

Ye Know Not the Scriptures



THE BOOK OF MARK

Lesson 20—Mark 12:18–44

Three Questions

SADDUCEES

- Came to the baptism of John (Matthew 3:7)
- Colluded with the Pharisees against Jesus (Matthew 16:1)
- Beware of the leaven of the Sadducees (Matthew 16:11)
- Why did they not believe in a resurrection? Daniel 12:2; Isaiah 26:19, 25:8; Job 19:25–26)

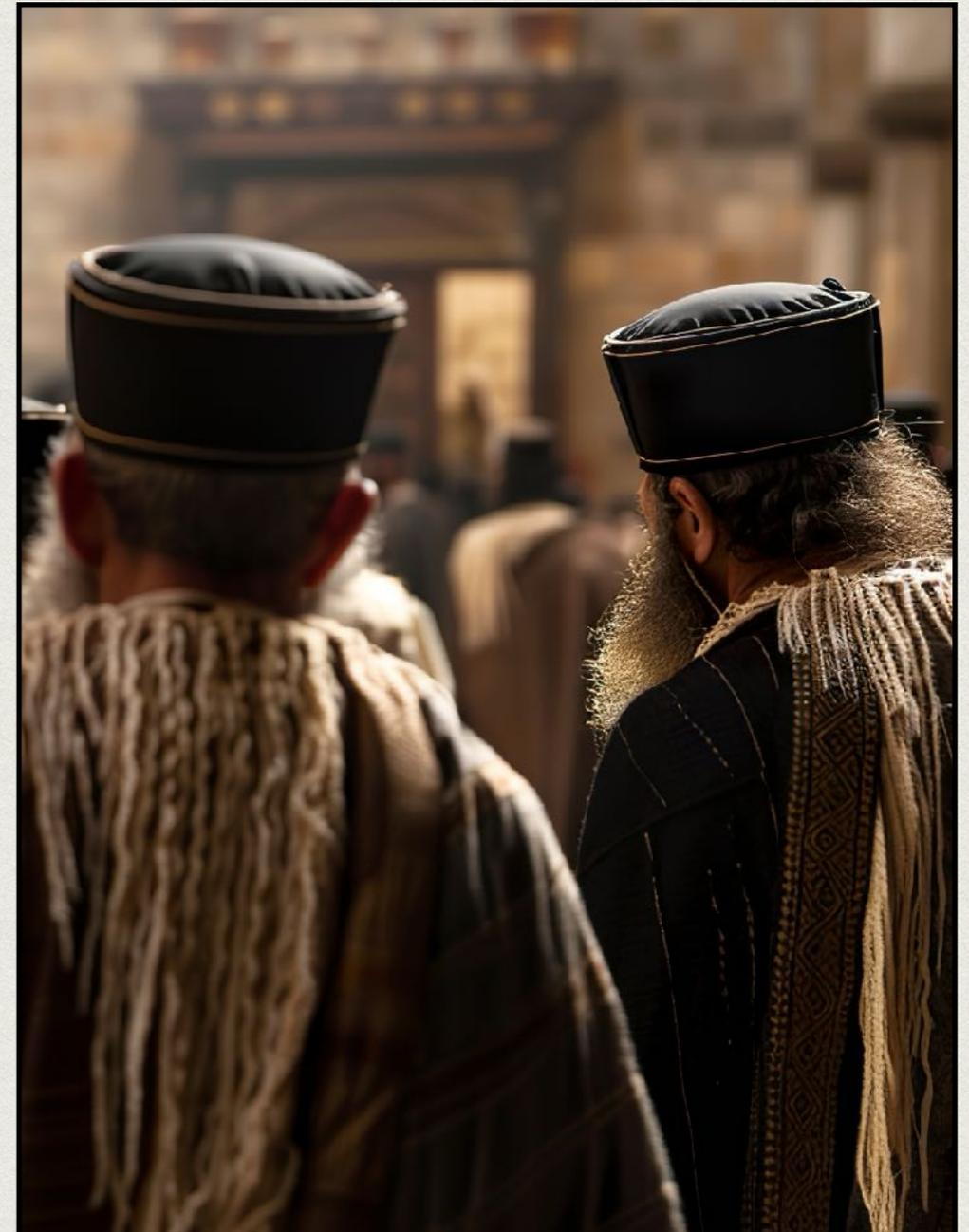


