

Twentieth Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT

Exodus 3:1-15

Moses and the Burning Bush

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” ⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” ⁵ “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” ¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ¹² And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.” ¹³ Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” ¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, ^c the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

3:1 Like David (2Sa 7:8), Moses was called from tending the flock to be the shepherd of God’s people.

WAS TENDING THE FLOCK – Moses like David before him was doing simple but God-pleasing work when God came to him. We, too, are to be about the daily work that God gives us to do. He will find us and direct our lives in ways that will help his kingdom come and his will be done. – According to Acts 7:30, this event took place 40 years after Moses arrived in Midian. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2) – The difficult journey over, he might relax, while watchfully observing the flocks.

Perhaps Moses mused about his luxurious past at Pharaoh's court, the tragic struggle of his Israelite people as slaves in Egypt, and his inability as a fugitive to help them. (LL)

Jethro. See note on 2:16. (*priest of Midian*. Reuel (see v. 18), which means "friend of God." His other name, Jethro (see 3:1), may be a title meaning "his excellency.")

Horeb. Means "desert," "desolation"; either (1) an alternate name for Mount Sinai or (2) another high mountain in the same vicinity in the southeast region of the Sinai peninsula. Tradition identifies Mount Horeb with Ras es-Safsaf ("willow peak"), 6,500 feet high, and Mount Sinai with Jebel Musa ("mountain of Moses"), 7,400 feet high, but both identifications are uncertain. – At the higher elevations around Mt Horeb was enough water and food for large flocks, and this is probably Moses came to this location. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

3:2 *angel of the LORD*. Used interchangeably with "the LORD" and "God" in v. 4 (see note on Ge 16:7). – This can also mean "the Lord" or "God." – This expression is often used in the OT for the Second Person of the Triune God, before He came to this earth in human form at Bethlehem. (PBC)

appeared to him in flames of fire. God's revelation of himself and his will was often accompanied by fire (see 13:21; 19:18; 1Ki 18:24, 38). - God used this ordinary means to get Moses' attention. The choice of fire for the appearing and a bush for the place of appearing suggest that God would descend on an insignificant people just as He had descended on an insignificant plant and that He would do so without harming either. We see the mixture of the ordinary with the extraordinary. Fire symbolizes God's presence (Ex 13:22; 19:18; Mal 3:2) not only in the OT, but also in the NT. It especially seems to symbolize the holiness of God (Ex 19:18; 32:10; Mt 3:11) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2) – Fire also became a symbol of revelation in the NT, as divine "tongues of fire" appeared on the disciples' heads when the Holy Spirit inspired them to preach the Gospel in languages unknown to them. (LL)

3:4 Every true prophet was called by God (see, e.g., 1Sa 3:4; Isa 6:8; Jer 1:4–5; Eze 2:1–8; Hos 1:2; Am 7:15; Jnh 1:1–2; see also note on 7:1–2).

GOD CALLED HIM – God does the initiating, not man.

Moses, Moses!... Here I am. See notes on Ge 22:1, 11.

3:5 *Take off your sandals*. A practice still followed by Muslims before entering a mosque. – Where God is present, there we must show respect. One such place is the worship service. – This practice may result from the fact that slaves usually went barefoot. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

holy. The ground was not holy by nature but was made so by the divine presence (see, e.g., Ge 2:3). Holiness involves being consecrated to the Lord's service and thus being separated from the commonplace. – The ground is holy not because the place is holy in itself but because God has made it holy by His presence. This is the first occurrence of the word holy in the Bible, but the word occurs frequently in the next book of the Bible, Leviticus, a book full of guidelines for Israel's worship. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

3:6 GOD OF YOUR FATHER, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM...- The identification of God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the identification Jesus later used as proof for the resurrection (Mt 22:32; Mk 12:26; Luke 20:37). God has seen the problem, and He is bringing a solution. The solution is the call of Moses to the God-given task and the assurance that Moses will succeed, for Moses will worship Him on that very mountain. But the heart of the assurance is in the nature of the God who calls. The God who calls is not only the God who has been faithful to the patriarchs, He is also the God who is beyond naming. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

afraid to look at God. See notes on Ge 16:13; 32:30. Later, as the Lord's servant, Moses would meet with God on Mount Sinai (19:3) and even ask to see God's glory (33:18) – As humans we cannot behold the face of God and live. In heaven where he has brought all cleaned up by Jesus' blood we will not have this problem.

