

## **Matthew 21-12-26a**

Well, good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 26th day of December 2021.

We're in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 22, to which you may want to turn. We've already seen in this chapter the parable of the wedding feast, whether it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. And we have come to the section here in verse 23 through 33, where the Sadducees have approached Jesus and asked him a question because they don't believe in the resurrection.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and we'll get started. Father, it is such a wonderful privilege. It gives us pause to come before your throne.

We know that we are authorized and given that privilege because of the wonderful work of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to represent ourselves directly in your presence, to thank you for your grace and your faithfulness toward us, the provision that you've made, the protection that you have blessed us with, the opportunities that we have to learn and to grow, to be challenged, to be tested, and to draw upon the resources we have in your word and in your spirit. We pray this morning as we take the opportunity to look at the Lord Jesus Christ, his words and his actions in the face of opposition and in sharing heavenly truths that your Holy Spirit will help us to see their importance, their pertinence in our own lives, and that we can enjoy our fellowship today, leaving with a soul that is better equipped to take advantage of the time that remains to us in this life to grow in grace and to be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's read our passage. It's been a couple of weeks since we saw it.

We've had some holiday studies that have intervened. Matthew 22-23, the same day, of course, this is the same day that Jesus had had his conversations with the Pharisees. The Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise, the second also, and the third, even to the seventh.

Last of all, the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her. Jesus answered and said to them, You are mistaken, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God.

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. When the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at his teaching." This is one of those passages that we, at least I, I would rather speak for myself, would tend to come to read and say, well, it's too bad they don't know the resurrection.

I believe in the resurrection. I know where I'm going. I'm going to see all of my departed loved ones, and it's not a big issue for me.

These poor Sadducees don't believe in the resurrection. That's kind of tough for them. But in terms of traction for me to close my Bible, walk back out into life, I wouldn't find this passage initially very helpful.

I don't feel a fresh gust of wind in my sails to go out and be and to do and to serve and the rest of it. On first glance, you think, well, I don't really have a problem with the resurrection, so maybe God put this in here for people who do. I want to offer you a different thought about that this morning, and you're stuck with my current opposition to the forward progress of progressive Christianity, because unbelievably, we have people right now, as I speak in church on Sunday morning, who do not believe in the resurrection.

It just gobsmecked me. You would think, how can you be a Christian and not believe in the resurrection? Paul in Corinthians, I deliver to you as of first importance, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. He was buried.

He rose again the third day according to the scriptures. How can you claim to be a Christian and not believe in resurrection? We so take it for granted that when people challenge the resurrection, we can be somewhat unprepared to even defend it. It's just like, how can you not believe in the resurrection? Well, we don't want to be that way.

It's interesting to look at what Jesus says here, because his initial response is, what? You don't know the scriptures and you don't know the power of God. You err not knowing the scriptures. So the first thing I want to look at is, what is their problem? How did they arrive at this place? Because it will tell us how people right now have gotten to this place.

And I will tell you, I'm still sitting here with a part of my mind kind of reeling, but let me read you something. This is from [religious.tolerance.org](http://religious.tolerance.org). Many have wondered just what is historically accurate about the accounts of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, given the conflicting information presented in the Christian New Testament and other writings. Conflicting information.

So there are some gospels that say Jesus didn't rise and others say that he did. Some people in the gospels thought it was spiritual. Others say, what is this conflicting information? I am scratching my head.

I suppose they think, well, one says that Mary Magdalene saw Jesus first. Others say there were women, you know, Peter and John who got there first. We have been through the entire sequence of events beginning on the Saturday before the crucifixion, all the way through Passion Week, every single day of the week.

There is no silent Wednesday. We have seen every one of those. We have seen the arrest, the trial, the crucifixion, the burial.

We have seen why it took two days before the women could return from the tomb, because it was a Thursday Passover. The Passover lamb was slain between the evenings, according to the law of Moses, on Thursday afternoon. Jesus went into the tomb and was sealed in Thursday evening.

