



May 31, 2020

F260 Bible Reading Plan

Week 21 (5/25/20)

1 Kings 16:29-34, 17
1 Kings 18-19
1 Kings 21-22
2 Kings 2
2 Kings 5, 6:1-23

Week 22 (6/1/20)

Jonah 1-2
Jonah 3-4
Hosea 1-3
Amos 1:1-9
Joel 1-3

SCRIPTURE

Luke 20:27-40

²⁷ Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. ²⁸ "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. ³⁰ The second ³¹ and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. ³² Finally, the woman died too. ³³ Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

³⁴ Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, ³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. ³⁷ But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'^[a] ³⁸ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

³⁹ Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!"

⁴⁰ And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Romans 6:8-14

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

COMMENTARY

20:27-33. Luke now reports a second and final attempt to confound Jesus in argument. This time the Sadducees, who are only mentioned here in the Gospel, raise a far-fetched example, in order to refute the belief in the resurrection held by both Jesus (14:14) and the Pharisees (Acts 23:8) but which they deny. Quoting Moses' command that a man should marry his brother's widow if no heir has been left (Deut. 25:5) in order to provide an heir (Gen. 38:8), they then come up with an example that was carefully worked out, for since no brother left an heir, none has any real advantage over the other. The Sadducees knew that neither Jesus nor the Pharisees would have answered "All seven equally," so they felt confident that the whole doctrine of the resurrection had to be rejected as illogical.

20:34-40. Once again, however, Jesus in this pronouncement story refutes His opponents. He does so by refuting their premise that the situation and conditions governing this present age (Luke 20:34) will continue into and govern "that age" (20:35), i.e., the age to come. Since there is no longer death in the age to come, the need to procreate through marriage will have ceased (cf. Gen. 1:28). Thus marriage as we know it will cease to exist. Having refuted the Sadducean attack on the resurrection, Jesus argues in favor of the resurrection based on the Pentateuch, which alone is the supreme authority for the Sadducees. He refers to Exodus 3:6, where the Lord, i.e., Yahweh, refers to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If long after their death God still remains the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then they must still be alive, for dead people cannot have a God. Only living people can. Jesus' refutation of the Sadducees is so masterful that even a group of Jesus' opponents commend His defense of the resurrection. The account ends with Jesus' complete mastery of His opponents (Luke 20:40).

Two important questions are raised by this passage. One involves the argument in 20:37-38. In what sense are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob alive? Did Jesus (and Luke)

mean that their “souls” were with God, i.e., they were immortal? Or did He mean that although they were not presently alive they would be on the day of resurrection and that because of God’s covenant with the patriarchs a resurrection was necessary? The Sadducean attack on the resurrection was an attack on life after death in general, for they denied not only the resurrection but life after death as well. For both Jesus and Luke the resurrection of the dead was clearly a future event (14:14; Acts 23:6; 24:15, 21). Nevertheless in some way they believed that the patriarchs were alive at the present time. Jesus and Luke believed both in a conscious life immediately after death (cf. 16:19-31; 23:39-43) as well as a final day of resurrection. Their thinking may have been very much like that of Paul in 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Phil. 1:21-23. Since Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were alive now, the Sadducean disbelief in life after death is refuted; and since the present bodiless existence of the patriarchs was incomplete, it must find its fulfillment in a resurrection.

The second question involves the practical concern of happily married believers who do not want the God-given union with their mates simply to end in death. Granted that marriage is “until death do us part,” will the intimacy, love, fellowship, and partnership between married Christians end at death? The New Testament does not give a complete answer to this question. It assumes that the need for love, fellowship, and whatever is necessary for joy and blessedness will be provided in the age to come. The believer in that age will lack nothing. Some things, however, will end. Like faith and hope, some “lesser” things will come to an end in order that the “greater” blessings of the kingdom may be even more intensified. Yet the believer, in faith, believes that if anything good in this age is not carried over in the age to come, it is because it will be replaced by something far, far better.

