

Sadducees, Resurrection and Religious Liberals

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Date: 02 June 2024

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[0 : 00] Open up to Mark chapter 12, Mark chapter 12. I'll open up my Bible. If you've got a Bible, open it up to Mark chapter 12, or sometimes people have got iPads and iPhones, and pull up the Bible there, which is all fine and good.

So, this week we're going to be looking at a short, well, short passage, about 10 verses, but the focus is on a question that is asked of Jesus regarding the resurrection of the dead.

There's a group of people called the Sadducees who ask this question. They don't believe in the resurrection, as we'll look at, and so they're trying to really make Jesus look bad.

They've got a question that seems like it should make somebody look foolish for believing in the resurrection. Jesus' response and answer to them, to me anyway, comes across as brilliant, and we'll look at why that is.

We're going to spend some time this morning looking at the Sadducees, who they were, kind of where they're, you know, what perspective they're coming from. They were actually considered religious liberals. We're going to look at that particular issue in particular.

[1 : 18] There are conservative religious people, or Christians, and then there are liberals, and what does that mean, and what are the effects of that, and what's kind of behind that? And then we're also going to look at this question specifically of the resurrection and the afterlife.

So, just to step back on the biblical context here, where are we at? We've been going over, reviewing this context every week for the last few weeks.

Jesus is in Jerusalem. This is his final week. Some people call it his passion week. This is the last week before he gives up his life for the sins of the world. Right now, I think this is a Wednesday specifically.

He came into Jerusalem on a Sunday night, and Monday, I think it was, that he flipped over the tables and drove out the money changers from the temple, and he's been having these confrontations with many of the Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrin, those who ruled over the religious life of Israel, and various groups have been coming to him, and they've been confronting him, and he's been confronting them back, and it's increasing the tension, and will ultimately culminate in him being arrested and being killed for his claims and the things that he's doing and teaching.

So, let's read through these verses, starting with Mark 12 and verse 18, and then we'll look through each verse one at a time.

[2 : 50] Mark 12, 18. Then some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him, and they asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies and leaves his wife behind and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and dying, he left no offspring. And the second took her, and he died. Nor did he leave any offspring. And the third, likewise.

So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all, the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be?

For all seven had her as wife. Jesus answered and said to them, Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?

For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

[4 : 05] He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken. This question of the resurrection was a debate between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, primarily.

The Sadducees were a minority group, and we'll talk about them more in a second. But they held the minority position, that there is no resurrection from the dead. When you're dead, you're dead, that's it. It's more of, we would consider that a very secular view today, a materialist view.

The Sadducees were quite religious, but when it came to this idea of really supernatural things, they rejected really almost anything supernatural.

The Old Testament actually speaks a lot to, or a fair bit, to resurrection. Not nearly as much as the New Testament. As we read through the New Testament, and we'll look at one of the most famous passages in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 15.

We'll look at that at the very end of this message. But it gets into a lot of detail about our future hope, the hope of the believer to live forever, that this life is not all that there is.

[5 : 17] But there are plenty of passages in the Old Testament that also speak to that, not nearly as in detail, but still evident enough and quite clear.

There are several in the Psalms. I'm just going to give one example. Here's Psalm 16, verses 9. Psalm 16, verses 9 and 10. Therefore my heart is glad, my glory rejoices.

My flesh also will rest in hope, for you will not leave my soul in Sheol, or hell, nor will you allow, or the grave, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption.

So this is a Psalm, I think, of David, in which he said, you're not going to leave my body in the grave. You're not going to leave my body in the grave. This is actually also a Messianic Psalm.

We see this a lot with Messianic passages, is that they have a double meaning. So here he's talking about his own body. You won't leave my own body in the grave.

[6 : 21] But this is also a reference. Nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption. Also, from the body of David will come the Messiah, and he will not stay in the grave either.

Ecclesiastes 12, 7 says this. Ecclesiastes 12, 7. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the Spirit will return to God who gave it.

He's talking about death. The body will return to the dust of the earth, but the Spirit will return to God who gave it. Job, in his whole debacle, his whole ordeal, there's a passage towards the end in Job chapter 19, verse 26, where he's talking about his own death.

He says, Job 19, verse 26, And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another, how my heart yearns within me.

Job, and we know Job is one of the earliest books of the whole Bible, and even at those early times, he knew that not just spiritually, but even physically, he said, after my flesh is destroyed, I know that I will see God again, not just as a spirit, but also in my flesh.

[7 : 52] He knew that there would be a resurrection, not just of his spirit, or his soul, but even of his body. Daniel chapter 12 actually speaks probably the most explicitly about a resurrection from death.

In Daniel 12, chapter 12, verse 1, this is what Daniel says, we'll read three verses. At that time, Michael, he's talking about the archangel Michael, shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people.

Michael actually oversaw the people of Israel. And there shall be a time of trouble, he's talking about the tribulation, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.

And at that time, your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. That's pretty clear, isn't it?

[9 : 07] The dead, those who are in the dust of the earth, they will rise again, not just the righteous but even the wicked also. And we read in the New Testament a lot more detail about that. There will be a resurrection in the future of both the righteous and the unrighteous.

The righteous unto eternal life and those who have rejected the Lord to judgment and eternal punishment. So what about these Sadducees?

The Sadducees were a minority group among the Jewish leaders. Many times they are contrasted with who? Who's the other group?

The Pharisees. So you have the Sadducees and the Pharisees. And one group was considered more conservative. They held more conservative views. They were both fastidious when it came to keeping the law of Moses.