While he was in the tomb, everybody else was celebrating Passover. They had the staff in their hand and the robe. They did all of the traditional things.

We know this. We know the Friday crucifixion can't be right because Jesus didn't say, I will be in the tomb for a full day and part of two others. He said, this generation is going to get the sign of Jonah.

We just saw it a couple of chapters ago. The only sign this generation is going to receive when he was challenged by the Pharisees and Sadducees, they both came demanding a sign. He said, you're not going to get a sign.

An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign. The only one you're going to get is the sign of Jonah, which is what? As Jonah was in the belly of the fish, how long? Three days and three nights. So the son of man will be in the heart of the earth, how long? Three days and three nights.

A Friday crucifixion does not give you three nights. Either Jesus is a liar or the crucifixion was on Thursday. It's pretty much just that simple.

Why is it that they had to break the legs of the thieves and get the bodies off the cross? The next day being a Sabbath, because it was a high Sabbath, the first day of the feast of first fruits is a high Sabbath. So you can do no work on that special Sabbath followed by the Saturday Sabbath in which you can do no work. And so they were not allowed to intrude or go back to the tomb until early in the morning on the first day of the week.

And so Jesus was in the heart of the earth Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday night. He was in the heart of the earth all day, Friday, all day, Saturday, and early in the morning on the third day, which by Jewish reckoning, it was already half over because it

started the previous evening he arose. Well, it's a matter of knowing the scriptures.

You have to know how long Jonah was in the belly of the fish to understand what Jesus is saying. But anyway, to understand the story of the resurrection, we first need to examine the earliest written account of the event rather than the later gospels that had been created contradictory stories about it. It should be remembered for the first 40 years of Christianity after Jesus' crucifixion, there was no detailed written account of Jesus' resurrection from the tomb and his appearance to certain women and disciples, accounts of his ascension to heaven, and finally the commissioning of his followers at Pentecost follow in the last two decades of the first century.

This is how it begins to understand the story of the resurrection. We don't want to look at scripture. We want to look at scholarship because scholarship tells us that Paul wrote first and then the gospel accounts came later.

There is no hint, no inkling, no proof, no suggestion of this anywhere in scripture, but you can't just go by scripture. You need scholars to help put it in order and put it in a historical context that will let you start playing games with it instead of letting scripture interpret scripture. Here's the problem with the you need scholarship to understand this properly view.

99.98% of all people who ever lived were not willing, not scholars themselves, but didn't have the scholarship to appeal to. If you cannot understand God's word rightly, unless you've got a human educated guy with archaeology and languages and the rest of it, how are the common people to whom Jesus came and ministered ever going to understand God's plan? Well, I'm sorry, but let me turn you over to the Pharisees and let them educate you. And after you've had nine years of school, then you'll understand why my resurrection was really only a metaphor.

Sorry. No, all we need is God's spirit and God's word. And it is sufficient.

If we have trouble understanding whether something is literal or something is figurative, we have two choices. I can go to scholars and dissect their opinions and their debates with each other and their differing views and the other scholarship that they rely on and they footnote and that they quote, or I can appeal to God's Holy Spirit. Which one do I always have with me? Which one is perfect? Which one is not just going to give me the truth, but show me the purpose for the truth.

And that really gets at the heart of what we're talking about this morning. Scholars largely don't understand the purpose of God's truth. It isn't just given so that we have the truth.

If I'm trying to build something, if I'm trying to fix something, if I'm trying to get over something, I would like some truth, right? But it's not just any old truth. I don't want to

understand that you can make a tea out of sassafras leaves in the northeast part of the United States and it's good for a bellyache. Sorry, no, I've got a cut here and I need a natural antiseptic from my forest at my time.

We gather truth and we employ truth for a purpose. There is a purpose in it. And this is Jesus' answer to the Sadducees.

They are challenging a widely held doctrine. Even in this day, the Sadducees were a minority. There were three main sects.