Romans 6:8-14

6:8-9. Here Paul linked the power we have to live the Christian life to Christ’s victory over the grave. Since, as Paul said, death no longer rules over Him, we as believers also have assurance that we will live with Him. It is important to take notice of Paul’s emphasis here on living with Christ as evidence that we have been joined with Him in His atoning death. In other words, saving faith ultimately leads to Christlike living.

6:10-11. Since Christ died to sin and lives to God, it remains for believers who are united with Him in His death and resurrection to live to God too. Throughout this section, Paul emphasized believers’ identification with Christ. However, such a belief cannot remain simply a doctrinal statement. Identification with Christ is a new way of life (see Rom. 6:4). Believers are to consider themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. The verb consider is an imperative, and it is cast in the present tense; thus Christians are directed to keep on considering, or reckoning, that they are dead to sin and are living to glorify God. In Romans 8, Paul discussed in more detail the idea of having a spiritual mind-set that honors God in everything.

6:12. When Christians falter in their faith, it is not because they are powerless against sin. Such a condition is true of those who are lost but not of those who are saved. Christians falter when they choose to follow the world’s way rather than the Lord’s way.

Paul closed out the previous section by challenging his readers to keep on considering themselves dead to sin. That imperative assumes that in Christ believers have been set free to willingly, gladly, and consistently show they are alive to God and dead to sin.

Before their conversion, people are incapable of not sinning; in Christ, believers are free not to sin. Thus Paul admonished his readers to not let sin reign in their lives. Why would Christians who had died to sin ever choose to obey its desires again?

6:13. Paul continued by using a military figure of speech. Christians must do battle every day against the schemes and temptations of the Devil and the evil ways of the world (see Eph. 6:11-12). In this fight we often find that our minds, tongues (speech), hands, or feet serve as weapons—either in the service of unrighteousness or in service to God as weapons for righteousness. Paul envisioned believers as soldiers who constantly have a serious choice to make. Will they be mercenaries for the powers of darkness or will they show through their lives and actions that they serve the living God?

6:14. Paul's use of military language might give an initial impression that Christians are caught helplessly in the middle of a cosmic struggle. However, the apostle also knew and declared that for believers, the way of righteousness had the upper hand. God made it possible for believers to choose the way of righteousness every time. How? Because Christians are not under law but under grace. The powerful demonstration of God's grace, which redeemed us when we were at our worst, continues to be operative in our daily walk with Christ.

MAIN POINT

The certainty of Jesus' resurrection means that believers can be certain of their eternal future with Him.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How have you seen the concepts of heaven and the afterlife depicted in pop culture? What is the worst example you've seen? The most impactful?

What do you imagine heaven will be like?

Since long before Jesus walked the earth, people have been curious about what happens after they die. As we'll see in today's passage, some of the Jewish religious leaders didn't believe in eternal life and used their doubts as a way to challenge Jesus' authority. While we can't know the specifics, Jesus' response to the religious leaders affirmed that, through Him, eternal life with God is possible, even though it may look differently than we imagine.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

- Have a volunteer read Luke 20:27-33.

One trait separated the Sadducees from all other Jewish groups: they denied the resurrection because they could not find it in the five books of Moses (Genesis–Deuteronomy), the only books they accepted as Scripture. Other groups turned easily to Daniel 12; Isaiah 26:19; Job 19:26; and Psalm 16:9,11 to prove resurrection in Hebrew Scripture. Seeing their approach, Jesus must have known what to expect.

In your own words, restate the question the Sadducees asked Jesus in verse 33.

Based on the description of the Sadducees in verse 27, what were they really asking Jesus?

Why would the Sadducees, an elite religious and political group, pose a question like this to Jesus?