SADDUCEES

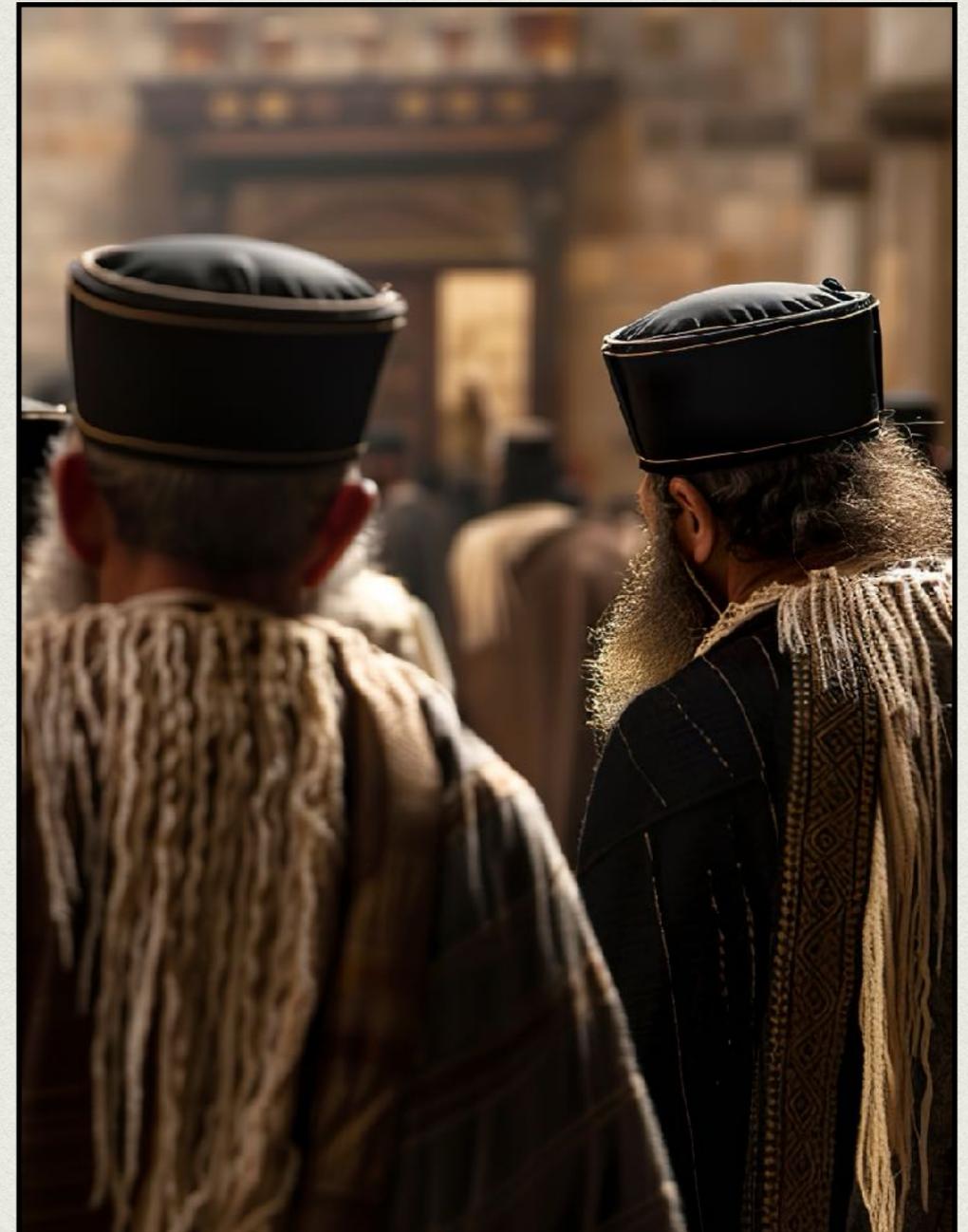
- Only accepted the Torah as divinely inspired—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They did not consider the rest of the Hebrew scriptures to be inspired. It is something like today. Protestant Bibles have 39 books in the Old Testament, but the Catholic Bibles have 46 books because they include some of the apocryphal writings.