3:7 I HAVE SEEN THE MISERY OF MY PEOPLE - Nothing escapes the sight of God. He is also always very caring. But, he comes at just the right time.

3:8 *I have come down to rescue.* God may also come down to judge (see Ge 11:5–9; 18:21). – This does not mean that he isn't always near. It is an expression that means he is moving into action. – God speaks here almost as if He were coming in bodily form to deliver Israel, as He does in other places (Gen 3:8; 11:5; Ex 19:11; 18, 20: 34:5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

land flowing with milk and honey. The traditional and proverbial description of the hill country of Canaan—in its original pastoral state (see note on Isa 7:15). – This refers to the fertility of the land of Canaan. The milk will come from sheep and goats and the honey from bees. This phrase is common in the Pentateuch, a proverbial expression for the his country of Canaan. It demonstrates the blessing of God in the land, part of God's original promise to Abraham (Gen 13:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

Canaanites ... Jebusites. See notes on Ge 10:6, 15–16; 13:7. The list of the Canaanite nations ranges from two names (see Ge 13:7) to five (see Nu 13:29) to six (as here; see also Jdg 3:5) to ten (see Ge 15:19–21) to twelve (see Ge 10:15–18). The classic description includes seven names (see, e.g., Dt 7:1), seven being the number of completeness (see note on Ge 4:17–18).

3:10 *Pharaoh.* Probably Amunhotep II (see Introduction: Chronology). – This passage may well have been in Christ's mind when He gave a similar apostolic commission to His disciples in NT days (Jn 20:21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

3:11 WHOM AM I THAT I SHOULD GO – God's call can be very overwhelming as it was with Moses. His, like our reaction is to make excuses. Moses' first expression of reluctance (see v. 13; 4:1, 10, 13). – One might express the protests as inadequacy, incredibility, inarticulateness, and insubordination, four I's. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2) – This is a different Moses. Many years before this he had wanted to take on this job as a deliverer all by himself when he killed an Egyptian and tried to settle an argument between two of his people. Now he doubts his own ability to do this work. Forty years as a shepherd have taught him humility. (PBC)

3:12 *I will be with you.* See note on Ge 26:3. The Hebrew word translated “I will be” is the same as the one translated “I AM” in v. 14. – God knows our weaknesses and stand ready to be by our side the whole time. He told his disciples and us this in Matthew 28:20. He shows it constantly in the lives of his disciples and still does so today. The promise is the same promise God gave to Jeremiah (Jer 1:8), when Jeremiah complained about his youth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

sign. A visible proof or guarantee that what God had promised he would surely fulfill (see notes on 4:8; Ge 15:8).

YOU WILL WORSHIP ME – We are to call upon him AND also recognize him with thanks when he takes care of our needs.

Psalm 50:15 “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will honor me.”

3:13 Moses’ second expression of reluctance. *What is his name?* † God had not revealed himself fully to Moses by his personal name (see v. 6; cf. Ge 17:1).

3:14 *I AM WHO I AM.* The name by which God wished to be known and worshiped in Israel—the name that expressed his character as the dependable and faithful God who desires the full trust of his people (see v. 12, where “I will be” is completed by “with you”; see also 34:5–7). *I AM.* The shortened form of the name is perhaps found also in Ps 50:21 (see NIV text note there). Jesus applied the phrase to himself; in so doing he claimed to be God and risked being stoned for blasphemy (see Jn 8:58–59). □ *Yehovah* - This is the personal and covenant name of God, emphasizing his role as Israel’s Redeemer and covenant Lord. It means “He is” or “He will be” and is the third-person form of the verb translated “I will be” or “I am.” Basically it is an assertion of authority. – The name comes from a verb form in the Hebrew language that means “cause to happen.” In the context of God’s kindness and his promises to his OT people the name can be translated “The one who makes the good things happen.” - It may also suggest that this deity is the only one with real existence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2) – *Yahweh* in the original Hebrew text included only the consonants. By the time the scribes added the vowels, the name of God was no longer pronounced. These Jews feared that the name of God would be profaned if spoken by the human voice. So, the Jews added the vowels for “Adonai,” which means “Lord” which is why their Greek translation of the OT and general Christian usage, too, renders God’s name, *Yahweh*, as “the Lord.” (LL)

3:15 *The LORD.* The Hebrew for this name is *Yahweh* (often incorrectly spelled “Jehovah”; see note on Dt 28:58). It means “He is” or “He will be” and is the third-person form of the verb translated “I will be” in v. 12 and “I AM” in v. 14. When God speaks of himself he says, “I AM,” and when we speak of him we say, “He is.”

