

**20:27 Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection),
20:28 and they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that IF A MAN'S
BROTHER DIES, having a wife, AND HE IS CHILDLESS, HIS BROTHER SHOULD MARRY THE WIFE
AND RAISE UP CHILDREN TO HIS BROTHER.**

20:29 "Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless;

20:30 and the second

20:31 and the third married her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children.

20:32 "Finally the woman died also.

20:33 "In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her."

In Luke 20:1-26 the chief priests, scribes, and elders had questioned Jesus' authority and tried to set a trap for Him so He would be arrested by Rome. Now, in verses 27-40, the Sadducees (who were priests) try to trap Him.

The origin of the Sadducees is not clear, but it seems that they came into existence around the second century BC. "The Sadducees were priestly and lay aristocrats who revered only the Torah. They were somewhat rationalistic, tended to be wealthy, rejected oral tradition, and desired to preserve the status quo. They were the most religiously conservative group of their day" (Bock, 1616). Although they were relatively few in number, they sat in the seats of power and influence; most of the Sanhedrin members were Sadducees. Doctrinally, they denied that there was life after death, a resurrection, and the existence of angels and spirits (Acts 23:8).

Because the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, they formulated a question that was intended to show how ludicrous the idea of a resurrection was. It is common for those who wish to undermine the truth of God, to load it with difficulties; and this is what the Sadducees did.

According to the law (Gen. 38:8; Deut. 25:5-10; Ruth 4:1-12), if a man died childless, "his brother was to take the wife as his own and raise up a child for the deceased brother, and the child would carry on the dead brother's name and heritage. The goal of the law was to raise up seed for the deceased brother" (Bock, 1620).

With this law as the basis of their argument, the Sadducees created a hypothetical scenario involving a chain of marriages: There were seven brothers. The first brother took a wife and died before she had children. This made the second brother responsible to marry her in order that she could produce an heir for the brother who had died. So, he married her. However, he died before she had any children, making the third brother responsible to produce an heir. This pattern was repeated for all seven of the brothers. Finally, the woman also died. They then asked Jesus whose wife would she be at the resurrection?

Believing in a resurrection wasn't punishable by death, but their intent was to show the absurdity of a resurrection and discredit Jesus whom they perceived as putting their position in jeopardy. John 11:47-48 expresses their concern: "for this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and *take away both our place* and our nation." They needed to get rid of Him before Rome got involved and they were stripped of their power and wealth.

Apparently, this question had never been sufficiently answered and the Sadducees were certain that there was no way out of the dilemma that their question posed. The law would be broken if the woman did not marry her deceased husband's brother, yet she would be a polygamist at the resurrection if she did what the law told her to do.

**20:34 Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage,
20:35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;
20:36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.**

The Sadducees' question assumed that the afterlife is like this life and that marriages would remain intact after the resurrection. In the parallel account in Matthew, Jesus began by saying, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). When the Scriptures and the power of God are known, such difficulties and others like them vanish.

When Jesus spoke of "those who are considered worthy to attain to *that age*" (20:35), the age He was referring to is the future age where the believing will enjoy God, eternal life, and the blessings of God forever. It is the opposite of "this age" (earthly life) in verse 34. "Those who are considered worthy" is a divine passive and means "those who are considered worthy by God;" they are considered worthy by virtue of their status as sons of God (20:36). Because the sons of God attain eternal life and resurrection (20:35), they are also called sons of the resurrection (20:36). These will neither marry nor be given in marriage.

Verse 36 begins with "for" (an explanatory γάρ in Greek) and explains why people in the age to come don't marry. Marriage is unnecessary in the eternal state because people will no longer die. As Ellicott says, "The implied thought is that death and marriage are correlative facts in God's government of the world, the one filling up the gaps which are caused by the other." That is, "Marriage is ordained to perpetuate the human family; but as there will be no breaches by death in the future state, this ordinance will cease" (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown). In other words, marriage is not an eternal condition. It is a necessary part of our earthly existence where children are needed to repopulate a dying race. However, the "sons of the resurrection" ("the sons of God") are not part of this world; they are part of a new age where death no longer exists. "They are like angels." Angels were all created at one time, they don't procreate and they don't die. Their number is fixed. There's no need for marriage because there's no need for propagation. In the same way, because death ceases to exist in the age to come, marriage and procreation are no longer necessary for people either.

The contrast between this age and the age to come immediately removes the dilemma. The Sadducees' question doesn't really create a problem with the resurrection; the problem is with their understanding of the future.

20:37 "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB.

20:38 "Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him."