You can read Josephus on this, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Essenes. And the Sadducees were by far the smallest and least influential, but they were anxious to proselytize and grow. And they were scripture literalists and they didn't find resurrection in the literal reading of the Old Testament scriptures.

They didn't see any physical resurrection in mass. It's hard to know how they explained away the resuscitations of the Old Testament, Elijah, Elisha. And they could explain Samuel coming up and talking to Saul with the witch of Endor as an apparition or whatever, but none of their writings have survived.

We know about them largely by their opponents and from scripture itself. They're mentioned about eight different times, eight different episodes where the Pharisees are mentioned and two or three of them are in Acts. Interestingly, I thought they were all in the Gospels.

Here's the point. Here's the point. The Sadducees say there is no resurrection.

Just like in the modern day, progressive Christianity has launched a very aggressive attack on resurrection. Not all progressive types disbelieve in the resurrection. There's a spectrum.

But this R.C. Symes here on the Religious Tolerance website starts with a scholarly argument that the Gospels are mythological because they're late. And if you want to know what really happened, you have to only read Paul. So Jesus didn't write anything.

His native language was Aramaic, a Galilean dialect. He may have spoken Greek. The first written account of Jesus' resurrection comes from Paul, originally a non-believer and persecutor of the followers of Jesus, but later their greatest missionary.

He was converted to Christianity about two or four years after Jesus' death by a subjective revelation from, quote unquote, the Lord, during which Paul writes that he was swept up to the third heaven, 2 Corinthians 12, 1-4. This is a conflation. Paul didn't say that when he met Jesus on the Damascus Road, he was swept up to heaven.

In 2 Corinthians 12, 1-4, he doesn't even say that he is the individual who was taken to

heaven. And I have offered an alternative understanding of that. But the point is, those two, Damascus Road and I know a man in Christ upwards of 14 years ago who was caught up to heaven, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot say.

Paul doesn't say I was caught up and heard things that it's not lawful for a man to utter. He says, I know somebody who was. Well, you can argue that the one he knows is Jesus Christ himself who was caught up to heaven and has revealed things.

Jesus himself says that about him. He says, no one has ascended except the Son of Man, the same one who was descended and who has shared what he knows. But regardless, this is the kind of sloppy Bible reading that can lead to great errors.

Anyway, he says Paul was converted by a subjective experience where he meets, quote unquote, the Lord and then writes that he was swept up to the third heaven, immediately began his preaching in Arabia. Years later, he met Peter and James, other apostles in Jerusalem. In about the year 55, Paul wrote what he knew about the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15, I quoted to you earlier, first and foremost, I hand onto you the facts which have been imparted to me. Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, buried, raised, third day according to the scriptures, appeared to Cephas and afterward to the 12. Then he appeared to over 500 of our brothers at once, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.

Then he appeared to James, afterward to all the apostles. In the end, he appeared even to me. At first glance, this description of the resurrection seems too sparse for the seminal event of Christianity.

It was the most memorable miracle seared into the minds of Jesus' disciples. But this is all the detail that Paul gives about the resurrection. You can see the way this is going.

I'm not going to burn a lot of Bible class time quoting this guy. You can read it if you want to find it. Just search on resurrection, progressive Christianity, and this will pop up.

There is a similar notion on [progressivechristianity.org](http://progressivechristianity.org). Go to the horse's mouth here. Resurrection, fact or fantasy by Bill Ahlenbach a couple of years ago. Progressive thinking is often considered heresy because it questions doctrines such as a God living above us or physical resurrections.

A dead man coming back to life defies the laws of nature, which says that dead is dead because the body shuts down and decomposition begins instantly. Nothing can reverse that process but fantasy. Some people try to squirm out of the finality of death by postulating that Jesus played dead, held his breath for 30 plus minutes.

The centurion pronounced him dead, but Jesus supposedly sneaked away never to be

heard from again. He says snuck, but snuck is not a word. It's sneaked, so you know.