GOD OF – They were to remember that God had always been their God and had been with them. This was to comfort them, give them confidence and lead them to worship him. The same is true for us.

EPISTLE
2 Thessalonians 2:1-8, 13-17

The Man of Lawlessness

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness ^a is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷ For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

2:1 *coming.* See note on 1Th 2:19. The second coming of Christ is the principal topic of 2 Thessalonians. What Paul wrote was supplemental to his oral teaching and the instructions contained in his earlier letter.

gathered to him. See note on 1Th 4:17.

2:2 *unsettled.* The Greek for this verb was often used of a ship adrift from its mooring, and suggests lack of stability. – When people think about the end of the world, it often seems they are ready to believe any rumor which comes along. This happens especially when people have not carefully studied what God says about that awesome day. It seems that some of the Thessalonians were no different. (PBC)

alarmed. Jesus issued a similar instruction, using the same verb (Mk 13:7).

some. Paul seems to be uncertain about what was disturbing them, so he uses a general expression.

prophecy. Lit. “spirit,” denoting any inspired revelation.

report. Lit. “word,” perhaps referring to a sermon or other oral communication.

letter supposed to have come from us. A forgery.

day of the Lord. See note on 1Th 5:2. – What was this false idea which was circulating? Paul does not say much about it, excepts to mention the rumor “that the day of the Lord has come.” (PBC)

has already come. Obviously Christ's climactic return had not occurred, but Paul was combating the idea that the final days had begun and their completion would be imminent. – What gives this rumor some status was the added rumor that Paul himself had said the day of the Lord had already come. In his first letter Paul had indeed spent quite a bit of time instructing them about Jesus' “coming” and their “being gathered to him.” But Paul categorically denies he had ever said that “the day of the Lord has already come.” (PBC)

2:3 *the rebellion.* At the last time there will be a falling away from the faith (see Mt 24:10–12; 1Ti 4:1). But here Paul is speaking of active rebellion, the supreme opposition of evil to the things of God. – The one thing that would happen is a falling away or a denial. The NIV translation “rebellion” is a possible rendering of the Greek word, which is the same word as our English “apostasy.” But the following verses, especially verses 10-12, indicate that Paul is talking about a denial or desertion from the truth of salvation. In the OT this word referred to unfaithfulness to God or the denial of God. In the only other place where it is used in the NT, Acts 1:21, it also refers to a turning away of desertion. (PBC)

the man of lawlessness. The leader of the forces of evil at the last time. Only here is he called by this name. John tells us of many “antichrists” (1Jn 2:18), and this may be the worst of them—the antichrist of Rev 13—though Paul’s description of the man of lawlessness has some distinctive features. He is not Satan, because he is clearly distinguished from him in v. 9. – The second event which must take place is the revelation of a “man of sin.” The NIV takes the reading “man of lawlessness” which is found in some of the early manuscripts. As the NIV footnote indicates, there are many early manuscripts which read “man of sin.” The latter definitely has the stronger evidence. (PBC)

revealed. Since the Greek for this word is from the same root as that used of Jesus Christ in 1:7, it may indicate something supernatural.

doomed to destruction. For all his proud claims, his final overthrow is certain. The same expression is used of Judas Iscariot (see Jn 17:12). – He would be particularly responsible for the apostasy or falling away because he would be a powerful and influential leader, who would presume to take the place of Christ. Thus he is often referred to as the Antichrist. Since he tries to take the place of Christ and leads people away from Christ, his fate is sealed. (PBC) There are nine points to keep in mind about the “apostasy” and the “Antichrist”:

