

**Are There Dogs in Heaven, by Daniel H. Kuhn, Jr. 24071111**  
**Haggai 1:15b-2:9 and Luke 20:27-38**  
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Dogs can be very important to children. Dogs run and play with children, sleep with them, and protect them. It comes as no surprise that a young boy asked where his pet dog went after it died. When the mother said the dog was in heaven, it reassured the boy. So, the next question came, and most questions children ask are pretty important, “When I die, will my dog be in heaven with me?” Now, some parents will say that when dogs die, they go to doggie heaven. If there are separate doggie and people heavens, then we have a problem.

This mother quickly saw the bind she was in. The mother answered, “Yes! Whatever is important to you will be in heaven with you.” That is a wise answer, and I believe it is truth.

In the Bible, many people asked Jesus questions. Some were sincere, others were trivial, and others were carefully designed traps. Bullies and loudmouths who wanted to force their own way on others made a big deal out of insignificant issues. The Sadducees wanted to trap Jesus over a doctrinal question about resurrection. They asked Jesus an inane question.

The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, life after death, or angels. They were reasoned men, practical, perhaps, with common sense. They asked, what do you do with this woman who lost seven husbands, all brothers. What do you do with this woman who had no choice in the matter but to marry each brother in his turn, because she was subject to the law. She was literally “given in marriage.” Jewish law dictated that she, as a widow, would marry each brother in turn, in order to have offspring to fulfill first brother’s legacy.

Perhaps the Sadducees thought this kind of legal issue was silly, so they thought of an interesting puzzle to ask Jesus. Whose wife would this woman be in heaven, assuming all seven of her earthly husbands were present in heaven?

Jesus’ answer, as it was to most inquisitors who tried to trip him up, was brilliant. He divided people up into two groups, those who belong to this age and those who belong to a new age, a resurrection or Easter people. He said, “Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage.”<sup>1</sup> In the resurrection age people “neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, your silly human earthly rules don’t apply in that age. When you are a child of God, you need not worry about human rules. God “is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.”<sup>3</sup>

There are some who like to split hairs. The Pharisees and the Sadducees spent many long days arguing these fine points of law, marriage, resurrection, and whose wife or husband you were in an afterlife, or whether or not there is an afterlife. They loved to bully people into their particular world view or what they believed to be so important.

The same happens today. We also can get hung up on silly questions, questions of legality. When we do, I do not think we are in the spirit of that which is God. We can argue about whether Jesus rose bodily from the dead, or about whether you’re supposed to baptize infants or believers, or sprinkle or immerse, or about whether God loves gay people, or about whether the

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<sup>1</sup>Luke 20:34

<sup>2</sup>Luke 20:35

<sup>3</sup>Luke 20:38

Bible is literally true or not. Such arguments and questions are matters of the dead. They are dead issues. In the resurrection age, in the age of the children of God, things like that do not matter. The only things that matter are loving God, accepting God's love for you, and loving others.

Jesus asserted that God is the God of the living. God is concerned about more important things. The primary relationship is the relationship with God, not relationships with law or even marriage. This woman need no longer be "given in marriage" something about which she had no choice.

Jesus's answer to the Sadducees is one that can give us comfort about the afterlife if we believe that we are Easter or resurrection people. We need not be afraid about death.

One of my jobs as minister is to help people work through their fears of death and dying. When death is imminent, then also imminent is the question, "Where will I go after death?" Jesus says to us in this Lucan passage, simply be a child of God. Be a child of the resurrection. Be a child of God's age. Make God more important than anything else in your life, and legal issues of where you spend eternity will no longer have meaning.

Decide right now to be a child of God. That means, make your relationship with God more important than any other relationship. God is love, so you will receive God's love; you will love God, and you will love others. You will be an angel of God—not one of those fat little cherubs with wings that flies around, as is popular in the culture today. "Angel" means appearance of God. You are an appearance of God. God is in you and acting through you, spreading divine love and kindness and compassion.

The call to be an angel is nothing less than a call to ministry.

God will take care of us. We will have all we need in heaven.

I can not stand up here and tell you what heaven is like, exactly. Many have tried to speculate: streets paved with gold and mansions built of jewels. Those are simply metaphors for wonderful and beautiful. A God who loves us as much as Jesus showed us, will provide something wonderful and beautiful for eternity.

Heaven will have dogs, but no one will have to scoop up after them.