Reality says this theory is even sillier than dead man, blah, blah. In reality, the dead bodies of crucifixion victims stayed on the crosses with wild animals eating them at night or they were taken to the dump to be cremated. Anyway, I'm not even going to waste time on that either.

But these people claim to be Christian. They claim that the second coming of Jesus is now and that it's in us. They claim that the resurrection and the kingdom is now and it's in us.

And it all begins with these subtle misapprehensions and missing the purpose of truth. This is how Jesus answers. And I'd rather spend my time in scripture.

But just so that you know, there are not thousands, not tens of thousands. There are now hundreds of thousands of people going to church, calling themselves Christians, wagging a Bible around who do not believe in resurrection anymore. And it's slipping under everybody's radar.

But if you start looking around, start reading, start looking at the blogs, start looking at the followers of people who put out this type of misinformation, it's huge. We seem to live, they used to call this the information age. It appears to be the misinformation age.

And all sides accuse the others of misinformation. The standard of what is information is the word of God. And this is what Jesus cites when he is talking to the Sadducees.

So in chapter 22, when they come and what they do is they attack him with a combination of scripture and reason, right? Moses told us that a man should raise up children to his dead brother. So they start with scripture, but then they go to, is it reasonable? And the reason I read a little bit of these is people are rationalizing. Is it reasonable to think that writing a hundred years after the fact, the gospel writers would get it correct.

And by the way, this scholarly opinion that the gospels were written, you know, decades after the fact is false. Look at the we sections of Luke. Luke is writing his second book and taking notes for it and doing his research while he is traveling with Paul.

He has already written the first epistle to Theophilus and Paul has no doubt seen a copy. Paul has access to the gospel of Luke and Luke had access to Mark. So that tells us in likely terms from scripture that both Luke and Mark are available either directly or indirectly to Paul in the forties, not in the sixties and seventies and later as these people claim.

So scripture tells us that the gospel accounts were available early. And remember that scripture doesn't have the capital S in it was referred to in the new Testament that we

put in our English. Christ died for our sins according to what has been written according to the writings.

And these are writings from God about God. And they are all the ones that have been written up to the point that the speaker is speaking. Paul tells Timothy, you know, the holy scriptures and they're able to make you wise.

Well, what scriptures are available? Everything in the old Testament and whatever new Testament scriptures have now been written, whatever letters are starting to circulate the letters that Paul might've previously written to Timothy, these writings about the things of God from apostolic authors and gospel authors are all comprehended. They didn't have published Bibles to say it's canonical or non-canonical. These are the writings that God has delivered his word through.

So just so that's clear. So they begin their attack with scripture. Well, Moses gave us the Levitical law.

It's not the tribe of Levi. Levitical has the idea. It comes from a different route that has the idea of brothers stepping in to take the place of a dead brother.

So seven brothers all had her. Jesus answered and said to them, you are mistaken. This word mistaken is very interesting because it is used frequently in scripture and the word means misled.

It means in error. It means the word itself is from Planao, P-L-A-N-A-O. Patty and I used to live in Planao, Texas.

But this is the word we get planet from. How did they identify the planets in the sky? They would look at the fixed pattern of the constellations, but then there were these wandering non-conforming lights and they said, look, they are Planao. They're off course.

They're not following their planets. So we find this in Matthew chapter 18. We saw it in the parable of the hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray.

It's Planao. He's not with the group anymore. So you have strayed, you have departed from what we would, the old word was orthodox.

Orthos means straight, orthodontia, you get your teeth straight. And so people who have left what is straight and true, rightly dividing the word of truth, laying a straight course of bricks in the word of truth, you've gone astray. Jesus said, wouldn't a shepherd leave the 99 and go after the one that has gone astray.

This is really the second time, the second occasion on which he uses this word in the gospel of Matthew here. The next time, if you look forward to Matthew 24 and verse five, when they are asking Jesus about the time that these things will be when one stone of

the is not laid on another, what will be the sign of your coming? The end of the age, Jesus said, take heed that no one deceives you. Deceives.

