

# "The Resurrection"

Luke 20:27-38

November 11, 2007

A man brought a very limp duck into a veterinary surgery clinic. As he placed his pet on the table, the vet pulled out her stethoscope and listened to the bird's chest. After a moment or two, the vet shook her head sadly and said, "I'm so sorry, your duck has passed away." The distressed owner wailed, "Are you sure?" "Yes, I am sure. The duck is dead," she replied. "How can you be so sure?" he protested. "I mean, you haven't done any testing on him or anything. He might just be in a coma or something." The vet rolled her eyes, turned around, and left the room. She returned a few moments later with a black Labrador retriever. As the duck's owner looked on in amazement, the dog stood on its hind legs, put its front paws on the examination table, and sniffed the duck from top to bottom. The dog then looked at the vet with sad eyes and shook its head. The vet patted the dog on the head and led it out of the room.

A few minutes later, she returned with a cat. The cat jumped up on the table and sniffed delicately at the bird. The cat sat back on its haunches, shook its head, meowed softly, and strolled out of the room. The vet looked at the man and said, "I'm sorry, but as I said, this is most definitely, 100% a dead duck."

"Well, I suppose," said the owner. "How much do I owe you?" "\$300," said the vet. "\$300!" gasped the owner. "\$300 just to tell me my duck is dead?!" The vet shrugged. "I'm sorry. If you'd taken my word for it the first time, the bill would have been \$30. But with the lab report and the cat scan, it's now \$300."

Ridiculous! Right? But then what are you going to do? You are stuck with me and my demented sense of humor. Jesus was stuck with the likes of the Sadducees. And they thought that it was ridiculous for anyone to believe that there was anything beyond death. There are a lot of Sadducees still today - people who do not believe in all of that silly church talk about life after death. The Sadducees used their disbelief in the resurrection to try to discredit Jesus and His teachings. And to do that they made up the most fantastic situation they could come up with. Of course it could happen! One woman .... marries into a family of 7 brothers. Her husband dies and his brothers are sensitive enough to want to help. In those days it was considered the right thing to do - it was even seen as a moral obligation. But unfortunately this woman must have married into a family with a really poor genic pool. Each brother she marries soon dies. We might soon wonder if the local authorities should have been watching her more closely .... but none of those details would have any bearing on the point that the

Sadducees were trying to make with Jesus. Seven brothers all die while being married to the same woman. And the point ..... How ridiculous to imagine that there is a resurrection where this poor woman would be reunited with her seven husbands. What kind of mess would that be? Ridiculous! Right?

Well, the response that Jesus gives could lead us into all kinds of discussion. We treasure the image of the great reunion that we will experience when we die and go to heaven. What Jesus says could well be troubling if we did not understand that what Jesus is saying is that marriage is a worldly institution. We worry about such things in this age. But in the age to come - - - in the resurrection we will not concern ourselves with such details. We will be gathered together with our loved ones in the presence of God. God will take care of such details - we don't have to fret over such concerns. Trust God! And, by the way, there is a resurrection!

From a human perspective it is all a bit ridiculous. Imagine Job from our Old Testament reading this morning. He has experienced the loss of everything that has been important to him. Not only has this once wealthy man lost all of his worldly possessions - most importantly, he has lost his entire family to death. But there in the midst of utter despair he is able to put his total trust in God. There, surrounded by the ashes of his life he is able to proclaim faith in a God is able to restore life from the grave. There, before there is any word about Jesus and the empty tomb, ... there, Job is able to profess a belief in a bodily resurrection from the grave. *"I know that my Redeemer lives ..... and after my skin is destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God!"*

Ridiculous! Right? And yet, isn't even more ridiculous to believe that there is no God and no resurrection. And yet that seems to be what so many really want. The Sadducees believed in God but wanted nothing of the resurrection. So many today hope that there is a resurrection but want nothing to do with God. "In God we Trust" has been eliminated for the new dollar coin. The inscription on the top of the Washington Memorial which says "In Praise to God" {in Latin} used to be spoken about in the tourist displays attached to the monument but now those words are carefully hidden. The struggle with keeping or removing Christ from Christmas is again on but [luckily] Santa Clause is as acceptable as ever and already out in the malls.

Yes the Sadducees wanted to get rid of Jesus - He did not preach what they believed to be true. He was getting in their way and it was ridiculous to believe in Him - certainly to believe in a resurrection. Is it ridiculous to believe in God and in the resurrection? I certainly don't know how God would handle the situation that they set before Jesus. Frankly, I don't worry

about it - I believe that God does all things well and I can trust Him for the details. Do you believe or is God in the way? Can you believe in a resurrection and trust God? Some human logic would suggest that it is ridiculous. But there are many who believe and would call us to believe. "Without the resurrection, our faith is dead. The story's not complete without it." — "The Passion" director **Mel Gibson**, explaining why the movie ends with a scene of the empty tomb — Outreach (Jan/Feb 2004) "I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead." — Oxford professor **Thomas Arnold**, author of the three-volume "History of Rome" — [www.evantell.org](http://www.evantell.org) "After more than 700 hours of studying this subject, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is either one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted on the minds of human beings — or it is the most remarkable fact of history." — **Josh McDowell** in "Evidence for the Resurrection" — [www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/josh2.html](http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/josh2.html) "It is no exaggeration, therefore, to maintain that the bodily resurrection of Christ is as certain as any fact of history can ever be. If there is anything at all in which we can believe with absolute confidence, it is the fact that Jesus Christ died, was buried, then conquered death and is now alive!" — **Henry Morris** in "The Resurrection of Christ — The Best-Proved Fact in History" Ultimately we can simply say that it is ridiculous and there is no evidence or we can have faith in a living God. What is really ridiculous.

AMEN