- 1) The falling away from the truth of salvation would be accompanied by the revelation of the Antichrist, the man of sin.
- 2) The Antichrist would exalt himself so that he would become the equal of God in the hearts of men.
- 3) The opposition to Christ was already at work when Paul wrote these words, but God was holding it back from working openly.
- 4) Eventually God would let it work openly, and this would result in the Antichrist being clearly revealed as an opponent of God.
- 5) With His Word Jesus would overthrow the power of the Antichrist.
- 6) With His second coming Jesus would completely destroy the Antichrist.
- 7) The Antichrist would be successful in bringing about the apostasy, because Satan would support him with miracles to mislead many.
- 8) Satan would also use his power to lead the Antichrist’s followers to join the man in denying the truth of salvation.
- 9) Because of their denial of the truth, God would harden the Antichrist’s followers in the delusion that they were on the way to salvation when they really were perishing.

Note in particular two key facts included in all nine points. First, the Antichrist is clearly a religious teacher. Secondly, the span of time of the Antichrist stretches from Paul's time to the end of the world. (PBC)

2:4 *everything that is called God or is worshiped.* He is not merely a political or military man, but claims a place above every god and everything associated with worship. He even claims to be God. – His sin is that he not only opposes God, but exalts himself above God. The man of sin, man of lawlessness, demands for himself a position above “everything that is called God or is worshiped.” The word “worshiped” was a word used in the NT time to refer to everyone who held a leading position in the family, government or religion and was to be highly honored. Paul is saying that the Antichrist exalted himself above these people who God wants Christians to hone as His representative. By so opposing God's will, he even sets himself above God. (PBC)

God's temple. † May refer to a physical building (cf. Mk 13:14) from which he makes his blasphemous pronouncements (cf. Da 11:36–45; Rev 13:1–15). More likely the reference is to a religious institution. Lutheran tradition sees the papacy as the “man of lawlessness.” But this tradition must remain a historical judgment, not a scriptural truth. Paul's “letters contain some things that are hard to understand” (2Pe 3:16). – Paul cannot be referring to the temple in Jerusalem. He knew from Jesus' prophecy that it would be destroyed so that “not one stone will be left on another” (Matthew 24:2). Paul was accustomed to use the term “God's temple” to refer to Christians, especially to Christ's or the Holy Spirit's dwelling in the hearts of Christians by faith. The major result of the Antichrist's exaltation, then would be that in the Christian church he would tyrannize the hearts of believers by demanding to be recognized as God's equal. The clearest fulfillment of this in the Roman Catholic papacy is the consistent upholding of the principle that the “tradition” (the official teachings of popes and councils) be given equal place with, and in some cases greater authority than, the Word of God. Moreover, the exaltation of the papacy over every one of God's earthly representatives in the family, state, and church was proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303): “It is altogether necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” This proclamation still stands as the official position of the papacy. (PBC)

2:6 *what is holding him back.* † The expression is neuter, but the masculine equivalent is in v. 7. There have been many suggestions as to the identity of this restrainer: the Roman state with its emperor, Paul's missionary work, the Jewish state, the principle of law and government embodied in the state, the Holy Spirit or the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit through the church, and others. The first suggestion would harmonize with the Lutheran tradition on the identity of the “man of lawlessness.”

2:7 *secret power.* Lit. “mystery,” which in the NT usually denotes something people could not know by themselves but that God has revealed (see note on Ro 11:25). It is most often used in reference to the gospel or some aspect of it. The expression here indicates that we know some things about evil only as God reveals them. This evil is already at work and will continue until the restrainer is removed at the end time.

2:8 *the lawless one will be revealed.* Evidently refers to some supernatural aspects of his appearing (see v. 9).

overthrow with the breath of his mouth. Despite his impressiveness (v. 4), the man of lawlessness will easily be destroyed by Christ (cf. Da 11:45; Rev 19:20).

splendor. In 2Ti 1:10 (“appearing”) the Greek for this word refers to Jesus’ first coming, but everywhere else in the NT to his second coming.