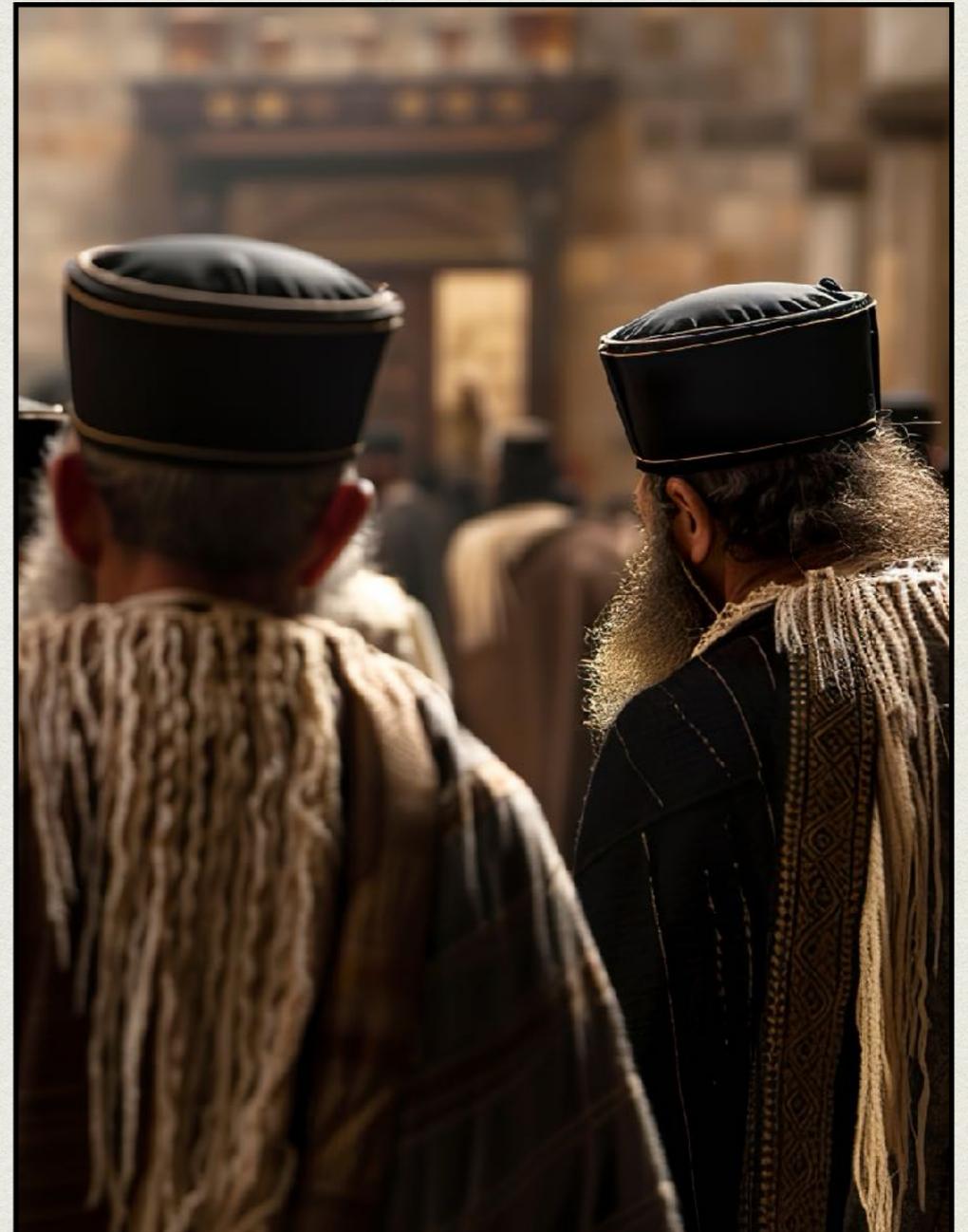
The Sadducees were composed of the high priests and their families, other aristocratic families, and merchants — the wealthier elements of the population. They tended to have good relations with the Roman rulers of Palestine, and were the ultraconservatives within Judaism. They strictly adhered to the Torah and nothing else, unlike the Pharisees who strictly adhered to tradition also, which helped to change interpretations of the law. While the Pharisees claimed the authority of piety and learning, the Sadducees claimed that of birth and social and economic position. During the long period of the two groups' existence — which lasted until the Romans' destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 — the Sadducees dominated the Temple and its priesthood. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sadducee>, condensed)



The Sadducees and Pharisees were in constant conflict with each other over details of ritual and the Law and most importantly over the content and extent of God's revelation to the Jewish people. The Sadducees did not go beyond the written Torah and, unlike the Pharisees, denied the immortality of the soul, bodily resurrection after death, and the existence of angelic spirits. For the Sadducees, the vast body of Jewish traditions meant nothing. By contrast, the Pharisees revered the Torah but also claimed that oral tradition was part of Mosaic law. Because of their strict adherence to the written law, the Sadducees acted severely in cases involving the death penalty, and they interpreted literally the Mosaic principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". (Ibid., paraphrased)



