THE GOD OF THE LIVING

Mark 12:18~27

Key Verse 27

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

**Introduction**



 Professional boxing is limited to a maximum of twelve rounds, most are fought over four, six, eight or ten rounds depending upon the experience of the boxers. But amateur boxing bouts are short in duration, comprising three rounds of three minutes. The religious leaders approached Jesus two times so far and now one more time Sadducees challenged Jesus with a strange story. They were like amateur boxers who expected more highly than they were and tried to defeat Jesus. But Jesus is invincible, because He is the winner always. May the Lord help us to accept Jesus’ words in our hearts and submit ourselves newly to Him. Amen.

1. Read verses 18-23. How did the Sadducees’ view the resurrection? (18) Describe the hypothetical scenario they presented to Jesus. (19-23) What does it show about them?

1-1, Read verses 18-23.

Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 19 “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. 20 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. 21 The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. 22 In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. 23 At the resurrection[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24697c)] whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”

1-2, How did the Sadducees’ view the resurrection? (18)

***Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.***

* In Jesus’ time, there were three distinctive Jewish religious factions: the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes.
* The **Pharisees** believed in both Torah (Written Law) and Talmud (Oral Law: Interpretation of the Written Law). They believed that there is resurrection.
* The **Essenes** believed that the Pharisees and the Sadducees had corrupted the city of Jerusalem. They sought piety and so lived a monastic life in the desert.
* The **Sadducees**, on the other hand, believed only in the Written Law—Moses’ five books, but rejected the Oral Law.
* They also rejected the prophets and the rest of the Old Testament. They didn’t believe in the resurrection of the dead or God’s judgment after death.
* Their main focus was rituals associated with the temple. Most probably they lived a religious life to get earthly blessings: wealth, honor, good health and long life.
* The Sadducees were the party of high priests, aristocratic families, and merchants—the wealthier elements of the population.
* They came under the influence of Hellenism, tended to have good relations with the Roman rulers of Palestine, and generally represented the conservative view within Judaism.

1-3, Describe the hypothetical scenario they presented to Jesus. (19-23)

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* Now, the Sadducees came to Jesus with a made up story and a question at the end. What a ludicrous and tragic story it is!
* The Sadducees made use of Moses’ law to fabricate the story. Deut 25:5-10 command that if a husband died leaving no heirs one of the surviving brothers should take his widow and marry her and so provide the dead brother with an heir. So the brother’s name and inheritance would be kept in the family.
* But in the Sadducees’ story, a woman had no children from all seven brothers whom she married and who all died one by one.
* Then in the end she died. Now the Sadducees’ question was whose wife she would be in the resurrection for she had been married to all seven brothers. They told this story in order for the resurrection to be totally nonsense and absurd.

1-4, What does it show about them?

* The Sadducees’ made up story shows about human life without resurrection faith. The Sadducees viewed that human life begins with birth, marriage comes next to have children and it ends in death.
* After death, they would return to the dust. Their point is that human beings only have this life here and now and that’s all. There is no resurrection, no judgment, no hell, no angels, no heaven, no after life, no fear of God, no guilt after sin.
* What a godless thought! Because of such a view, the Sadducees’ life was focused on having lots of fun and success in this life and then die.
* So they held tightly on their rank and wealth. Their interest was, “Whose wife will she be? Whose possession will this be? Whose honor? Whose title?”
* When we don’t live by resurrection faith we can be just like the Sadducees, the practical atheists whose interests lie in possessing things in the world greedily.
* Just as St. Paul said in 1 Cor 15:32, if we don’t live by resurrection faith and hope, we will say, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”
* But the problem is that even after eating and drinking a lot, we cannot be satisfied and content but feel inwardly. Ecclesiastes 1:2 reads, “Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”
1. Read verses 24-25. How did Jesus correct the Sadducees’ error? (24) What will happen to those who rise from the dead? (25)

2-1, Read verses 24-25.

24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? 25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

2-2, How did Jesus correct the Sadducees’ error? (24)

