife." When men place themselves above God, as many do in our own society; when men change the eternal meaning of God's Word, they quickly expose themselves as fools to all with ears to hear. Things have not changed throughout the centuries; when men speak by their own knowledge, their own plans, their ambitions – they expose their foolishness to those with eyes that see.

As Christians and for me as a pastor we are to always look to God's truth, His authority and His eternal Word and not rely on our own opinions. When the

Bible speaks of the resurrection, we must believe it and live our lives with that belief. I do not believe anyone here has experienced resurrection; I have not seen anyone raised from the dead. However, God's Word teaches the resurrection; the Old Testament writers believed, Jesus not only believed in the resurrection but He taught it and finally demonstrated it to be real, the New Testament writers believed it. I believe God's Word. I believe in God's Son as my Savior and I know the resurrection is reality. In spite of all the evidence, the Sadducees in their human wisdom decided the resurrection did not exist and they thought they could trap Jesus and show Him to be wrong. In their attempt to show Jesus as a man without divine knowledge they show their lack of understanding of God's Word. They thought with the minds of men. However, as believers we have the Holy Spirit within us helping us understand that the glorious age to come; eternity, is nothing like this present age.

The Sadducees thought they had Moses on their side and Jesus could not stand before Moses. They misuse scripture in an attempt to show Jesus does not have the authority of God. However, the Son of God speaks and all become quiet.

### **Before God Men Of This Age Fall Silent** (v.34-36)

The Lord begins answering their question and like pulling back the layers of an onion He proves them false. Taking up this exchange in verse 34, "Jesus said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage,<sup>35</sup> but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage,<sup>36</sup> for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.' "

First, Jesus points out there is no marriage in the resurrection because there is no death. Marriage on earth was designed by God to bring a man and woman



together for life and to build a relationship that glorifies God and to propagate the human race. Marriage was designed by God, not man; and godly marriages not only honor God but they have proven over history to be the right foundation for societies and best for the upbringing of children. Jesus is not saying everyone should or will marry. However, our society is suffering the aftermath of the destruction of the family as God created; single parent families are now the majority of American families and cannot fully give the future to the children they need or the moral foundation society desperately needs. Rampant abortion has devalued life. Studies have shown over 70 % of homosexuals come from single parent families, in addition, children raised in single-parent households are more likely to drop out of school, to have or cause a teen pregnancy and to experience a divorce in adulthood. (*Kids Count.org*) These problems are at the foundation of the devastation of societies. Present day societies are repeating the mistakes of the past that caused the collapse of great man-centered societies of history. God designed marriage for this present age, not the glorious eternal future for those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

I would like you to take notice of verse 35, “those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.” This implies two groups of people; those worthy of the age to come and resurrection and those who are not. Since Jesus is addressing the Sadducees, He is saying they are not part of the first group. Most people in the present world are concerned with their own honor, fame, money and power, just as the Sadducees were. As Christians our focus is not this present age, but the age to come; so, as we live, we live for the honor and glory of God as witnesses to the world of the age to come. We are to live with traits the world no longer values; humility, servanthood, seeking the good of others and as peacemakers. Jesus was

clear, when Nicodemus asked how one enters heaven. As a Pharisee he rightly believed in the resurrection and heaven. Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3) In this present age men are self-promoting and seeking their own glory. It is only when one is “born again” by believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior, they are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit enabling them to focus on life lived as God designed. With the resurrection Christians as verse 36 tells us, “cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” Christians are like angels in the sense they no longer can die, they are immortal. Jesus is showing the Sadducees there has to be a resurrection because those worthy, do not die and because they cannot die there is no need for marriage. In the glorious age to come we will have glorified bodies; we will never get sick for there is no disease, no pain, no suffering and we will be forever in the presence of God.

Paul understood this and made it clear for the believers in Corinth when he wrote to them, <sup>50</sup> “I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written *by the Prophet Isaiah*: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. <sup>55</sup> O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always

abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:50-58)

Let me ask, are you longing for that day when there will be no more sickness and death? I am. I agree with Paul when he wrote, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21) I pray we are all sons and daughters of the resurrection. I pray our suffering will be eased in this present age and we keep our focus on the age to come, no matter what this world does.

The Sadducees believed that this woman was in an absurd predicament. Whose wife will she be in the age to come? What they fail to understand is that the age to come is fundamentally different. There will be no death in the world to come, no marriage in the world to come because the world to come is fundamentally different than this present world. The world to come is perfect, the world of the present is broken.

Jesus will prove to them that there is a resurrection and that they are the ones in the absurd predicament, one which will prove to be a horrific mistake. In fact, Jesus will prove the resurrection to them from the Books of Moses, the very Scripture they believe does not teach a resurrection. But before He does, He throws in another tidbit where they are mistaken, for as Jesus says, ... “because they are equal to angels”. Not only are they wrong about the resurrection, which they denied and they also denied there were angels. The resurrection is a reality and so are angels. In fact, we will be like angels in the world to come after we undergo the resurrection; we will be immortal. All who are in Christ will experience this amazing event. The resurrection of the body to a body which will never see decay. Are you among those who will be found worthy of the resurrection? If not, the solution is to give up control of your life and believe in Jesus as the Christ.

## Resurrections & The Age To Come (v. 37-40)

Jesus demonstrates that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive because of the resurrection. Reading from verse 37, Jesus continues, “ ‘But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’ <sup>38</sup> Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.’ <sup>39</sup> Then some of the scribes answered, ‘Teacher, you have spoken well.’ <sup>40</sup> For they no longer dared to ask him any question.” Clearly, God is the God of the living! Jesus is referring to Exodus, chapter 3, “God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ <sup>5</sup> Then he said, ‘Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ <sup>6</sup> And he said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ ” (Exodus 3:4-6) God plainly says, “I am the God of your father” meaning in the present. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are currently worshipping God, so they cannot be dead; they are alive and worshipping their God.

What is truly amazing is that Jesus specifically proves the reality of the resurrection from the very section of the Bible the Sadducees accepted; the 5 Books of Moses. Their problem was that they did not really understand the Books they claimed to accept. God the Son spoke and they are silent. Their complete lack of understanding is exposed and their motives are exposed.

My beloved, when we realize ever more clearly through the eternal Word of God the realities of the age to come, we are drawn to Christ even more deeply. Because of His death and resurrection, we too, as believers will experience the same. He is the prototype or as scripture says Jesus is the “firstfruit” of the resurrection. Jesus received His glorified body as a result of His resurrection and

so will we. Once that happens everything will be different. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, Christ's resurrection and our resurrection is addressed, <sup>20</sup> "in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ... <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ... <sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, *found in Genesis 2:7* 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual." (1 Corinthians 15:20-21, 23 and 42-46)

We may suffer in this life. We may experience pain. We get sick and suffer loss. We live in the realm of sin and we too are sinners. Please understand beloved, this age is dying. What will spring forth when death has died will be immortality and everything changes; no more sickness, death, disease, pain, suffering, loss, and no more sin. We will live forever and praise God with reclaimed and remade bodies, bodies just like Jesus'.

I pray, we live our lives now in anticipation of the age to come. That we will be faithful followers of Christ for His glory and our good. Take to heart and remember, **the glorious age to come is nothing like this present age!** Amen and amen!