

## Pharisees & Sadducees

It took me forever to figure out who these people were, and they are central figures in the Bible, particularly concerning the key roles they played in *persecuting* Christ, but they were also the Religious leaders of their era.

The crying shame of it all is that these people, having been the religious leaders of their day, were people we'd expect to have known better than anyone else on the planet NOT to treat Jesus the way they did. But like so many other high-level people in any given society, including ours in the present era, they were so smart that they had no "common-sense" (I use to say they were so smart they were stupid, but I've lightened-up a bit; Now my admonition is: "We're all so smart that we're overlooking the obvious". (*Insult is usually my intention*))

Anyway, these guys made up the Ruling Class of Israel in Jesus' day. And Jesus was in constant conflict with them. Most of them were "puffed-up" "holier-than-thou" jerks, & "know-it-alls", not realizing that when they were arguing Biblical Policy with Jesus they were debating Godly principles with the very Son of God. But to them, they didn't believe this. They accused Him of blasphemy...unbelievable...

**The explanation about the Biblical groups known as the Pharisees and the Sadducees is as follows:**

The Sadducees were wealthy (they were the aristocracy of the day). They had the choicest positions throughout their society. Some of them were Priests, and they held the majority of seats in the ruling Council (the Sanhedrin). I guess the modern-day analogy would be like Priests and Senators & Congresspeople of today). They were much more concerned with being seen by their Emperor as being "politically-correct", than they were with pleasing God. And all their actions & decisions reflected that. They were NOT very popular with the masses (there were major disconnects). The Sadducees were strictly "Black-Letter", highly conservative, traditionalists, and, for the most part, they were out of touch with the commoners and they were "clueless". They embraced mostly the books of Genesis and Deuteronomy, greatly emphasizing the role Moses played in Biblical history (ironically, this is also true of Jewish people of today, but I'm not sure whether the Sadducees were the predecessors of modern-day Jewish people, I certainly hope not, but the similarities are kind of striking). But the Sadducees are thought to have been wiped-out around 70 A.D., along with the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Pharisees, on the other hand and by contrast, were mostly the middle-class business people of the time. They were also lawyers. They were a minority in the Sanhedrin. Religiously they were very much more "Right-Wing" so far as more modern-day doctrine is concerned. They even went against the tide of the Sadducees by embracing both God's written Word (all they had at the time was the Old Testament), as equal to the preachings of the day (which were destined to become parts of the New Testament). That was a very controversial position, given they were in the minority. The Pharisees believed that God was in control of all things, whereas the Sadducees felt He was disconnected.

The Pharisees were much more concerned with pleasing God than they were with being politically-correct, but they took themselves too seriously, and therein lies the irony of their own stupidity. One day, after Jesus healed a little girl from some affliction, for example, (I don't remember what the affliction was), some Pharisees confronted Him, angry because He performed the healing on the Sabbath day (I don't know whether their Sabbath day was Sunday like ours), and God's Word says "no work on the Sabbath" (paraphrased).

So they were rivals. In fact, one of the very few issues they ever came to agree on was the persecution of Jesus. Both groups together conspired and went to their Caesar to argue for Jesus' death.

Unforgivable??? Well as hard as it is to believe or accept, God even loves these people. He knows they're just too "bull-headed" to truly understand Him.

### **One Bible Commentary puts it like this:**

Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees earned numerous rebukes from Jesus. Perhaps the best lesson we can learn from the Pharisees and Sadducees is to not be like them.

Jesus once called both groups " ...a generation of vipers". I could not agree more!

I hope you have an amazing day!!

- Jack

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## **Matthew 16 (NASB)**

### **Pharisees Test Jesus**

The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. <sup>2</sup> But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' <sup>3</sup> And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? <sup>4</sup> An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away. <sup>5</sup> And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. <sup>6</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>7</sup> They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "He said that because we did not bring any bread." <sup>8</sup> But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? <sup>9</sup> Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? <sup>10</sup> Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? <sup>11</sup> How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

### **Peter's Confession of Christ**

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He \*said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will

not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup> Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

### **Jesus Foretells His Death**

<sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. <sup>22</sup> Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” <sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

### **Discipleship Is Costly**

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds. <sup>28</sup> “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”