Yeah. A lot of us have memorized a Galatians six, seven, and eight. Be not deceived.

God is not mocked whatsoever. A man sows that shall he also reap the word deceived here in Matthew 24 there in Galatians six and many other places is Planao. How do you get astray? How do you get off course? How are you misled? You are deceived.

Be not deceived. Jesus says here in 24, let no one deceive you over and over again. He says in verse 11 of Matthew 24 that these are going to rise up.

There'll be many false prophets who will rise up and Planao many deceive them. Sadducees you are deceived. These weren't the first Sadducees.

There were Sadducees back in the days of the Maccabees. They'd been around. Nobody knows where they came from or how they got started.

Nobody knows why they're called Sadducees other than the little children's joke. But were they, some people think, well, maybe they came from Zadok because Zadok the priest sounds a little bit like Saddoc, Sadduce. You know, you kind of morph into it.

Some think that they thought they were followers of righteousness, which is Sadiq in Hebrew. So Sadducees were righteous guys. But nobody knows where it came from.

Nobody knows what their founding documents or arguments or tenants were. We only know what scripture tells us. And that's enough because they're given to us here as an example of those who have been misled.

This is not the first generation of Sadducees. They have listened to earlier Sadducees who listened to earlier Sadducees who, and they were convinced by these misleading arguments. And the arguments of progressive Christianity, as I pointed out, are not new.

They were a part of the emergent church. They were part of the earlier movements in the 1960s and going all the way back to over 100 years ago when liberalism first came out, when the documentary hypothesis and the deconstruction of scripture began. And there have been elements of this ever since Jesus walked the earth, ever since Paul preached, ever since John and Peter wrote their letters and addressed their churches.

There have been those who will take scripture and twist it. There are those who take knowledge of scripture too far. The Gnostics became so heavenly minded, they were no earthly good.

They thought that you could live in a world of knowledge and the physical didn't matter. There are 19 ways to go wrong. And it is really hard to stay on that narrow road that leads to the straight gate of life.

Few there be that find it. Broad is the road, wide is the gate that leads to destruction. And many people get plowed onto that.

So Jesus says, here's where you went wrong. Here's how you got deceived. This to me is fascinating because there's widespread deception in the church today.

There's widespread deception in the world today. And so when Jesus himself says, you guys are a deceived group and here's where you went wrong. It's really instructive.

So what does he say? Well, not knowing the scriptures. One of the first posts of deconstruction in progressive Christianity is to set aside the authority of old Testament scripture. I have dear friends who have been misled into believing this.

The rationale is old Testament scripture is not the inspired word of God equal and on the same level with new Testament. It is just old Testament people and their encounter with God, their impression of God, what they thought God was saying. And that got written down, but that's not really God.

You can't see God until John 1 18. No one has seen God at any time. Christ reveals him.

So it's the Jesus hermeneutic. And if I don't see Jesus leading troops into battle, then nobody should lead troops into battle. If I don't see Jesus condemning a homosexual, then I should not condemn a homosexual.

If I don't see Jesus, uh, uh, implementing, uh, the patriarchal system and that, uh, husbands should, uh, be the authority in the home and wives, uh, should honor that authority and, and, uh, equality and equality. I don't, I don't see Jesus saying what Paul says. So Paul is out and Jesus is in it's the Jesus hermeneutic.

And I only have to follow what I see Jesus positively affirming. Well, this leads to its own problems. Jesus himself.

If you start with Jesus, let's say you start with the Jesus hermeneutic. It ought to be a self-correcting error because Jesus says, you know, where you go astray, you know, he'd get misled. You don't know your old Testament scriptures.

These guys came quoting old Testament scriptures. And Jesus says, you have not understood those scriptures rightly. How does he do it in the resurrection? They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.

Many people have come to this passage and said no marriage in heaven. And they're looking at the husband and wife, um, you know, wedding cake idea. What is the premise here is the question about marriage.

