

**November 17, 2013**  
**Saints Triumphant**

*“Children of the Resurrection”*

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## **LUKE 20 27-38**

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**S**ome Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him <sup>28</sup>and asked him a question, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. <sup>29</sup>Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; <sup>30</sup>then the second <sup>31</sup>and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. <sup>32</sup>Finally the woman also died. <sup>33</sup>In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.' <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, 'Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; <sup>35</sup>but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. <sup>36</sup>Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup>And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. <sup>38</sup>Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.'

Jesus says that we are “children of the resurrection.” The word for resurrection in the original Greek is anastasis. I love the sound of that word- anastasis. Would you join me in saying it together.

Anastasis or resurrection is a combination of the word stand and the word again. When we die our bodies are lying down flat in a sleeping position. When Jesus returns in glory he will raise our bodies to stand up again and live in the glorious place he has prepared for us.

We are children of the resurrection. That means we live each day of our lives here on this earth with the very real hope that we will be raised to life again after we die. On this Saints Triumphant Sunday we think of all those people who have gone before us being raised to life with us on the last day. It is hard to imagine what a joyful reunion that will be. Thessalonians four says, “And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

### **Not all people have this hope in a bodily resurrection**

Not all people have this hope in a bodily resurrection on the last day. That was certainly true of the Sadducees who came to poke fun at Jesus' teaching about a bodily resurrection. “Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.” These people were Sadducees. They were “sad you see” because they did not have this amazing hope in a resurrection that we celebrate every day of our lives.

They considered the first five books of Moses more authoritative than the rest of the Old Testament. They dismissed what the Job and the Psalms and the book of Daniel said about the resurrection. Job expressed his hope in the bodily resurrection with the words, “Though he slay me, yet I will rejoice, yet I will trust in him. I will awake in his likeness.”

Daniel wrote of a time when those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake. The Sadducees dismissed these words because they considered them inferior to the books of Moses. Something similar happens today when people see the red lettered words of Jesus in the Bible and say that they were superior to the rest of the words of the Bible. I like what one lady recently said in our Midweek Bible study: "All of the words of the Bible are the words of Jesus." They were given to us by our Heavenly Father, by the Holy Spirit and by our Lord Jesus.

Can't you see these Sadducees coming to Jesus with smirking smiles on their faces because they are going to present Jesus with a trick question that will discredit his teaching about the bodily resurrection? Can't you hear them chortling and chuckling? "Teacher, they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but not children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother." This was true. A woman who lost her husband was encouraged by Old Testament law to marry the man's brother or nearest relative who was not married to raise up children for her husband to keep the family line and inheritance intact. Thus Boaz offered to marry Ruth to raise up children for Ruth's husband and who had died.

See them smiling. Hear them chortling. They set the trap for Jesus. "Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. The second and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children." Wow this was a dangerous lady. I think if I am brother four and she asks me to marry her, I want to get out of town as quickly as possible. If I am brother five, six and seven, I definitely want to get out of Dodge. This woman is fatal. She is toxic. She is a black widow. Finally the woman also dies. Smirking they pop the question that was intended to make Jesus look foolish for his teaching on the resurrection. "Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her."

What do people of our day believe about the bodily resurrection on the last day? A few years ago we saw a WELS Connection video clip about a young woman in Russia who came to believe in Jesus through one of our mission churches in Russia. She shared how she grew up with parents who did not believe in Jesus. One day when she was about eight years old she asked her mother what would happen to her after she died. Her mother told her, "You will be eaten by worms." The words of this insensitive mother haunted her. She had this terrible fear of dying and being eaten by worms. Then she came to know about Jesus and his resurrection from the dead. With a powerful witness to her faith as she spoke of the peace and comfort and hope she had in a resurrection on the last day. That's the blessing of being children of the resurrection.

Consider the story about a popular young university professor who considered it his duty and mission at the university to rid the students of their "foolish childhood beliefs." One day he devoted an entire lecture to the question, "Is there a resurrection from the dead?" Christian students in the class were upset with his outspoken beliefs against the resurrection. The next day the university heard the sad news that his brilliant young professor had lost his wife during emergency surgery shortly after he delivered the lecture "Is there a resurrection from the dead?" Weeks went by before the grief stricken professor returned to the classroom. Students wondered what he would say to the class after losing his wife so suddenly.

Here is what he said: "Gentleman, once again I must talk to you on this subject, 'Is there a resurrection from the dead.' There is most assuredly a resurrection from the dead. The great God Almighty who dwells in the heavens and with those of a broken heart, who searches the minds and humbles the proud, has shown me, a poor sinner, in a shattering way on the very night of my last lecture to you by the untimely death of my beloved, young wife, there is, and there must be a resurrection from the dead. Forgive me for what I said in opposition to that. Today I retract it all. What would I, a poor brokenhearted man, do now if there were no resurrection of our loved ones unto life?" Then he stopped, broke down with grief, and sympathetic students rushed to his side to support him.

### **You are children of the resurrection**

Because you are children of the resurrection you love to hear what Jesus said to show the Sadducees how wrong they were. Jesus told the Sadducees, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels."

In this present life, the Lord our God has given us marriage and families to bring us happiness in this life. When God brought Eve to Adam, he joyfully proclaimed, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." In the resurrection, we will live in the place that Jesus has prepared for us, but there will not be marriages or families similar to what we enjoy in this life. In the resurrection we will enjoy closeness and love unlike anything we have experienced in this life and it will be with all people. If you take the happiest moments you have ever had in your marriage and family, and put them together in one minute of time, it would not begin to compare to the blessings you will enjoy with your fellow saints in the resurrection on the last day. 1 Corinthians 2 says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

Notice that Jesus said the ones who participate in this resurrection to glory are those who are worthy. "But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection..." I have no chance of being part of that resurrection if I base my hope on trying to make myself worthy and acceptable to the resurrection. A famous Hollywood actress was once asked why she was so generous with her money. Without hesitating, she said, "You know that the more rent you pay here now, the bigger your apartment will be in the next life." If my place in the resurrection depended on my performance, then I am hopelessly lost. One of the most alarming discoveries you can make in your life is that even the good you do in life is not up to God's standards of holiness and perfection. The words of Romans 3 speak to every person who has every walked on the face this earth. "There is none who does good, no not one."

As children of the resurrection your hope is found in Christ alone. The sin of the world was placed on Jesus. He suffered at the cross for sin of every person in the world including mine. Then the Father proclaimed he accepted the sacrifice Jesus made by raising him to life again. Romans 4 says that "He was delivered over to death for our sin and was raised to life for our justification." You can be sure of being raised to life again after you die because of the perfect life Jesus lived for you and the perfect sacrifice he made for you at the cross. So we can sing confidently, "Blessed are the saints of God, They are bought with Christ's own blood. With them numbered may we be, Here and in eternity." Because

of Jesus you can sing, "When the roll is called up yonder I will be there."

The Sadducees boldly asserted that there was no evidence of the resurrection in first five books of Moses. Jesus points them to Moses and the burning bush. He says, "Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord, 'the God of the Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'" Moses spoke of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are alive and they are among the saints triumphant. Their souls are not floating around in the vaulted spheres of the universe as the people who believe in reincarnation believe. The saints triumphant are all those who died with saving faith in Jesus and are now with him at his side. In the resurrection on the last day, their bodies will be raised to life again. That's the hope we live with each day. Anastasis. Resurrection. Such beautiful word. Such a living hope. Such a wonderful reality. Look around you at the people worshipping with you today. Think of your loved ones who died in Jesus. We are children of the resurrection. Amen.