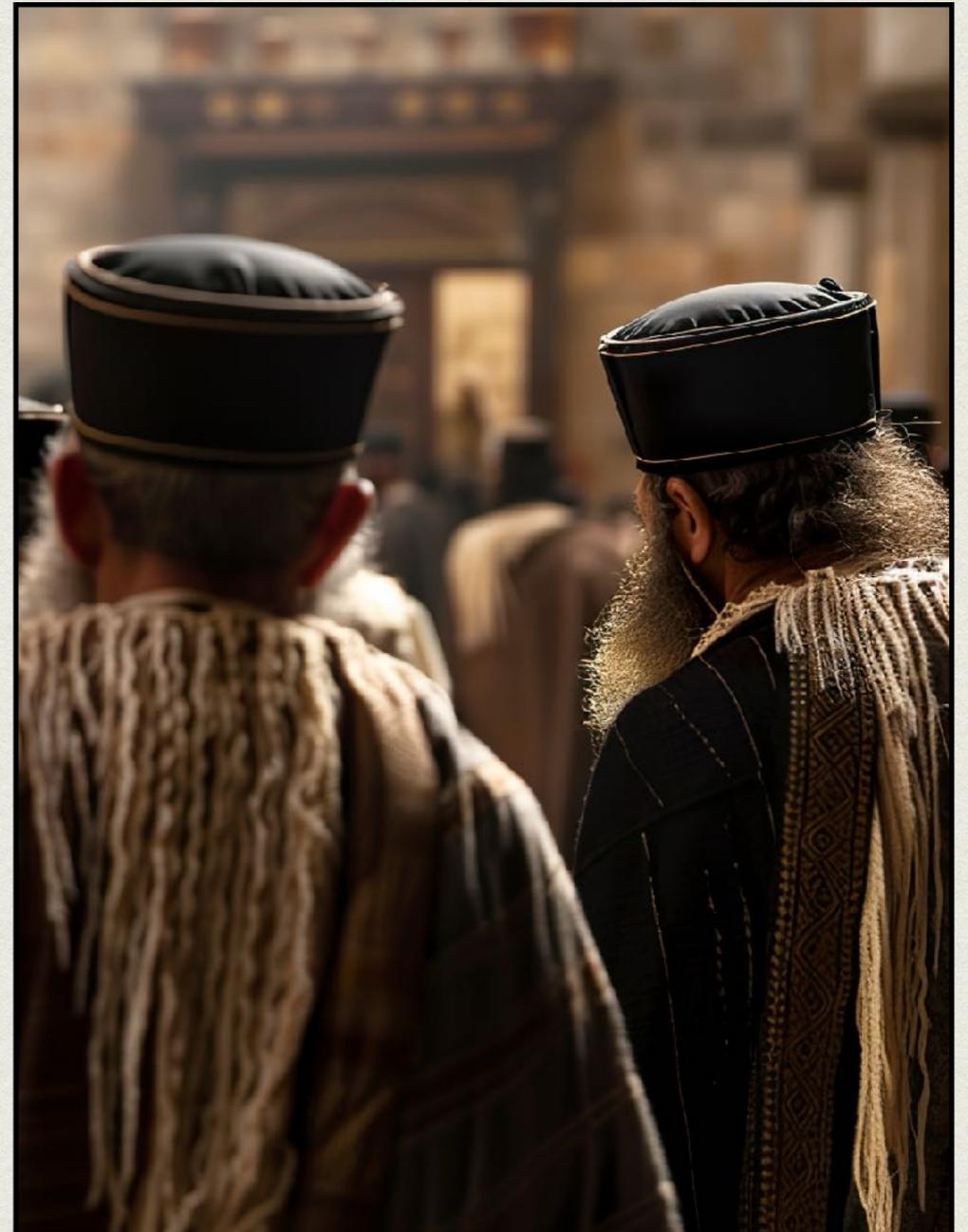
Though the Sadducees were conservative in religious matters, their wealth, their haughty bearing, and their willingness to compromise with the Roman rulers aroused the hatred of the common people. They were strict defenders of the Torah and thus viewed the ministry of Jesus and his new teachings with considerable alarm.



