

## **“Is There Life after Death?”**

(Luke 20:27-38 – Saints Triumphant – November 16, 2025)

Luke 20:27-38 – <sup>27</sup>Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, <sup>28</sup>saying: “Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>29</sup>Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. <sup>30</sup>And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. <sup>31</sup>Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. <sup>32</sup>Last of all the woman died also. <sup>33</sup>Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.” <sup>34</sup>And Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. <sup>35</sup>But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; <sup>36</sup>nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup>But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ <sup>38</sup>For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.”

Dear Redeemed, Saints of God through faith in Jesus Christ:

Often, our biggest fears in life have to do with the unknown. This may be true when it comes to matters of death and the afterlife. Many people fear what might come next. Is death simply the end of existence? That in itself would be a fearful prospect, to think one’s life will come to a pile of dust in a grave. Again many have wondered, if there is life after death, whether it might bring them before God in disfavor. What an especially fearful prospect that would be, to think one’s life might end in eternal judgment.

Here, Jesus is confronted with this question critical to all people: **“Is There Life after Death?”** **1) Reason denies it, 2) Jesus describes it, 3) Scripture teaches it.**

### **1) Reason denies it**

One way people deal with fear is by living in denial. Many live as if death will never come, or as if it is a long way off. They live in a kind of denial that says: “I have nothing to be concerned about as long as I am happy here and now. I’ll think about eternity when the time comes.” Many also believe there is no God before whom they must come for judgment. So they live in a kind of denial that says boldly: “I’m not afraid of death.” They pride themselves in overcoming fear by their reason, apart from faith.

Here Jesus is confronted by such people: *“the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection”* (vs. 27). These religious leaders were like rationalists today who refuse

to believe what they cannot understand with their minds. They put human reason over God's Word to judge which parts they accepted. The Sadducees held to only the first five books of Moses. Even then, they picked and chose what they wanted to believe. They denied the existence of angels since they could not see them. By the same logic, they denied a resurrection. As materialists, they believed life consisted only in what you can see. They were more concerned with life in the present than life after death.

So they come to Jesus with a question meant to show how ridiculous His teaching of a resurrection to eternal life was. They give this account of seven brothers in turn being married to a widowed woman and then dying. Then they ask: "*Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become?*" (vs. 33) By this question, the Sadducees think they have caught Jesus in a trap. For if there really were a resurrection, how could He say whose wife the woman would be in the afterlife among the seven brothers?

Before we hear Jesus' answer, let us examine our attitudes about this life and the afterlife. Colossians 3:1-2 says: "*Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*" This is not telling us to live with our head in the clouds, completely disengaged from life in this world. God has a purpose for us here. He gives us gifts and abilities to use in this world, for our good and for the good of others. But above all, He gives us this time of grace so we may prepare ourselves and help others to prepare for eternity.

But there is a Sadducee in us, that part of us that trusts our reason instead of God's Word to decide what is important in life. Sinful reason says: "I'm not ready to leave behind all I can see here, and set my mind on things seen only by faith." We often live the part of the materialist, focused on passing things of this world as if they were an end in themselves. We often make a priority of accumulating money and surrounding ourselves with earthly comforts. But God invites us to delight our souls in the imperishable riches of His Kingdom, and to surround ourselves with the comforts of His Word, His forgiveness, His love, His eternal life in Christ. We often focus on the name we can make for ourselves in this world, and pleasures we enjoy here. But God invites us to rejoice that our names are written in heaven with His Son, who is preparing eternal pleasures for us there. What could be more important for us and our loved ones?

## **2) Jesus describes it**

Sinful reason wants to deny eternal life in favor of temporal life. But Jesus describes heaven as a most desirable place. The Sadducees had it wrong trying to compare heaven to life in this world. Jesus says: "*The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection*" (vs. 34-36).

For His purpose in this world, God instituted marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman into one flesh, for the purpose of childbearing, companionship, and sexual fulfillment. He created them male and female and blessed Adam and Eve and their descendants saying: *“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth”* (Genesis 1:28). Since the fall into sin, we are subject to death. So our need for family and companionship from one generation to another depends on God’s gift for marriage and childbearing. Also, with sin and temptations to immorality, God gives marriage as the only proper place for sex (1 Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 13:4).

But Jesus says those in heaven are different, for they *“are equal to the angels.”* This does not mean we will become angels, but we will be like them in certain ways. In heaven, we will be perfect and sinless like the angels. Without sin, we will no longer be able to die but will live forever. So marriage will no longer be necessary. As children of God in the resurrection, we will be completely fulfilled in our heavenly family and companionship. We will love and be loved perfectly, far better than the closest relationship we know in this world! We will be united in heavenly bliss as the Bride of Christ with her heavenly Bridegroom. Heaven’s joys are beyond earthly description.

So as believers, why should we fear death? Why should we not rather look forward to that great homecoming and being with Jesus? Isn’t fear rooted in trusting our reason instead of His promises? We know we have sinned by putting the things of this world before the things of heaven; and we know that sin brings death instead of life. Based on what we see or feel, we may ask: How can I be one of those Jesus is speaking of, *“who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead”*?

The good news is that God is counting us worthy by the saving work of His Son. We could never enter heaven’s wedding banquet in our own filthy clothes of sin and unrighteousness. These do not make us fit to enter the glory of God. But in His great love for us, God sent His Son down from heaven’s glory into the world, to cleanse us of all our sin and clothe us in His perfect righteousness. The heavenly Bridegroom gave His life for us as His Bride, to win us back to Himself for eternity (Ephesians 5:25). On the cross: *“Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit”* (1 Peter 3:18). On Easter, Jesus showed Himself alive in the flesh, proving He won the victory for us over sin, death, and hell; and He lives to give us His forgiveness and eternal life.

Already God is counting us saints, whom He calls holy and gives eternal life through faith in His Son. Jesus says: *“He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life”* (John 5:24). Though our body dies, our soul will live with Him in Paradise (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43). On the last day, He will raise our body with our soul, that He may bring us into His heavenly mansions to share His eternal joys.

### 3) Scripture teaches it

So in response to those who deny the afterlife, Jesus describes it as desirable above all for believers. And finally, He shows that Scripture has always taught it.

Jesus cites Scripture given through Moses, whom even the Sadducees accepted: *“But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him”* (vs. 37-38). When the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been in the grave for centuries. Yet God said: *“I am their God”* (Exodus 3:6).

The souls of all who have departed this world looking to Christ as their Savior, like those ancient fathers of Israel, are living in the blessed presence of God. With all who have fallen asleep in Christ, they await the resurrection of their bodies. This is what Scripture teaches, and we can look forward to. We can say with Job: *“I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”* (Job 19:25-27)

Scripture teaches that in the resurrection our bodies, which sleep in the dust of death, will be glorified like Jesus’ heavenly body (Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2). 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 says: *“We shall not all sleep, but we shall 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”*

So in matters of death and the afterlife, Jesus and His Scripture show that we need not fear. We can look forward to eternity with our Savior, enjoying heaven as His Saints Triumphant – free at last from all sin and evil; perfect in body and soul, perfect in love (Revelation 21:1-5). We will join Adam and Eve; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses; our loved ones, and all who have believed in Christ from the beginning to the end of the world, as one great eternal family of God. *“Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words”* (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forevermore. Amen.