It is not, it is about resurrection and they're using the marriage idea, right? To, to complicate and, and rationally challenge that there could be a resurrection because it's

going to create confusion. A resurrection is too confusing. What about multiple spouse people? So I have a rational objection to your resurrection notion.

And Jesus says, you don't really know the scriptures because you are presenting this scripture. And they themselves said it, and Jesus is very subtle about this, but look at, look at the beginning of what they say. Moses said, if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring.

The issue is children. That's why the lever at law was given by Moses. Remember we were talking about what is the purpose of the truth.

It's not just gathering any old truth and carrying it around in a bag. I need truth. That's meaningful to me.

I want something that helps me live today in a way where I redeem the time. The days are going to be evil by default. If I don't redeem the time, I need truth and the guidance of the spirit to grab ahold of this day and invest it in the eternal future.

So I need, I need purposeful truth. I need truth that counts and that matters and that guides me today. Well, this truth, the lever at law was given to Israel for a purpose.

What was the purpose? Was it, well, nobody should be without a wife. Nobody should be without a husband. If we've got a wife here, let's have a brother marry her.

And that way she'll have a husband and he'll have a wife and we'll have more marriages. Marriage wasn't an end in itself. Marriage had a purpose.

What is the purpose in the law? Raise up children. That's what it's for. So the Sadducees, by raising this complication, there isn't going to be marriage in the eternal future for the purpose it was given.

Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, manly father and mother and cleave to his wife. He had a father and mother. He was, he was reproductively created, right? And he's going to take a wife and he's going to reproductively create more.

And the purpose of marriage primarily is for family. That's its purpose. Do you need to procreate and reproduce in the resurrection? In the resurrection, everybody that's ever been created by reproduction is going to be back.

And so in the resurrection, they do not marry or give in marriage for the purpose you just stated, which is to create children. I am firmly convinced that husbands and wives who love each other in this life are going to spend eternity enjoying that the way they enjoyed this. There is no, in this life we become one flesh and we work toward becoming one spirit.

And I think in the resurrection, and I've made this point before, you've heard me talk

about the fact that it seems significant that angels so often appear in pairs or in groups. How many angels are there at the tomb? Oh, it's a contradiction. That's why the resurrection can't be true because one gospel says there's one angel and another gospel says there's two.

Well, one gospel says there was one man possessed by the legion and another gospel says there's two. One gospel talks about blind Bartimaeus and the other says there were two blind men outside of Jericho. If you're talking about the one, it doesn't exclude the other.

If you focus on one, it doesn't mean the other isn't there. And they are not contradictory. They are complementary.

When you're trying to make a point about a conversation, you focus on the person you were talking to. When you want to make a point about the larger context, well, then you include the second demon-possessed man, you include the second blind man, you include the second angel. But angels often appear in pairs, going all the way back to the days of Lot.

God himself comes down and talks to Abraham and Sarah and he's got two angels with him. God's got two angels on two sides of his throne. His throne is surrounded by four angels.

It's a group. And angels function great in group. The angel that announced to the shepherds, as we recently remembered, suddenly there was with that angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God.

When Gabriel appears singly to Daniel, he appears to Zechariah, he appears to Mary. But you know that there is a focus on communication at that point. There is a message and it's important to be delivered.

So we're not going to distract you. I don't have a second angel, but remember the angel that says, Daniel, I'd have been here sooner, but I was opposed by the Prince of Persia and Michael came and helped me. And that's how I got here.

Two angels did, but one angel could not. Interestingly, I say that to say this, not knowing the scriptures, knowing the scriptures is not, can you recite the scriptures? Can you recount the scriptures? Do you understand the purpose? And this is one of the great failings that is rife in progressive Christianity today. They are calling the wars that Joshua and David engaged in wars of genocide.