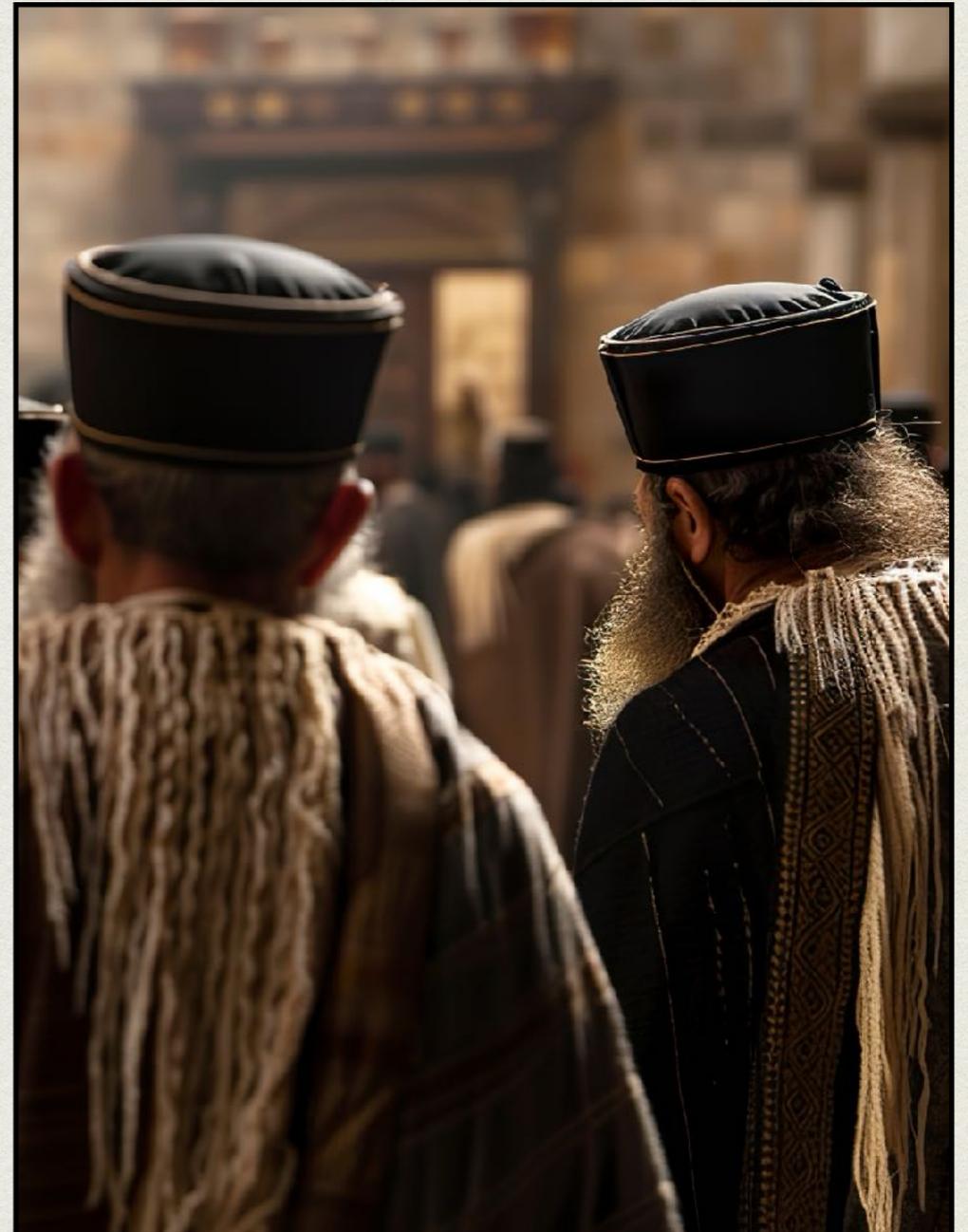
They rejected the rest of the Old Testament as uninspired, and denied the value of tradition of which the Pharisees made so much.

Consequently, the Sadducees refused to accept the teaching of a future life, or of angels, or of spirits of any sort, or of future retribution, for they declared that they failed to find in the Torah plain statements on these matters. . . .

Comparatively little is known of the Sadducees, however, because they have left no literature whatsoever. (*SDA BC* vol. 5, p. 52, 53).