Stand Firm

¹³ But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you^a to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴ He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. ¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

2:13 ALWAYS TO THANK GOD – Paul repeats the obligation of thanks he feels toward God which he had earlier expressed in 1:3. There he said he owed a debt of thanks to God for enabling the Thessalonians to grow in faith and love in spite of the bitter persecution. Here he expresses thanks for their election from eternity and for their call to faith at the present time. (PBC)

loved by the Lord ... God chose. For the connection between God’s love and election see Col 3:12; 1Th 1:4; see also note on Eph 1:4.

from the beginning. Election is from eternity (see Eph 1:4). – The primary point is that as God’s chosen we can rest assured that our salvation will not be taken away from us. Predestination is whatever God has done, is doing and still will do for us during our life on earth to bring us to faith in Christ and to preserve us in this faith unto eternal salvation. Some things to remember:

- 1) It is not a matter of chance.
- 2) It is not motivated by any personal merit on the part of humans.
- 3) People are not predestined to hell. That would be contrary to God’s will as expressed in 1 Timothy 2:4, “who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”
- 4) People can through willful and intentional neglect throw away their faith. There is no such thing as “once saved, always saved” [Cain Gen 4:16 – Pharaoh – Judas/Peter – Jews – Romans 1:24]
- 5) The life of the Christian is not in the hands of “fate.” In this short phrase three things are said:
 - Our destiny is in God’s hands,
 - The spirit in which God handles us is loving, and
 - Christ is the agent through whom our destiny is managed. (A)

In the NT divine predestination is always presented in the context of gratitude for God’s grace, never is the sense of blaming God or questioning God’s choices.(LL)

2 Timothy 1:9 “who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,”

sanctifying work. A necessary aspect of salvation, not something reserved for special Christians (see 1Th 3:13; 4:3 and notes). – Men can choose to reject the truth, as they do when they follow the Antichrist, but they cannot choose to believe in Christ as their only Savior. This choosing only the Holy Spirit can accomplish by working the miracle of faith in a human heart. “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). By bringing them to trust in Jesus as their Lord, their Savior, the Holy Spirit sanctified or made the Thessalonians holy. AS they heard the gospel, the Holy Spirit led them to accept it as true. He led them to believe its message of Jesus’ redemption of the world as the only way of salvation. (PBC)

truth. See note on v. 10. All three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in this verse (see note on 1Th 1:1).

2:14 *called ... through our gospel.* The past tense refers to the time when the Thessalonians were converted; but the divine call is a present reality in 1Th 2:12; 5:24.

our gospel. See note on 1Th 1:5. – Paul, Silas and Timothy had had the privilege of bringing this saving gospel to the Thessalonians. They also looked forward to sharing with the Thessalonians the future glory which was their firm possession in Christ. (PBC)

glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. 1Th 2:12. Ultimately there is no glory other than God’s. – Here again Paul stresses that these blessings were theirs only because of what God did. God chose them from eternity. God established the gospel of salvation by sending His Son. God sent Paul to preach this gospel to them. God called them to faith through His Spirit by the preaching of that gospel. (PBC)

2:15 **STAND FIRM** – God had called the Thessalonians to follow Christ and not the Antichrist, This would mean nothing if they failed to stand firm in their faith. This is done, Paul asserts, by holding tightly to those teachings he and the other apostles have “passed on” to us. Strengthen by constantly reading and hearing them we will be able to stand firm. (PBC)

teachings. Lit. “traditions.” Until the NT was written, essential Christian teaching was passed on in the “traditions,” just as rabbinic law was (see note on Mt 15:2); it could be either oral or written. In 1Co 15:3 Paul uses the technical words for receiving and handing on traditions.

2:16–17 There is a similar prayer in about the same place in the first letter (1Th 3:11–13).

2:17 *encourage ... strengthen.* Also used together in 1Th 3:2. The prayer is for inner strength that will produce results in both action and speech. – In our earthly trials and tribulations he supplies us with “encouragement.” We can bear our troubles patiently, because we know God will make them serve our eternal good. (PBC)

GOSPEL
Luke 20:27-40

The Resurrection and Marriage

²⁷ Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. ²⁸ “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. ³⁰ The second ³¹ and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. ³² Finally, the woman died too. ³³ Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” ³⁴ Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, ³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection. ³⁷ But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ ^a ³⁸ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.” ³⁹ Some of the teachers of the law responded, “Well said, teacher!” ⁴⁰ And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

