

WHO WERE THE SADDUCEES?

Matthew 16:6, 12

Introduction: During Jesus' ministry He was always being criticized and plagued by many but one group seems to stand out from among all others and that group was the Sadducees. Jesus warned His followers to beware, to be careful of this group for they were a troublesome lot.

This brief study will help us understand just who the Sadducees were and where they came from.

1. The Sadducees and Pharisees emerged as two strong religious parties during the last period of rebellions during the time of 135 - 105 B.C. They were opposed to each other at almost every point and their rivalry was sharp and bitter.
2. One group of patriots were willing to die for religious freedom and had no political interest. Out of this group came the Pharisees.
3. Another group saw some good in the Greek culture and believed that it could be accepted and still be able to keep the Jewish faith in its entirety. Their goal was "political." They were mostly the aristocracy of Israel. They became known as the Sadducees.
4. The rivalry between the two parties eventually brought an end to the nation's political freedom under the Greeks and then came the Roman and there was no chance of ever being independent again politically and their religion became closely monitored.
5. The Sadducees were made up of the aristocratic families, the wealthy, the priests and the officials of the Temple.
6. Because of their learning and hereditary position they became the leaders of the nation, having gained control of the Temple and its tithes and finances. (*Acts 5:17*)
7. Their policy was to avoid difficulties with the pagan governments and keep on good terms with them, thus allowing Israel to remain religiously free. Believing Israel could best survive in a pagan world by using intelligence, diplomacy and prudence.
8. From the Sadducees were chosen the statesmen and diplomats who in turn maintained the essential relationship with the Roman government. In their hearts they opposed the Romans, but for the good of their country, they wanted to make the best of the situation by supporting the Roman government.
9. In religious matters, they rejected everything that did not come out of their five books of Moses or the Law and its 613 great principles. They rejected angels, the resurrection, demons, and grace. They did not believe that God was interested in human affairs and that each person was free to choose to live good or evil and his/her choice determined whether he/she would be punished and disappear. (*Acts 23:6-10; Luke 20:27*)

10. The Sadducees were harsh, even brutal and contemptuous toward the common people and later on especially those who followed Jesus, Christians. (*Matthew 3:7; Acts 4:1-4; 5:17-18, 40*)
11. The Sadducees disappeared after the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. because their only concern was the Temple, sacrifices and the literal interpretation of the Law. With the Temple gone, they lost their hold on the Jews.

CONCLUSION:

1. No doubt a nation needs leaders and often leaders spring up from difficulties within that nation, thus came the Sadducees and the Pharisees.
2. It is a common thing for those who are leaders to assume and even demand powers that they officially do not have, such as the Sadducees and the Pharisees.
3. Any person who contradicts those in power are quickly condemned and removed from the public to keep others from following them.
4. Jesus was everything that the Sadducees and Pharisees dreaded, a threat to their positions, therefore they did all they could to discredit Him and eventually "murdered" him.
5. Who were the Sadducees? Self-made leaders who presumed to have all the answers and defied anybody who dared to contradict them.
6. As you study of Jesus and His conflicts with the Sadducees, perhaps this brief study will help you identify with some of His difficulties with them.