The Sadducees had flattered themselves that they of all men adhered most strictly to the Scriptures. But Jesus showed that they had not known their true meaning. That knowledge must be brought home to the heart by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Their ignorance of the Scriptures and the power of God He declared to be the cause of their confusion of faith and darkness of mind. (*DA 605.5*)



PHARISEES

- The Pharisees were the popular, orthodox, majority party. Their program was one of rigid adherence to the law and to the host of their traditional interpretations.



PHARISEES

- They insisted on the binding force of oral tradition. The basic difference that led to the split between the Pharisees and the Sadducees lay in their respective attitudes toward the Torah and the problem of finding in it answers to **contemporary** legal and religious matters far different from those of the time of Moses. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pharisee>, paraphrased)



PHARISEES

- The Sadducees refused to accept any precept as binding unless it was based directly on the Torah. The Pharisees, on the other hand, believed that the law that God gave to Moses consisted of the written law **and** the teachings of the prophets and the oral traditions of the Jewish people. The Sadducees taught that the written Torah was the only source of revelation, but the Pharisees believed in evolution in the law, that humans must use their reason in interpreting the Torah and applying it to contemporary problems. (Ibid.)



PHARISEES

- As students of the law, they were the **scribes** and hence they were the popular spiritual guides. They pressed their beliefs with ardor and conviction, and won numerous adherents to their point of view.



PHARISEES

- The Pharisees harmonized the teachings of the Torah with their own ideas or found their own ideas suggested or implied in it. When a law had been outgrown or superseded by changing conditions, they gave it a new and more-acceptable meaning, seeking scriptural support for their actions through a ramified system of hermeneutics. (Ibid.)



- But when he saw many of the **Pharisees and Sadducees** come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (Matthew 3:7)
- The **Pharisees also with the Sadducees** came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. (Matthew 16:1)
- Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the **Pharisees and of the Sadducees**. (Matthew 16:6)
- How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the **leaven** of the **Pharisees and of the Sadducees**? Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the **Pharisees and of the Sadducees**. (Matthew 16:11–12)

- The same day came to him the Sadducees . . .
(Matthew 22:23)
- Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, (Acts 5:17)
- Fourteen verses mention Sadducees; whereas, Pharisees are mentioned in 84 verses. Remember, the Pharisees were the popular, orthodox, majority sect of the Jewish people. They taught rigid adherence to the law **and** to traditions.

QUESTION 1—MARK 12:18–27

- Sadducees. They were Jews and believed in Moses but did not believe in a resurrection. They called Jesus, Master, which means teacher.
- Whose wife shall she be?
Deuteronomy 25:5
- Jesus answered that they erred because they did not know the scriptures and
- Because they did not know the power of God.



QUESTION 1—WHOSE WIFE IS SHE?

- Mark 12:18–27
- Matthew 22:23–33
- Luke 20:27–38
- Matthew 11:20, 21
- Mark 5:30
- *Dynamis*—power, might, strength
- *Exousia*—power, authority
(Matthew 7:29)



The Sadducees came to Jesus with a hypothetical story. Jesus answered by first telling them that they did not know the Scriptures nor the power of God. Then from the writings the Sadducees professed to believe, he showed them there would be a resurrection and used as the basis for this truth that God is a God of the living. **It would be no glory to be the God of the dead, for death came by sin,** but in the writing of Moses, God calls himself “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6). They knew these men were dead and buried, so how could God be the God of the living for these three men who were dead?

The answer is in Roman 4:17, where God calls those things that are not as though they were. God knew he would raise them from the dead. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were, instead, already living in heaven when Jesus spoke and that is why God called himself the God of the living, then the words of Christ in Mark 12:26 would make no sense, for Jesus was quoting Exodus 3:6 to prove that the dead will rise.

God counts the things that are not as though they were. He sees the end from the beginning, and beholds the result of His work as though it were now accomplished. The precious dead, from Adam down to the last saint who dies, will hear the voice of the Son of God, and will come forth from the grave to immortal life. God will be their God, and they shall be His people. There will be a close and tender relationship between God and the risen saints. This condition, which is anticipated in His purpose, He beholds as if it were already existing. The dead live unto Him. (*DA 606.1*)

Prior to and at the first advent of Christ, religious teachers set forth strange ideas that were so mingled with portions of truth that they were full of deceptive power, and led souls away from God, although they still preserved the appearance of being His true worshipers. We find a similar condition of society in these **last days**, and those who depart from the faith, mingle with their belief diversities of human opinion. . . . the trouble is that men are doing today as they did in the time of Christ, and are teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (*TDG* 164.2)