20:27 *Sadducees.* An aristocratic, politically minded group, willing to compromise with secular and pagan leaders. They controlled the high priesthood at this time and held the majority of the seats in the Sanhedrin. They did not believe in the resurrection or an afterlife, and they rejected the oral tradition taught by the Pharisees (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 13.10.6.). See notes on Mt 2:4; 3:7; Mk 12:18; Ac 4:1. – The chief priests came from this party, which claimed as their ancestor the high priest under David, Zadok (1 Kings 1:26); “Sadducee” means Zadokite.” The party also included laypeople. Sadducees came from wealthy and privileged families in Jerusalem. Religiously they were completely devoted to the temple cult, but sociologically they were cut off from the rest of the people. Many of them were attracted to Hellenism. They were considered theological liberals because they denied the resurrection and the existence of angels. They held to the written code of the law, especially the Pentateuch, because of the sacrificial instructions contained there, but considered the oral code an aberration. Thus they were theologically opposed to the views of the Pharisees (scribes) regarding the oral law, doctrines such as the resurrection, and their stance toward Greek and Roman culture. Outside of their implication in the death of Jesus during His trials, the Sadducees/chief priests play a very minor role in Luke’s gospel. However, this encounter has its value in that Jesus uses this opportunity to present a word of Jesus about His resurrection. (CC)

20:28 *the man must marry the widow.* The levirate law (see note on Mt 22:24; cf. Gen 38:8). – The Sadducees attempt to trap Jesus concerning levirate marriages, where the brother of a man who dies childless must marry his dead brother’s wife in order to provide a son to keep the family name alive. (Gen 38:8; Deut 25:5) This is a particularly

significant Mosaic statute, and the Sadducees would be well versed in it since they accepted only the Pentateuch as canonical. (CC)

20:34–35 *this age ... that age*. See note on 18:30. – Jesus ignores the issue of levirate marriage but addresses the question of the resurrection. The Sadducees have it all wrong. They are equating this age with the age to come. In this creation, God established marriage so that humanity could reflect the communion of God, multiply and fill the earth, and receive the post-fall promise of a Savior in the Seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). Christian marriage reflects the mystical union of Christ and His bride the church, who now waits for His return and the consummation. But in the age to come, there will be no marriage, for those whom God deems worthy (Luke 20:35) will live forever as “equals angels...sons of God...sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:36). Jesus’ words include a subtle rebuke also of the Sadducee’s denial of the existence of angels. (CC)

20:36 *like the angels*. The resurrection order cannot be assumed to follow present earthly lines. In the new age there will be no marriage, no procreation and no death.

children of the resurrection. Those who are to take part in the resurrection of the righteous (cf. Mt 22:23–33; Mk 12:18–27; Ac 4:1–2; 23:6–10).

20:37 *account of the bush*. Since Scripture chapters and verses were not used at the time of Christ, the passage was identified in this way, referring to Moses’ experience with the burning bush (Ex 3:2). – Instead of invoking the Prophets, Jesus refers to the Pentateuch (Moses, the Sadducees’ canon). He quotes from the passage about the burning bush (Exodus 3; Acts 7:30–34) – where the Lord tells Moses that He is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob – to show that at time of Moses, the patriarchs (who had died hundreds of years previously) were still alive in God. Thus Jesus concludes that even now, God is a God of the living and not the dead, because all are living to/in Him. Since Jesus has made clear that His authority is from God, and the hearer knows that He is the Son of God and the Messiah (9:20), Jesus is essentially saying here that He is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25), for all are living in Him. Jesus is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in few days He will prove to the Sadducees that there is a resurrection from the dead. For the hearer, this speaks to the reality that has been hinted at throughout the gospel but is stated boldly here by Jesus. Already now they are a part of the eschatological community (“with angels and archangels and with the all the company of heaven”) that includes Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the OT saints. (CC)

20:39 *Well said, teacher!* Even though there was great animosity against Jesus, the teachers of the law (who were Pharisees) sided with Jesus against the Sadducees on the matter of resurrection. – The scribes are also greatly impressed at Jesus’ ability to argue from the Pentateuch. They stand in awe of His exegetical and analytical skills and realize that it would be suicidal to dare to ask Him anything else. From now on, there will be no more questions or challenges from Jesus’ opponents. Jesus will provide the narrative with His own teaching and His own agenda. (CC)

