

What Is The Difference Between The Pharisees and Sadducees

Pharisees:

There were three Jewish sects - Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes. This sect arose prior to the period of the Maccabees when there was a tendency on the part of the Jews to adopt Grecian customs. In opposition to this the Pharisees conformed in the strictest manner to the Mosaic institutions. In the time of John Hyrcanus they were first known by this name. They were distinguished from the Sadducees in their doctrinal beliefs in holding to the doctrine of the resurrection and immortality of the soul, the doctrine of future rewards and punishment, foreordination consistent with freedom of action. But conformity to the law was the essential characteristic of their religion. In addition to the Mosaic law, they adhered strongly to traditions of the elders. This was denounced by Christ because it nullified the Scriptures. (*Matt. 15:2,3,6*). They were denounced by John the Baptist as well as by Christ for their observance of letter of the law instead of the spirit of it. (*John 8:1-11*).

(New Analytical Study Bible....World Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan.....1973)

The doctrine of the Pharisees include predestination, or, as some have termed it, a teaching of special divine providence. They also laid much stress on the immortality of the soul and had a fundamental belief in spirit life, teachings which usually caused much controversy when they met the Sadducees who just as emphatically denied them. (*Acts 23:6-9*). Being people of the Law they believed in final reward for good works and that the souls of the wicked were detained forever under the earth, while those of the virtuous rose again and even migrated into other bodies.

Jesus condemned especially their ostentation, their hypocrisy, their salvation by works, their impenitence and lovelessness, not always Pharisees as such.

(Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary...Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan.....1967)

Josephus says:

" They also believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them and that under the earth there will be rewards and punishments according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life."

Sadducees:

One of the Jewish religious parties in existence at the time of Christ. This sect did not believe in the resurrection and a future state of the soul, nor did it believe in the theory of rewards or punishment after death. In these beliefs it was opposed by the Pharisees, another important Jewish religious party. Politically the Sadducees, who took their name from *Zadoc*, a high priest in the reign of David, favored the policies of Rome in the government of Palestine. This was the party of the priesthood, for about 200 years prior to the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) most of the high priests were drawn from its ranks. John the Baptist once called both the Sadducees and the Pharisees "*a generation of vipers*" (Matt. 3:7). and Jesus warned his disciples against their doctrines. Paul once caused division in the ranks of both groups by claiming to be a Pharisee who questioned the resurrection of the soul. (Acts 23:6-10).

(New Analytical Study Bible...World Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan.1973)

The Sadducees believed that the Word of God alone was the seat of religious authority. They also denied the resurrection of the body, personal immortality, and retribution in a future life, they also denied the existence of angels and spirits. (Acts 23:8). A number of factors may have been responsible for this: their general indifference to religion, their rationalistic temper, and the wild extravagances of the angelology and demonology of the Pharisees.

They felt no need of a divine providence to order their lives. They thought man is entirely the master of his own destiny and that the doing of good or evil is left entirely to man's free choice.

(Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary...Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan..1967)

Josephus says:

" The doctrine of the Sadducees is this.... That souls die with the bodies, nor do they regard the observation of any thing besides what the law enjoins them."