

This passage finds four distinct groups trying to trap the Lord:

The **Pharisees** had no official standing in the government but their popularity assured their influence in the Sanhedrin and among the people.

The **Herodians** were followers of the dynasty of the Herods, the client kings of the Romans. The Herods tried to straddle the Roman and Jewish systems. As a result, they were viewed with suspicion in both Rome and Jerusalem.

The **Sadducees** were the westernized ruling class. They included the high priest. Believing only the first five books of the Bible, the Torah, were inspired, they rejected supernatural beliefs such as the possibility of resurrection or the existence of angels.

The **scribes** both made copies of the law and interpreted it. Their faithful work is one reason we have

such accurate versions of Scripture today. But they seemed to have taken on the attitude that they were the *owners* of the scriptures instead of merely stewards.

Tensions often ran high between these groups. But opposition to Jesus Christ seems to have united them. His crucifixion also created unlikely allies: *“And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other”* (Luke 23:12).

All four groups were to be scattered or lost in the general wreck of the organized nation of Israel after the rebellion of AD 70. As Hebrews 8:13 warns, *“In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”*

Questions:

1. What are we to learn from the question the Pharisees and Herodians asked the Lord in verse 14 and the Lord's response in verses 15-17?
2. What did the Sadducees believe about the afterlife?
3. What Old Testament scriptures are the Sadducees referring to in their hypothetical situation and question they ask the Lord in verses 19-23?

-

4. In verses 24-27, the Lord tells the Sadducees that they have errors in their thinking. What are the errors and how does the Lord correct them in what He says?
5. What Old Testament scripture is the Lord quoting in verses 29-31?
6. How do verses 35-37 show that the Lord is both God and man?
7. What is the Lord saying about what was in the heart of the scribes in what He says about them in verses 38-40?
8. Why will they receive the greater condemnation?
9. What is the Lord teaching us about giving in verses 41-44?