



Yes, Sadducees, There are Angels

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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PM Assembly



Introduction:

I'd like to share with you one of the New Testaments great ironies. First, note **Acts 23:8**. The Sadducees did not believe in either the resurrection or angels. Now turn to **Acts 5:17-18**. Luke went out of his way to explain it was the high priest and the Sadducees who arrested the apostles because of their jealousy. In **vs. 19**, the apostles were rescued by an angel. Now how can that happen? The Sadducees didn't believe in angels. Yet, there was one releasing the apostles right out from under the Sadducees' noses. I know this is no major point of doctrine and doesn't change the world. But thinking about this ironic occurrence, I learned a few faith building lessons I'd like to share.

Discussion:

- I. Just because someone believes or doesn't believe something, doesn't make it so.
 - A. As we noted in **Acts 23:8**, the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection or in angels. However, their belief didn't change the way things are. **Acts 5:19** is written as if to say, "Yes, Sadducees, there are angels." Jesus had dealt with the Sadducees in **Matthew 22:23-32**. The Sadducees asked what they believed was a stumper question. They thought it brought to an end all discussion and argument about the spiritual realm. Jesus said, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God." The belief of the Sadducees, or disbelief, as the case may be, didn't make it so.
 - B. You have probably seen the bumper sticker that says, "God said it. I believe it. That settles it." Actually, my belief doesn't settle anything. God said it. That settles it. As **John 17:17** says, God's word is truth. We aren't right just because we believe something. We hear someone else's opinion, which contradicts ours, and we take shelter saying, "That is just their opinion. They don't have a right to say I am wrong." But what if I am wrong? Something is not right or wrong based on my belief. It is right or wrong based on God's Word.
- II. Others may think we are foolish, but we will be the ones set free.
 - A. We have already discussed the altercation between Jesus and the Sadducees in **Matthew 22:23-32**. Knowing a little bit about how these kinds of debates pan out, I can almost envision the Sadducees as they huddled up with each other discussing this question about the woman married seven times in the resurrection. They were sure this question put a stop to all questions about the resurrection. No doubt, in their minds, if you couldn't see there was no resurrection, you were just foolish. Obviously there can't be a resurrection because the resurrection makes a mockery of marriage. But that didn't change anything. The resurrection will happen and the believers in it will be set free and the disbelievers will be made fools.
 - B. **I Corinthians 1:18-25** demonstrates many people will think we are foolish. We must not be surprised when people say this. Here is the key. Those who believe the message of the cross is foolishness will perish. Only those who believe the cross is God's wisdom will be saved by its message. Let's not be influenced by the seemingly intellectual masses who foolishly proclaim there is no God or foolishly refuse to obey His will. Let us be deemed fools by the foolish and be saved by God's wisdom.
- III. We just can't all be right.
 - A. In **Acts 5**, the Sadducees didn't believe in angels and the apostles did. I know this point seems like a no-brainer. However, in our society we have to make it. Our world places a premium on spiritual tolerance. But spiritual tolerance no longer means allowing folks to believe what they want even though you think they are wrong. Tolerance now means believing that we might all be right. That just doesn't make good nonsense. In **Acts 5**, the Sadducees and the apostles couldn't both be right. Either angels exist or they don't. The apostles were right and were freed.
 - B. This applies to every issue. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of churches with differing faiths. However, we just can't all be right. Nor can we hide behind strained clichés like, "We are all going to the same place, just taking different ways." According to **Matthew 7:13-14**, there is only one way—it is a strait and narrow way at that. Two plus two cannot equal four, five, and six all at the same time. In the same way, we can't read the scripture and come up with different truths. According to **Ephesians 4:4-6**, there is one faith and one body. All the different bodies and different faiths just can't be right any more than both the Sadducees and the apostles could be right.

IV. Some people will ignore the obvious to hammer their preconceived notions.

- A. One thing that most surprised me in this story is **Acts 5:27-28**. The text says, "And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying..." What do you expect to be said next? I expected him to say, "How on earth did you get out of the jail?" That is the obvious question. But he didn't ask it. Of course, he wouldn't have accepted their answer; he didn't believe in angels. Perhaps that is why he didn't ask the question. It would have led into territory he didn't want to address. Instead, he hammered home his point, essentially saying, "We told you to quit teaching about this Jesus and bringing His blood on our head." The high priest didn't really care how the apostles escaped and its ramifications for why he ought to listen to them. He just wanted to force his point.
- B. That happens so often today. And we need to be just as careful of it as everyone else. How easy it is to overlook even obvious points or objections to simply favor our preconceived notions. We all need to have open minds and hearts to what others have to say and then judge it based on what we can find in the Scriptures. We must be like the Bereans of **Acts 17:11**. These were noble-minded because they didn't just shut out messages that didn't jive with their preconceptions. Rather, they listened and then searched the Scriptures to see what is the truth. We need to follow in their footsteps.

V. No matter what, we just have to obey God.

- A. Though the Sadducees did not believe in angels or a resurrection, though they believed the apostles were fools, though they ignored plain and obvious evidence regarding why they should listen to the apostles, the apostles knew that no matter what, they simply had to obey God. In **Acts 5:29**, Peter said, "We must obey God rather than men" (ESV). No matter what people said about them or to them, they would obey God.
- B. We must follow in their footsteps. Numerous people will not believe what we teach. That doesn't make them right or us wrong. Numerous people will think we are fools. We should not be deterred. Numerous people will tell us we should just allow for the possibility that we are all right. We must not fall for that devil's lie. Numerous people will ignore the obvious truths in our message. We need to keep on preaching it. No matter what, we must obey God. We must keep on preaching the message. In the end, we will be set free by the blood of Jesus Christ. As Paul told Timothy in **II Timothy 4:1-4**, no matter what, we need to keep right on teaching what we believe and know to be true.

Conclusion:

Yes, Sadducees, there are angels. Yes, you must be careful lest you find yourself fighting against the angels of God and against God Himself. You may not believe in God, but that doesn't change the truth of the matter. If God is out there, your unbelief will not save you from Him. Are you prepared to meet Him? If not, why not prepare today? Why not submit in faithful obedience to His will? Ground your faith in the Word of God and then follow through with what it says. Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins today (**Acts 2:38**). Yes, some will disbelieve. Some will think you are foolish. But like the apostles, you will be set free.