

## Book Study – Matthew 22:15 - 46

*Paying Taxes – Marriage at Resurrection – Greatest Commandment – Whose Son is the Christ?*

### Before We Begin Our Journey...

1. What ideals do many people have about marriage?
2. If you had to summarize this past week, how would you describe it?

### Do Some Digging and Pre-planning...

3. How did Jesus answer the question without getting Himself in political hot water? ([22:21](#))
4. What group confronted or opposed Jesus? How? ([22:23](#))
5. What distinctive belief did the Sadducees hold? ([22:23](#))
6. What two important facts did Jesus charge the Sadducees with not knowing? ([22:29](#))
7. What specific question did the lawyer ask Jesus and why did he ask it? ([22:35-36](#))
8. How did Jesus answer the Pharisee's question? How important are these two principles? ([22:37-40](#))
9. What religious group had gathered? Why? What questions did Jesus ask? ([22:41-45](#))

### Sort, Organize, Gain Understanding...

10. What do you think Jesus called us to do when He said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and give to God what is God's"?
11. In what ways can our doctrinal beliefs blind us to the truth?
12. What questions asked by unbelievers do you have the most difficult time answering?
13. What does it mean to "love your neighbor as yourself"?
14. How can we keep our focus on what really matters?
15. What objections to Jesus' identity do people raise today?
16. How would you answer a friend who says, "Prove to me that Jesus is God"?



### Application for the Journey...

17. What needs to change in your life today to reflect the fact that you serve a living God?
18. What area(s) of your life do you need to surrender to the lordship of Christ today?



*A prayer for your journey... "Lord Jesus, as I walk through this coming week, help me prepare for my journey by reading my Bible more regularly, seeking help as I need it from my Christian friends and focusing on the needs of others instead of myself. Help me to demonstrate my faith by stepping into the unknown, untried, and untested areas of my life."* -Amen



### Direction Finder...

Thoughts from everyone on what belongs to God and what belongs to us or "man"...

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I will... \_\_\_\_\_

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## Who were the Sadducees and the Pharisees?

(from [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org))

**The Sadducees** - During the time of Christ and the New Testament era, those who were Sadducees were aristocrats. They tended to be wealthy and held powerful positions, including that of chief priests and high priest, and they held the majority of the 70 seats of the ruling council called the Sanhedrin. They worked very hard to keep the peace by going along with the decisions of Rome (Israel at this time was under Roman control), and in fact they seemed to be more concerned with politics than religion. Because they were accommodating to Rome, and they were the wealthy upper class, they did not relate well to the common man nor did the common man hold them in high opinion. The common man related better to those who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. Though the Sadducees held the majority of seats in the Sanhedrin, history indicates that much of the time they had to go along with the ideas of the Pharisaical minority, again because the Pharisees were popular with the masses.

Religiously, the Sadducees were more conservative in one main area of doctrine than the Pharisees. The Pharisees gave oral tradition equal authority to the written Word of God, while the Sadducees considered only the written Word to be from God. The Sadducees worked very hard to preserve the authority of the written Word of God, especially the Books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy). While they could be commended for this, they definitely were not perfect in their doctrinal views. The following are a brief list of beliefs they held that contradict Scripture:

1. They were extremely self sufficient to the point of denying God's involvement in everyday life.
2. They denied any resurrection of the dead ([Matthew 22:23](#); [Mark 12:18-27](#); [Acts 23:8](#)).
3. They denied any afterlife, holding that the soul perished at death, therefore believing there is no penalty or reward after the earthly life.
4. They denied the existence of a spiritual world, i.e. angels and demons ([Acts 23:8](#)).

Because the Sadducees were more concerned with politics than religion, they were unconcerned with Jesus until they became afraid He might bring unwanted Roman attention. It was at this point that the Sadducees and Pharisees united and conspired to put Christ to death ([John 11:48-50](#); [Mark 14:53](#); [Mark 15:1](#)). Other mentions of the Sadducees are found in [Acts 4:1](#), [Acts 5:17](#), and the Sadducees are implicated in the death of James by the historian Josephus ([Acts 12:1-2](#)).