There are men today who express their belief that there will be marriages and births in the new earth, but those who believe the Scriptures cannot accept such doctrines. . . . Neither those who shall be raised from the dead, nor those who shall be translated without seeing death, will marry or be given in marriage. **They will be as the angels of God, members of the royal family.** (*FLB* 366.2)

Do you have to cut loose from friends and relatives in deciding to obey the elevated truths of God's word? Well, take courage, God has made provision for you, his arms are opened to receive you. Come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean, and he will receive you. He promises to be a father unto you. Oh, what a relationship is this! higher and holier than any earthly ties. If you make the sacrifice, if you have to forsake father, mother, sisters, brothers, wife and children, for Christ's sake, you will not be friendless. **God adopts you into his family;** you become members of the **royal household;** sons and daughters of the heavenly King who rules in the Heaven of heavens. Can you desire a more exalted position than is here promised? (*T12 20.1*)

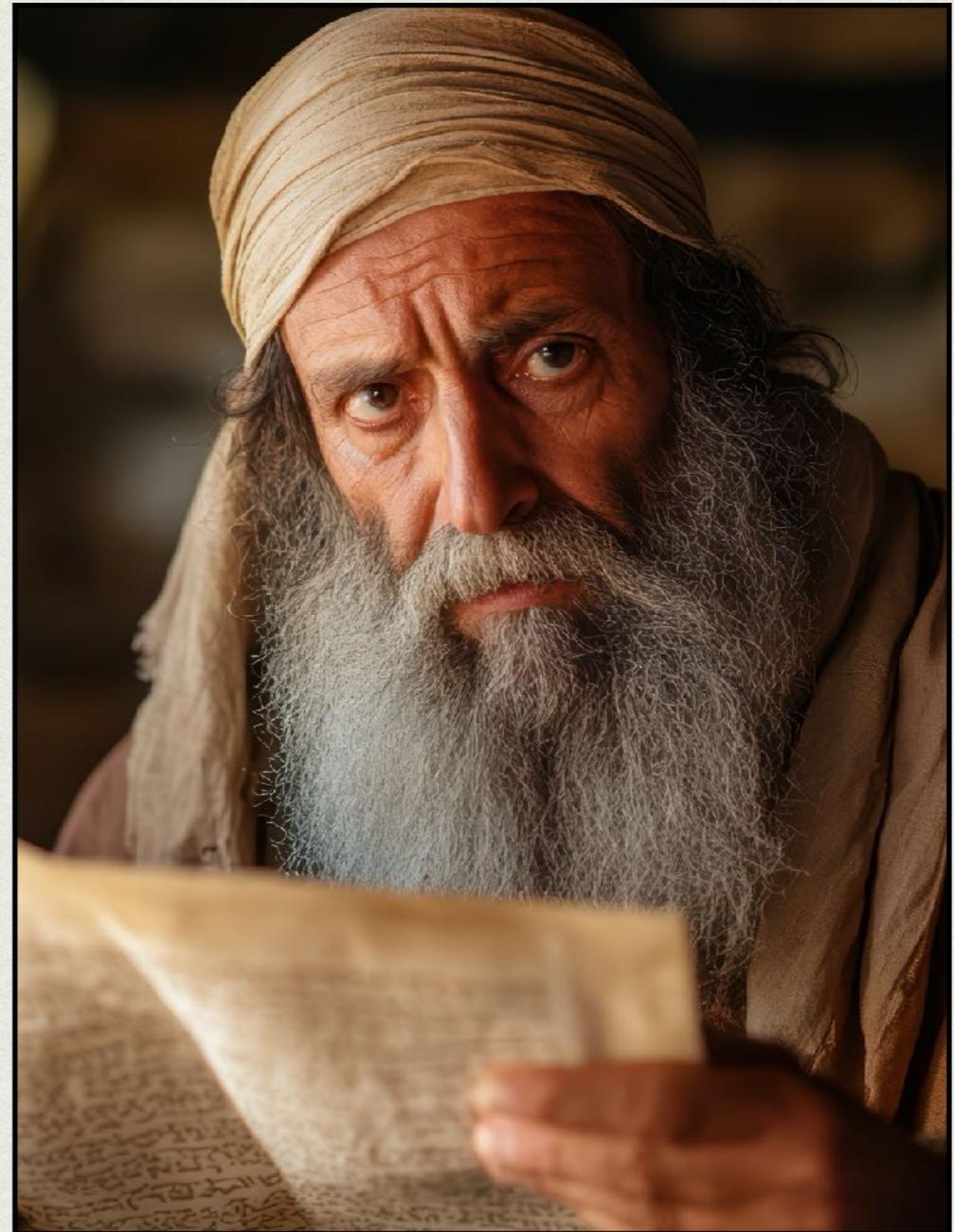
God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the **royal family**, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable. (*COL 142.1*)

