

The Many "Isms" ...

Premillennialism, postmodernism, liberalism, Gnosticism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Arianism, Calvinism, the list could go on and on. If you are like me, when you consider the many "isms" which are present in today's religious society, it makes your head hurt. Where did all of these "isms" come from? Who started them and why? It would appear that the contemporary world would have produced most of these "isms", however, that is not the case. Most of the ones listed above are centuries old.

Jesus Christ faced two main "isms" in the first century. These two isms were the Jewish sects called the Pharisees and Saducees. In Matthew 23 there is a relentless exposure of hypocrisy and pretense in Phariseeism and Sadduceeism.

The Pharisees believed in the resurrection, the soul, and eternal life. However, they were hard bound to the numerous traditions of their day. They valued tradition over truth and did not hesitate at all to put away God's law if it conflicted with their traditions.

The Sadducees were the modernists of their time. They would be considered the religious liberals of the first century. They denied angels, the spirit (or soul), and man, and they believed that the extent of man's life was here on earth, they believed there was no life eternal. If the Sadducees were to exist now, they would have no difficulty in taking their place with any of the modern "isms" which stand for nothing, yet fall for anything.

On the very same day that the Pharisees attempted to trap Jesus in his speech, the Sadducees asked him what they thought was a difficult question about the afterlife. In the second section of Matthew chapter 22, both accounts are given. Verse 29 is the sharp reply of the Lord and demonstrates how He regarded them: *Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."*

Phariseeism and Sadduceeism were early errors and intense "isms" which soldiers of the truth had to battle in the first century. That battle still continues today.

For the elders,
Tony Williams