First, the Sadducees quoted the Law of Moses, specifically Deuteronomy 25:5 (cf. Ruth 4:1-12). They centered on the practice called levirate marriage in which a brother was obligated to marry his brother's widow and raise children for the deceased. The priestly Sadducees took the practice of levirate marriage to absurd lengths, through seven husbands. The result: seven dead men; one dead woman; no children. Now the clincher to stump Jesus: whose wife would she be in this resurrection everyone talked about? The question assumed that people live in monogamous marriage relationships in the resurrection and shows how impossible this would be for a situation like they described. Their question was designed to discredit the idea of resurrection by reducing it to absurdity.

- Have a volunteer read Luke 20:34-40.

How did Jesus respond to their question? What can we learn from His response?

What did Jesus teach about life after death (vv. 34-36)?

Jesus attacked their assumptions. First, not everyone would experience eternal life spent with God. This was continuation of His teaching on the kingdom of God, His teaching about the punishment awaiting those like the rich man who ignored Lazarus, and on the religious leaders who would be surprised at the last judgment. Second, life in the next world is not like life in this world. People do not practice marriage relationships after death. Third, since the major focus of marriage is to rear children and fill the earth

as in Genesis 1, this will not be necessary for the afterlife, since no one dies there. In this respect, and only in this respect, do people become like angels. They have put on immortality, whereas angels are created immortal. Here again, Jesus attacked the Sadducees, for they did not believe angels existed. Thus Jesus disarmed the Sadducees, taking the power from their argument. In so doing He stated the reality of resurrection and set the stage for His own personal proof of the resurrection.

Look at verses 37-38. How did Jesus then “prove” the resurrection?

Jesus finished His argument by going back to the Sadducees’ own authority, the Law of Moses, specifically Exodus 3:6. Moses referred to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In Moses’ time, the three patriarchs were long dead. Using typical methods of interpretation of His day, Jesus drew the theological conclusion that God does not have a relationship with dead people but with living people. The implication was that if He could be the God of the patriarchs, the patriarchs must be alive. Obviously, their earthly life was long past, so the life must be one after death, a resurrection life. Only God has power over life, so the resurrected life is a life with God and under His control.

- Have a volunteer read Romans 6:8-14.

We often think of Christ’s death alone as that which completely secured our salvation, but why was the resurrection also necessary for our salvation? What does it mean to be “dead to sin” (v. 11)? What do you think it means to live with Christ (v. 8)?

What was Paul’s basis (and ours) for believing we will live with Christ?

What aspects of a Christ follower’s identity did Paul mention in this passage? Do you see them as part of your identity? Why or why not?

The Christian life is certainly not all about death. Good Friday was followed by Easter. Life is the theme of our faith. Having died with Christ means we will also live with Him. Paul described a reality, not a possibility. The foundation of Paul’s certainty is grounded in the resurrection of Christ. That Jesus had been raised from the dead meant He had conquered death.

We must accept the full reality of the Christian life. Having been united with Christ in His death and resurrection, Christians must realize they were once dead to sin. But the hold of sin is now broken in our lives. Freed from guilt and empowered to live in a manner that honors God, we act in an entirely different way. To be alive to God means to live for Him, to give every part of our lives for Him to bless, correct, and guide.

Read Romans 6:22-23. What does the gift of eternal life through Jesus mean to you? Why is it such good news? How does this impact your daily life?

The gift of eternal life becomes in itself a motivation and compels us to serve God and to embrace a lifestyle that leads to spiritual maturity. Jesus' living in us and freeing us from our enslavement to sin isn't just about changing us. It also means we can make a difference for His kingdom in our world.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What effect does the resurrection have on you today? What difference does it make in your relationships, work, and recreation?

How can you use the resurrection as a discussion point when you share your faith with others? Explain.

Do you look forward to eternity? If not, what does this reflect about your faith?

PRAYER

Thank Jesus for the power of the resurrection. Pray for reminders this week that our sinful natures died with Christ, and that we were raised with Him to live in new freedom.