

Here are some of our observations:

- The Bible mentions the Sadducees 14x: 9x in the Gospels (Matt, 7x; Mark 1x; Luke 1x; John 0x) and 5x in Acts.
- Matthew pairs the Sadducees with the Pharisees 5x as the spiritual leaders of the day.
- The NT authors mention the Pharisees an additional 81x not paired with the Sadducees (Matt 23x; Mark 11x; Luke 26x; John 19x; Acts 2x).
- Biblical authors pair the Pharisees with the scribes 16x (Matt 10x; Mark 2x; Luke 3x; Acts 1x). Mark 2:16 and Acts 23:9 specify the “scribes *of* the Pharisees.” Luke 5:30 makes their connection even more explicit by saying, “the Pharisees *and their* scribes...”
- Luke 5:17 refers to the “Pharisees and teachers of the law...”
- In Luke 7:30, it is the Pharisees and the lawyers together who reject God's purpose. (see also Luke 13:3)
- Nicodemus, who comes to Jesus privately, is called “a man of the Pharisees” and “a ruler of the Jews.” Jesus challenges him saying, “Are you a teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?”
- John the Baptist and Jesus speak very harsh words and warnings toward both groups, focusing on their hypocrisy and lack of sincere understanding of or obedience to the Scriptures.
- In Matt 5:20, Jesus warns that one's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. He then gives instructions concerning almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, saying, “do not be like the hypocrites,” who love to do their good deeds in full view for all to see (Matt 6:1-18). Jesus consistently pointed to the hypocrisy of these leaders as evidence of the emptiness of their religious zeal.
- Luke comments that the Pharisees were “lovers of money” (Luke 16:14).
- In the parallel passages of Matt 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-39, the Sadducees come by themselves to Jesus. All three passages clarify that they denied that the resurrection. And so they come with a question concerning the afterlife which they think will trap Jesus. Jesus not only addresses their question but goes further to challenge their denial of the resurrection. They are silenced as a result.
- In Acts 4:1-3, it is the Sadducees who are particularly enraged when the apostles are “proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.” Here they are mentioned in league with the priests and the captain of the temple.
- In Acts 5:17-18, those who were joined with the high priest are identified as the Sadducees. They are specifically called “*the party of* the Sadducees,” indicating that they represent a particular grouping within the Jewish leadership. They, along with the high priest, are filled with jealousy. They had authority to have the apostles arrested.
- Likewise, several passages connect the Pharisees with the chief priests.

- In Mark 11:27-12:17, there is a confrontation as the chief priests, scribes and the elders approach Jesus. He traps them in their own words and calls them out by way of a parable. They are unable to arrest him for fear of the crowds but respond by sending "some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk" (Mark 12:13).
- In Act 23:1-10, the Roman tribune brings Paul before the chief priests and all the council (Sanhedrin). Paul recognizes that the council is divided between two parties: the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He actually formulates his case in such a way to maximize their theological divisions. Luke explains that the "Sadducees say there is no resurrection, nor angels, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all."
- In Acts 15:5, even among the nascent church, there were believers who still counted themselves among the party of the Pharisees.
- Paul was trained as a Pharisee by the highly regarded teacher, Gamaliel (Acts 5:34; 22:3), but post-conversion he considers this status as less than worthless (Phil 3:4-9).
- **Summary:** The Pharisees and Sadducees were the two prominent parties among Israel's leadership. Members of both parties comprised the Sanhedrin, which the chief priests led. (The chief priests may have been partial to the Sadducees.) The distinction between them seems to be particularly theological as the Pharisees had a stricter view of the law and a more orthodox understanding of the supernatural (namely, resurrection, angels, spirits). The Sadducees fiercely denied all these. What they held in common is a hatred for Jesus. They were jealous of his popularity and increasingly escalated their efforts to get rid of him. Jesus condemned both groups as the epitome of hypocrisy. But this criticism fell more prominently on the Pharisees as they were so zealous for the law and yet had no sincere desire to actually obey. It was, rather, a means by which they enriched themselves and maintained their authority.