

Scripture and Power

“Jesus said to them, ‘You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. ...’” Matthew 22:29.

The Sadducees thought they had Jesus pegged. They thought they had an unanswerable question: If seven brothers all marry the same woman according to the Law, then whose wife will she be in the resurrection? To be fair, the Sadducees didn't come to their conclusion without evidence. The question was meant to demonstrate that if one took the notion of a resurrection to its logical conclusion, the conclusion became absurd, therefore there is no resurrection. The absurdity itself was evidence against any theological argument for a resurrection. Which really goes to show that the power of evidence is limited. Evidence cannot make a false statement true. Or said another way: A false conclusion with evidence to back it up is still a false conclusion. Jesus not only told the Sadducees that they were wrong but he told them exactly why they were wrong: 1. They didn't know Scripture; and 2. They didn't know the power of God.

It's important to note that Jesus said they didn't know Scripture even though they quoted Scripture and understood how to obey it. They knew that if a married man died without children, his next of kin was required to raise up children for the deceased kin. But Jesus, in quoting from a different passage, demonstrated they didn't really *know* Scripture because they didn't understand its cohesiveness. They were known for their stance on an issue and enjoyed proving their stance rather than understanding their conclusion cohesively. Their stance on a resurrection may have made sense within one part of Scripture, but, as Jesus told them, it didn't fit into other places in Scripture. Such as God being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

They also didn't know the power of God. It's important to note that they believed in the existence of God, yet this wasn't enough. They didn't believe in the full power of an existing God. Jesus here insinuated that they didn't believe that God has the power to raise the dead. Their false conclusion was based on a false idea of God – specifically a God with limited power. To strip God of power is to strip all of Judaism and Christianity of any meaning.

These two reasons are two fundamental flaws in many conclusions even today both within and outside of Christianity. We must be careful lest we find ourselves not understanding the cohesiveness of Scripture and not believing in the full power of God. One of the easiest ways to give up truth is to dismiss knowledge and one of the easiest ways to give up hope is to dismiss God's power. Scripture guides us when it is understood cohesively and God's power is inspiring when we ascribe to God the power of the God who made something from nothing. [DJR]