***24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?***

* Jesus replied, ‘Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?” Jesus was aware of their scheme who tried to trap him and kill him, but taught them the Scriptures from Torah which clearly shows about the resurrection of the dead. Jesus pointed out their two errors.
* Their first error was that they didn’t know **the Scriptures**. The Sadducees tried to prove that it is nonsense to believe the resurrection with their human reasoning.
* The Sadducees’ error was that they tried to understand resurrection through their human reasoning, not through the Scriptures.
* The Sadducees should have studied the Scriptures deeply to know the resurrection clearly.
* Also, they did not study the Bible to accept it as the absolute word of God. When they read the Bible, they picked and chose what they liked only.
* This is why they had such a ridiculous question and their minds were so fatalistic and anxious and materialistic.
* It is easy to have this kind of attitude when we read the Bible. There are parts of the Bible that we like to read such as God’s blessings and God’s love.
* But other parts of the Bible such as commitment, sacrifice and persecutions, we by nature want to avoid.
* When we have such a liberal attitude towards the Bible, the word of God cannot work in our hearts and we cannot meet God personally.
* Their second error was that they didn’t know **the power of God**. The Sadducees didn’t believe in the almighty power of God.
* The five books of Moses display the power of God numerous times. With his almighty power, God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing.
* With his power God created Adam out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life so that Adam could become a living being.
* With his mighty power, God punished mankind through the flood. With his power he rescued the Israelites from Egypt and led them to the Promised Land.
* But it is our common error that we do not put our faith in Almighty God. We often omit the power of God in our spiritual life and we become powerless.
* May we know the power of God and put our trust in Almighty God. May we first take the power of God when we read the words of God by faith.

2-3, What will happen to those who rise from the dead? (25)

***25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.***

* Jesus loved these Sadducees though. He did not give up on them. He wanted to patiently teach them so that they could be joyful people instead of sad people.
* So he taught them about the resurrection of the dead and about heaven. Jesus teaches that in heaven there will be no marriage.
* Heaven is not a mere extension of this world. It is different from this world and we will be different.
* Jesus says that we will be like the angels. What does this mean? It means that our bodies will be different. We will be as holy as Jesus. We will be as glorious.
1. Read verses 26-27. How did God introduce Himself to Moses? (26) Who are the dead and the living? (27) What does it mean when Jesus calls God the ‘God of the living’?

3-1, Read verses 26-27.

26 Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24700d)]? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

3-2, How did God introduce Himself to Moses? (26)

***26 Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’[***[***d***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24700d)***]?***

* Jesus taught them from the book of Exodus continually. Moses had been living as an exile in the gentile land for 40 years.
* Moses must have been very boring. Inside he felt hopeless and meaningless. Then one day an incredible thing happened.
* While he was shepherding his sheep, he saw a strange site in the mountain. It was a bush that was on fire, but was not consumed by the fire.
* He went up to look at what was going on. When he saw it, God spoke to him from out of the burning bush.
* He said to him, “Moses, Moses. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Moses was afraid and hid his face.
* God said to him, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.”
* When God said this he showed that he is the God of the resurrection. God used the words “I am” to identify himself to Moses.
* The words “I am” are in the present tense. This means that to God, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still alive.
* This is because they are with him in heaven, living forever. He did not say, “I was the God of Abraham, was the God of Isaac and was the God of Jacob.”
* He said, “I am.” When we study the book of Genesis we find out how God took care of their lives while they trusted in him and lived on earth.
* Because God shepherded them and because they learned to trust God, God was not ashamed to be called their God even when they messed up and sinned.
* Sometimes, they repeated the same bad habits over many years. However, God was faithful to them and he led them.
* They learned to trust in God and to have hope in his promises. The hope of having a great nation out of their own descendants, was encouraging to them.
* But the greatest promise was the hope of the kingdom of heaven. Heb 11:16 says, “Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one…”
* They all believed that their greatest hope and joy lay in the future eternal kingdom. Now they are with God in heaven living with him in all eternity in resurrected form, like angels.

3-3, Who are the dead and the living? (27)

***27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”***

* Jesus told the Sadducees that God is the God of the living. This verse that he quoted from Exodus was enough proof for them that they were in error.
* They did not know the Scripture, they did not know the power of God and then they fell even further because they did not know that God is the God of the living.
* God is not dead. God is alive and working. When we read about how God used Moses to free the Israelites from slavery through mighty acts of judgment, we can see that God is the living God.

3-4, What does it mean when Jesus calls God the ‘God of the living’?

* Jesus teaches us here that God is the God of the living. He is the God who raises the dead and gives life. He is the eternal God who is working through history in every generation in people whose hearts are open to him.
* This is why we need to study Scripture. God may open our spiritual eyes to know who he is. God may reveal himself to us personally so that we may confidently say, “The God of the Bible is the living God!! He is our God!!”

**Conclusion**

 Today we learned that God is the living God who raises the dead and who gives us the glorious hope in the kingdom of God. May God help us not to be like the Sadducees. May God help us to know and believe the Scripture and to know the power of God so that personal revival may come to our hearts. May God reveal himself to us in a very personal way as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob and as the God of the living. May God bless America to be a kingdom of priests despite the pandemic. Amen.

**One word: God of the living!**