In 20:37 Jesus goes on the offensive and advances the doctrine of the resurrection. Typically, Jews would defend the resurrection with texts like Job 19:26, Psalm 16:9,11, and Isaiah 26:19. Although these are clear OT passages that teach the resurrection of the dead, they wouldn't have been convincing to the Sadducees who placed a priority on the books of Moses (the Torah) over the other writings. Therefore, Jesus quoted from the Torah itself (Exo. 3:2-6). His argument is easier to understand in Matthew 22:31-32 where Jesus said, "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

In saying, "I am the God of Abraham," the Lord was demonstrating that the patriarchs were still alive, proving the reality of life after death and the possibility of resurrection. The argument hinges on the tense of a single word (the word, "am"). If hundreds of years after Abraham had died God could still say that He IS the God of Abraham (instead of, I WAS the God of Abraham), one would have to conclude that Abraham and the others still existed. The point of the passage in its OT context was that the patriarchs were still alive, so the promises that God made to them were still in effect. Jesus' point is that if the patriarchs were to experience the promises made to them, they would have to be resurrected.

20:39 Some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well."

20:40 For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.

The Sadducees and the crowds were amazed and admired Jesus for His answer (Matt. 22:33). Some Sadducees even gave their approval, saying that in their opinion Jesus had answered correctly.

Attempts at trying to make Jesus look like a heretic were falling apart. No matter who Jesus talked to, the conversation ended with Him possessing greater knowledge and authority. Whether people challenged His personal authority, His political alignments, or His theological positions, Jesus came out on top. "The effect of these encounters is clear: who can guide the people in God's way, the Jewish leadership or Jesus?" (Bock, 1626) The leaders were forced to withdraw.

NOTE: THE RESURRECTION

Many modern Christians are quite confused about their state of existence after death. Some are completely ignorant about the resurrection. Many assume that when believers die they go to be with the Lord in heaven forever, and live as disembodied spirits from that time on. On a popular level, some speak as if the dead receive a new body when they die. Others deny the resurrection altogether.

New Testament Verses That Refer to a Resurrection:

- 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 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 will be changed.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:14: For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus (also 1 Thess. 4:16).

- John 5:28-29: "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.
- John 6:39-40: "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."
- Romans 8:11: But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
- Philippians 3:20-21: For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Old Testament Verses That Refer to Resurrection:

- Job 19:25-26: "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;
- Psalm 16:9-11: Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.
- Isaiah 26:19: Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.
- Daniel 12:2: Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Jesus and Martha believed in a resurrection as taught in the OT. In John 11:23-24 Jesus said to Martha, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

Paul believed in a resurrection based on his understanding of the OT. In Acts 24:15 he said, "there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked."

Abraham believed in a resurrection based upon what he knew of the power of God. Hebrews 11:19 says that he considered that "God is able to raise people even from the dead."

The following has been taken from Charles Hodge's Systematic Theology, volume III; it includes direct quotes, but much has been re-worded and a lot has been added.

Proof that resurrection refers to the rising again of the body:

In the Bible, resurrection refers to a rising of that which was buried, or a restoration of life to that which was dead. In other words, resurrection refers to reuniting of the body and the soul so that the physical body comes to life again.

1. Those "that are in the graves" are said to rise. Only the body is in the grave; therefore, the resurrection refers to the body, not the soul.

2. It is “our mortal bodies” which are to rise again.

- Romans 8:11: But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead *will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit* who dwells in you.
- Philippians 3:20 – 21: For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who *will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory*, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

3. This also is clearly the doctrine taught in 1 Corinthians 15.

There were some in Corinth who denied the fact and the desirableness of the resurrection of believers. Paul’s argument is directed to both those points. First, he shows that the dead can rise by pointing to the resurrection of Christ. He then supports this as a historical fact with historical evidence. He then states that the denial of the resurrection of Christ is the denial of the whole gospel, which rests on that fact. “If Christ be not risen, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain.” But if Christ rose from the dead, all His people must rise as well for Christ rose as the first fruits of them that sleep. There is, therefore, a necessary connection between the resurrection of Christ and that of His people.

4. The sacred writers argue the possibility and the certainty of the resurrection of our bodies from the fact of Christ’s resurrection, and the nature of our future bodies from the nature of His body in heaven. There would be no force in this argument if the body were not the thing which is to rise again.

There is an Identity between our Future Body and our Present Body.

There is continuity between the body we presently have and our resurrected body, for resurrection is a living again of that which was dead (775).

- Paul's statement, "it is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body" (1 Corinthians 15:42), establishes that there is a continuity between our current body and our resurrected body, for it is the same "it" in both cases.
- Furthermore, the same body we have now (which is mortal) will become immortal: "we will be changed, for this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality"(1 Cor. 15:52, 53).
- In Romans 8:11, Paul says that God “will also give life to your mortal bodies.”
- Lastly, our resurrection is analogous to that of Christ. In His case there can be no doubt that the very body which hung upon the cross and laid in the tomb, rose again from the dead. Otherwise, there wouldn’t have been a resurrection. This identity was the very thing Christ was anxious to prove to his doubting disciples. He showed them his pierced hands, feet, and perforated side.

Nature of the Resurrection Body.