This is coming out of the mouths of Christians. The Old Testament conquest of Canaan by Joshua was a war of genocide. David protecting the borders of Israel and putting to flight the enemies who were coming and invading.

These were wars of genocide. David's wars against the Philistines, genocide. Here's the thing.

You remember early in the book of Joshua, didn't he have an encounter with someone and be strong and have a good courage. And who did he meet? I am the captain of the hosts of the Lord. We're fighting along with you.

God says, be strong and have a good courage. God gave them victory. David dedicates his defeat of Goliath and subsequent victory over the entire Philistine army to God.

God says, go into the land. God is the one who gives these instructions. They are upset with Elijah.

And I thought at first this was Mount Carmel. And I was talking with Elizabeth. She straightened me out that it's not Mount Carmel where fire comes down from heaven.

I just saw a little article by one of these folks and they said, well, you know, Jesus rebukes James and John because when they're going through Samaria and there's some people giving them a hard time, James and John say, Lord, shall we call down fire from heaven? And Jesus says, no, you do not know what spirit you are of. And they go on to say, see, you're not supposed to have the spirit of Elijah who called down fire from heaven and consume people. And I thought, well, I thought he consumed the altar.

But then I remembered there's an episode where a captain of 50 comes to fetch Elijah and take him to the king. And Elijah says, if I'm a prophet of God, let fire from heaven come down and consume you and your men. And it happens.

Well, the king says another 50 with a captain. And Elijah says, if I'm a prophet of God, let fire from heaven come down and consume you and your men. And it happens.

And you remember the third guy comes and he comes, you know, with his helmet in his hand and he says, Elijah, please, please don't don't incinerate us. The king really doesn't want to see you. And Elijah is willing to go.

But and they say, see, this spirit of Elijah, this is terrible. It's just unbiblical. It's a heinous thing.

If Elijah had a flamethrower or hairspray in a match or threw gasoline on him and threw a cigarette at him, that's one thing. But Elijah says, if I am a prophet of God, let fire come down from heaven. Where does the fire come from that consumes these hundred and two men? It doesn't come from Elijah.

When the teenagers are persecuting Elisha after he heals the water at Jericho and they lose their jobs because they made money hauling water from the Jordan to Jericho, which is a distance, and Elisha puts them out of a job. And that's why these teenage boys are

giving him such a hard time saying, going up, old bald head, go up, old bald head. Elisha doesn't attack them with his prophetic staff.

Bears come out and tear them. Where did the bears come from? These are not Elisha's trained bears. He doesn't keep them on hand in case he gets in a tight spot.

What these people refuse to acknowledge in the scriptures and what the Pharisees and Sadducees, and in this case, the Sadducees, fail to appreciate is not just the scripture, but the power of God revealed in scripture. You are misled. You are deceived.

You err. You go astray. You are mistaken.

You are wrong. All of these are English translations in various Bibles, because you don't know the scriptures and you don't know the power of God. It's both.

Scripture without the power of God isn't purposeful truth. Purposeful truth is what counts. And Jesus is about to deliver two pieces of purposeful truth here.

And the principle by which he delivers it and the way he rebukes and rebuts this attack on scripture, which is what it is, is instructive for us, because it will help us be prepared if we are suddenly challenged and asked a reason for the hope that is in us. What is your hope? What is my hope? Paul says, if you've got hope in this life only, we're of all men, most miserable. Our hope is the resurrection.

So defending the resurrection is defending the hope. Be ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you and our expectation of God's fulfillment, of his promises, of our reunion and our resurrection and our future life with God is central. Paul said it was central to the Corinthians.

Jesus points it out as central here. And to misunderstand it is something we need to be ready to correct when asked. Well, let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll see the principle by which, in other words, we're not just going to see Jesus answer, but how did he craft this answer? What is the way in which he answers? Because it teaches us the way to answer. We learn to pray by looking at the prayers of Jesus and Paul. We can learn to give an answer to those who ask us about our hope by looking at the way Jesus answers.

And we'll do that after we come back from the break.