The Sadducees ceased to exist in A.D. 70. Since this party existed because of their political and priestly ties, when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70, the Sadducees were also destroyed.

**The Pharisees** - In contrast to the Sadducees, the Pharisees were mostly middle-class businessmen, and therefore were in contact with the common man. The Pharisees were held in a much higher opinion by the common man than the Sadducees. Though they were a minority in the Sanhedrin, and held a minority number of positions as priests, they seemed to control the decision making of the Sanhedrin far more than the Sadducees did, again because they had the support of the people.

Religiously, they accepted the written Word as inspired by God. At the time of Christ's earthly ministry, this would have been what is now our Old Testament. But, they also gave equal authority to oral tradition, and attempted to defend this position by saying it went all the way back to Moses. This was nothing less than legalism. These traditions had evolved over centuries. These traditions added to God's Word, which is forbidden ([Deuteronomy 4:2](#); [Revelation 22:18-19](#)), and the Pharisees sought to strictly obey these traditions equally along with the Old Testament. The Gospels abound with examples of the

Pharisees treating these traditions as equal to God's Word ([Matthew 9:14](#), [15:1-9](#), [23:5](#), [23:16](#), [23](#); [Mark 7:1-23](#); [Luke 11:42](#)). However, they did remain true to God's Word with reference to certain other important doctrines. In contrast to the Sadducees, they held the following:

1. They believed that God controlled all things, yet decisions made by individuals contributed to the course of a person's life.
2. They believed in the resurrection of the dead ([Acts 23:6](#)).
3. They believed in an afterlife, with appropriate reward and punishment on an individual basis.
4. They believed in the existence of angels and demons ([Acts 23:8](#)).

Though the Pharisees were rivals with the Sadducees, they managed to set aside their differences on one occasion—the trial of Christ. It was at this point in time that the Sadducees and Pharisees united to put Christ to death ([Mark 14:53](#), [15:1](#); [John 11:48-50](#)). While the Sadducees ceased to exist after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple because they were largely political in nature, the Pharisees, who were much more concerned with the religious state of Israel, continued in existence well beyond the destruction of Jerusalem. In fact, the Pharisees were against the rebellion that brought on Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70, and were the first to make peace with the Romans afterward. The Pharisees were also responsible for the compilation of the Mishnah, an important document with reference to the continuation of Judaism beyond the destruction of the central place of worship, the Temple.

Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees earned numerous rebukes from Jesus. Perhaps the best lesson we can learn from the Pharisees and Sadducees is to not be like them. Unlike the Sadducees, we are to believe everything the Bible says, including the miraculous and the afterlife. Unlike the Pharisees, we are not to treat traditions as having equal authority as Scripture, and we are not to allow our relationship with God to be reduced to a legalistic list of rules and rituals.

## Sadducees

1. Rich aristocrats (Chief priests and high priest and majority of the 70 seats in the Sanhedrin)
2. More concerned with politics than religion
3. Considered only the written Word (law) to be from God. Denied God's involvement in everyday life.
4. Denied resurrection from the dead. Denied afterlife and idea of reward/punishment in the afterlife.
5. Denied the spiritual world (angels and demons for example)

## Pharisees

1. Middle-class businessmen who had the support of the common man.
2. Accepted the written Word as inspired by God and gave equal importance to the oral tradition.
3. Very legalistic because they believed that oral traditions were inspired by God, even though they were evolutionary traditions passed down from generation to generation.
4. Believed God controlled all things, but individuals could control their own lives.
5. Believed in the resurrection of the dead. Believed in an afterlife with reward and punishment.
6. Believed in a spiritual world with angels and demons.
7. Continued to exist as a group well after the destruction of Jerusalem. Lived in peace with the Romans.

## Recommended Resources:

[Bible Answers for Almost all Your Questions by Elmer Towns.](#)

