

**HOW JOY WILL BE MADE COMPLETE IN HEAVEN FOR CHRISTIANS OF ALL CIRCUMSTANCES**

**Mark 12:18-27** - "And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, [19] "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. [20] There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. [21] And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. [22] And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. [23] In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife." [24] Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? [25] For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. [26] And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? [27] He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong."

1) **THE QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION - Mark 12:19-23**

The string of questions for Jesus continues. Matthew's account makes it clear that this question came the very same day as the question about taxes (**Matthew 22:23**). The Sadducees didn't even believe in the resurrection of the body. Nor did they believe in the life of spirits or angels (**Acts 23:8 - [8] For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all**). *Why would they ask Jesus this particular question?* What were they looking for if their convictions already precluded accepting Jesus' teaching on these subjects? They carefully picked a difficult situation to make the whole concept of resurrection look ridiculous. It's another loaded question designed to make Jesus look ridiculous.

2) **THE SADDUCEES' QUESTION PROVES THEIR WHOLE CONCEPT OF THE RESURRECTION IS SMALL AND INADEQUATE**

They were thinking about life in heaven as *merely an extension of the kind of life they had on earth*. This is more like *resuscitation* than *resurrection*. They pictured life in the resurrection to be like life here on earth, only stretched out. This is a very common feature of our thinking about things like heaven and the resurrection. We are quick to create problems because we frame these issues with life as we presently know it. Obviously, using our own speculation, we can do nothing else.

3) **IN HIS ANSWER, JESUS POINTS OUT THAT LIFE IN THE KINGDOM IS MORE THAN JUST LIFE ON EARTH EXTENDED OR EVEN SLIGHTLY MODIFIED - Mark 12:25**

**"For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."** This is an important answer for all of us. Jesus shows that we simply can't approach the subject of resurrection life with our present understanding. All of us have questions about past friendships, family ties, differing ages, relationships with present spouses, etc. We wonder how we will ever be happy in heaven when all of these things we hold so dear are done away with. *But that's because we are still viewing things from this side of the grave*. As of yet, we can't imagine anything better than we already have grown to love. Without the revelation of God's Word we tend to picture the future changes of the life to come as being a diminishing of our present joy. None of this will turn out to be the case.

4) **THE REASON FOR THEIR MUDDLED THINKING - Mark 12:24**

**"Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?"**

This is a very important verse. The greatest cause of their lack of clarity was **they hadn't been hearing the Scriptures**. As is the case with many of our deepest questions, their darkness was **self-imposed**. They wanted quick answers but weren't given to deep study of the Scriptures. The Sadducees' real fascination was **contemporary Greek culture**. They knew the philosophies of the day better than they knew their Bibles. Jesus saw this as a real tragedy.

Because they didn't know the Scriptures, they were also in the dark about the power of God. **Note the order here**. Until the Scriptures are taken seriously, one will always lack faith in the power and greatness of God. **What are the Scriptures but a retelling of the powerful acts of God in this world?** As always, a reverent and faithful hearing of the Scriptures generates a living experience of faith and trust in God Himself. **Knowing the Scriptures and knowing the power of God are cause and effect.**

#### 5) THE HEART OF THE MATTER - Mark 12:26-27

**"And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? [27] He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong."**

Jesus recognizes that the subject about wives and marriage is only a smoke screen. The real issue for these Sadducees is much more basic. **Is there life after death or is this all a great wishful dream - a lie after all?** Jesus picks a passage well suited to this audience. Every serious Sadducee knew the writings of Moses inside out. Jesus picks **the** central event in Moses' life - his calling at the burning bush.

The real point in using this passage is this - **God calls Himself the "God of Abraham" as He introduces Himself to Moses**. This is half a millennium **after** Abraham was off the scene. Notice, He doesn't call Himself the **God of Abraham's body or bones**. He addresses Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as living in the presence of God **presently, as He spoke to Moses**.

As if to remove any remaining doubt, Jesus makes his closing punch in a more direct statement. **"God is not the God of the dead but the living"** (ie. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). And clearly not just these three, but all the **others** who have ever lived and died as well!

#### 6) OTHER PASSAGES ON THE RESURRECTION - John 5:28-29

**"Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice [29] and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."**

Yes, there is a resurrection, but there is more than one. The Sadducees were straining at **tiny** issues and ignoring the most **massive** one. We are not all alike in the future life in one very important sense, and Jesus won't let this issue slide by unnoticed. The Bible is clear on this point. Jesus talked about it more than anyone else. Everything hinges on what one does with the Lordship of Jesus Christ - how one **hears** when God speaks about the Savior of the world..