It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the **family of God**; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God's Spirit will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the **royalty of heaven**, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate. (*MB 75.2*)

The Pharisees and Sadducees despised the poor. The learned and rich neglected them, as though their wealth and knowledge made them of more value than those who were poor. But Jesus declared that it was His work to give encouragement and comfort and help where it was most needed.—Manuscript 65b, 1898. (*WM* 171.1)

QUESTION 2—WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF ALL?

- Mark 12:28–34
- Matthew 22:23–33, 35
- Luke 20:27–38
- Deuteronomy 6:4–5
- Leviticus 19:18



The Pharisees, however, did not yet despair of driving Him to speak that which they could use against Him.

They prevailed upon a certain **learned** scribe to question Jesus as to which of the ten precepts of the law was of the greatest importance. (*DA 606.3*)

The lawyer approached Jesus with a direct question, “Which is the first commandment of all?” The answer of Christ is direct and forcible: “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.” The second is like the first, said Christ; for it flows out of it, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (*DA* 607.1)

The scribe who had questioned Jesus was well read in the law, and he was astonished at His words. He did not expect Him to manifest so deep and thorough a knowledge of the Scriptures. He had gained a broader view of the principles underlying the sacred precepts. Before the assembled priests and rulers he honestly acknowledged that Christ had given the right interpretation to the law, saying: (*DA* 607.4)

“Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (*DA 607.5*)

The wisdom of Christ's answer had convicted the scribe. He knew that the Jewish religion consisted in outward ceremonies rather than inward piety. He had some sense of the worthlessness of mere ceremonial offerings, and the faithless shedding of blood for expiation of sin. Love and obedience to God, and unselfish regard for man, appeared to him of more value than all these rites. The readiness of this man to acknowledge the correctness of Christ's reasoning, and his decided and prompt response before the people, manifested a spirit entirely different from that of the priests and rulers. The heart of Jesus went out in pity to the honest scribe who had dared to face the frowns of the priests and the threats of the rulers to speak the convictions of his heart. "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." (*DA* 608.1)

QUESTION 3—CHRIST—WHOSE SON IS HE?

- Mark 12:35–37
- Matthew 22:41–46
- Luke 20:41–44
- Psalm 110:1
- Hebrews 1:1–3
- Ephesians 1:20
- 1 Corinthians 15:24–27



The Pharisees had gathered close about Jesus as He answered the question of the scribe. Now turning He put a question to them: “What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?” This question was designed to test their belief concerning the Messiah,—to show whether they regarded Him simply as a man or as the Son of God. A chorus of voices answered, “The Son of David.” This was the title which prophecy had given to the Messiah. When Jesus revealed His divinity by His mighty miracles, when He healed the sick and raised the dead, the people had inquired among themselves, “Is not this the Son of David?” But many who called Jesus the Son of David did not recognize His divinity. They did not understand that the Son of David was also the Son of God. (*DA 608.3*)

The LORD said unto my Lord. Substituting the Hebrew words for “LORD” and “Lord,” we have the following: “*Yahweh* said unto ‘*adoni*.’” According to Jesus’ statement the conversation occurred between the Father and the Son. Christ is seated in the place of highest honor in the universe, the right hand of His Father. (*SDA BC*)

David is saying, *Yaweh* (the name of God of the universe) said unto my *adoni* (lord, master, i.e. Jesus)

Genesis 24:9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master (*adoni*), and sware to him concerning that matter.

Genesis 15:2 And Abram said, Lord (*adoni*) God (*Yaweh*), what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

How is he his son? In other words, when David called him *adoni*, he was *adoni* because, in this context, he was older than himself and was thus lord or master. As he wouldn't call someone younger than himself his lord, how could his lord be his master as well as his son? The only possible answer to Jesus' question is that the one who was to come (as Messiah—Psalm 110 is a messianic psalm) would have existed prior to his incarnation on this earth. As David's "Lord," Jesus was none other than the Son of God; as David's "Son," Jesus was the Son of man. (Ibid. paraphrased)