1. Jesus said the resurrected are like the angels of God; that is, they are immortal.

2. Our bodies will be adapted to our future state of existence.

1 Corinthians 15:50 says, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

“Flesh and blood” is an expression used in the Bible to emphasize the frailty of humanity; it describes man with his limitations and weaknesses. For example, in Galatians 1:15-16 Paul said, “when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb . . . I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood.” He means, he did not receive the gospel from “mere man.” Nor did he go to Jerusalem to be taught the gospel by the apostles. Likewise, Jesus meant that as well in Matthew 16:17 when he said to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” In other words, 1 Corinthians 15:50 teaches that our present bodies with their limitations and weaknesses must be changed to enjoy our future existence.

3. God, we are told, gave to all His creatures on earth each its own body adapted to its nature (1 Cor. 15:38 ff.), and necessary to attain the end of its creation. Any essential change in the nature of the body would involve a corresponding change in its internal constitution. A bee in the form of a horse would cease to be a bee and a man in any other than a human form, would cease to be a man. His body is an essential element in his constitution.

4. We shall not only recognize our friends in heaven, but will also know without introduction prophets, apostles, martyrs, and others of whom we have read or heard while here on earth.

(a.) If the future body is to be the same with the present, why should not that sameness, whatever else it may include, include a certain sameness of appearance?

(b.) When Moses and Elias appeared on the mount with Christ, they were at once known by the disciples. It is also said that we are to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. This implies that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be known; and if they are known surely others will be known also.

5. 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 says of the resurrected body: “(1) It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; (2) it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; (3) it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; (4) it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. . .

Our bodies will be raised imperishable.

Our bodies will not wear out or grow old or ever be subject to any kind of sickness or death or disease. They will be completely and forever healthy and strong. There will be no sign of aging.

Our bodies will be raised in glory.

The bodies of the saints are to be fashioned into a body like Christ's glorious body. We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is. *We do not know exactly what this means*, but we do know that we shall bear the image of the heavenly. Daniel 12:3 says, “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” The glory we will possess may be external glory, but it will also transform the person from within.

Our bodies will be raised in power.

Power is contrasted to the weakness which we see in our bodies now. It soon grows weary, and must be refreshed by rest and sleep. In a little more than seventy years, it is worn out, and drops into the grave. Someday, however, when we are raised, we will have the fullness of strength and power.

Our bodies will be raised as spiritual bodies.

Our body "is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

Although we cannot define precisely what a spiritual body is, it seems that a natural body is an earthly body made of the dust of the earth, and while living, has constant need of being repaired; it must be sustained by the oxygen of the air, and by the chemical elements of its food. It is a body animated by the soul.

Spiritual (πνευματικοῦς) is an adjective that describes the new body. It means, "pertaining to the spirit" and is used of a spiritual person, spiritual thing, spiritual gift, etc. For example, in 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul said, "I, brethren, could not speak to you as to *spiritual* men . . ."

In 2 Corinthians 5:1, Paul likens his earthly body to a tent that is to be abandoned for an eternal dwelling. In 1 Corinthians 15:47-49 he says, "The first man (Adam) is from the earth, earthy; the second man (Christ) is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly." In Philippians 3:20-21 he says that Christ "will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory." All of these verses describe the spiritual body we will receive.

Thus, Paul is not saying that we are raised as a body made of spirit; that would be a contradiction in terms - a spirit is not made out of matter. Rather, in contrast to our present body, we will have a body animated by and consistent with the character and activity of the Holy Spirit; it will bear the image of a heavenly person and be fit for an eternal existence.

The Bodies of Unbelievers Will Also be Raised

It is important to understand that it is not only Christians who will experience the resurrection of their bodies. *All* people will have their bodies raised. The difference is that Christians will have their bodies raised to everlasting glory; non-Christians will have their bodies raised to everlasting destruction. There are many passages which teach that both believers and unbelievers will be raised. Acts 24:15 says, "There shall certainly be a resurrection of *both the righteous and the wicked*." Paul tells us how he applies this truth in the next verse: "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men." John 5:28-29 says, "For an hour is coming, in which *all* who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, *those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgement*." Unbelievers will thus suffer eternal punishment in their bodies in hell: "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to

kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).
(Matt Perman, <http://www.geocities.ws/mattperman/body2.html>)

In sum:

- ✓ ***Our bodies will be physical, like Christ's resurrected body.*** Philippians 3:20-21
- ✓ ***We will have the same bodies we have now, yet they will be changed (transformed).*** Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 15:42-44
- ✓ ***When our bodies are raised, sin, death and every other effect of sin will be totally defeated.***
1 Corinthians 15:55-56

If then our future bodies are to retain the human form; to be easily distinguished by those who knew and loved us on earth; if they are to be endued with an unknown power; if they are to be incorruptible, immortal, and spiritual; if we are to bear the image of the heavenly, we may well bow down with humble and joyful hearts and receive the exhortation of the Apostle:

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (Hodge; 1 Cor. 15:58)