But the Pharisees had more traditional views, we might call it. More historical views than the Pharisees. The Pharisees had different ideas that were somewhat new.

[10 : 15] A bunch of people were coming as we read this section here of Mark in Jesus' in Jerusalem. First we had the chief priests, scribes, and elders who represent the Sanhedrin come to him and ask him about his authority.

So there was that confrontation. And then we just talked about last week where the Pharisees and the Herodians came to Jesus and they were asking about paying taxes to Caesar.

And these are all questions that are not really looking for an answer but really looking for opportunities to accuse, mock, ridicule, separate Jesus, get him in trouble with either the authorities or with the people.

According to Josephus, the only thing we really know about the Sadducees or a little bit that we find in the Bible, and we'll look at one passage in particular in a second to look at some specific things about their views, there's a few writings in a guy named Josephus who was a Jewish historian just a few generations after Jesus, a couple of generations after Jesus.

And he wrote a few things about the Pharisees. One of the things that he said was that the Pharisees were known as being the most strict about the law, about the law of Moses specifically.

[11 : 36] They wanted, it held up to the very nth degree, even more so than the Pharisees. The Pharisees were very comfortable with adding tradition to the law.

In fact, that is kind of the history of the Jews even after this time, during this time and after, they would add all kinds of traditions, their own traditions. And Jesus spoke specifically to that. If you look in, I think it's Matthew 23, he upbraids the Pharisees for their traditions, the traditions of men that they add, that they uphold higher than even the word of God.

The Pharisees on the other, or excuse me, the Sadducees on the other hand were uncomfortable with adding things, but they were very strict when it came to keeping the law of Moses.

Some people say that there's this debate, I think, among scholars about, and looking specifically at this passage, whether the Sadducees accepted other scripture outside of the Torah.

There are some that say the Sadducees, they only upheld the authority of the first five books of the Bible, sometimes called the Torah or the Pentateuch, and they rejected the rest of scripture.

[12 : 53] Others say, no, it seems that they probably accepted all of scripture, just like the rest of the Jews, the prophets and Psalms and things like that, all the rest of the Hebrew scriptures that we would accept today, but they just had a more of a metaphorical view of things, and we'll talk about that more in a second as well.

But they said that there's no resurrection, that's what the passage here says, the Sadducees teach that there's no resurrection, and so that kind of sets up this account, this story of this question that's being asked to Jesus.

They also denied that there's no such thing as spirit, no angels, no judgment day, right? If there's no resurrection, can there be a judgment day? No.

So no immortality. Josephus said that the Sadducees taught that the soul dies with the body. Very much like a secularist today, an atheist or a materialist.

We'll read this from Acts chapter 23. This is an account where Paul, he's arrested and he's on trial and he's being accused by both the Pharisees and the Sadducees and he finds an opportunity actually to create some strife between them and so he brings up this debate that they have between themselves as a way to deflect from the accusations against him.

[14 : 22] It says this, Acts chapter 23, verse 6, but when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead.

I am being judged. So he's saying, hey, these people are judging me because I teach what the Pharisees teach, that there's a hope of resurrection. And when he had said this, a dissension rose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the assembly was divided.

For Sadducees say there is no resurrection and no angel or spirit, but the Pharisees confess both. So we get a little bit of a detail here.

They don't believe in the resurrection. They also don't believe in really the spiritual nature of things. They're materialists. They believe that the only thing that is is just physical. But at the same time, they believe in God, right, who is spirit.

So, obviously different from atheism. but aligns with atheism in so many ways. Let's talk a little bit about religious liberals in general.

[15 : 32] Is this something that was just something, was there just a liberal religion back during the times of Jesus and then now all religion is conservative?

That's not the case at all, is it? What does it mean to be liberal anyway? We usually think in terms of liberal and conservative when it comes to politics or culture, right? And so, we use the term conservative, right?

Typically, when you're a conservative, you are trying to conserve something, right? Conserve some kind of tradition, ideas, from the past that have been held onto for a long time.

And liberal, you have some new ideas that you want to add in, that you want to replace the conservative ideas with. Today, we have, when it comes to Christianity in particular, our faith, we have liberal Christians or many times they like to be called progressive Christians and it's the same way when it comes to politics, right?

Liberal is one word but a lot of times people prefer the word progressive because it has very positive connotations, right? We're progressing. Nobody wants to regress or stay in a rut, right?

[16 : 47] You want to be progressing and so, we're coming up with the new ideas. You guys have these old ideas and we've got these new ones that are going to make for a better life if we just ditch the old ideas and we stick with the new ones.

There have been in, throughout Christian history always some kind of progressive movement and they have taken different forms throughout the ages.

Some try to undermine the Bible completely, others reinterpret the scriptures to mean something else and we'll actually look at that more in a second.

Just two movements that I'm somewhat familiar with that I can think of. Back maybe a dozen years ago there was this movement called the Emerging Church. Does anybody else remember that? Is that just me?

You know, if you're not paying attention you might not notice it but the Emerging Church was this movement within usually younger people and Christian circles and a big part of that was just questioning everything.

[17 : 54] Everything was a question. And well does the Bible really say that? And can you really know really what the Bible teaches for sure? Can we really be certain about what the Bible teaches? another one that I can think about was this was happening really at the turn of last century, so the early 1900s.

And there was this movement to turn Christianity into more of a social movement. They called it the social gospel. And so there were churches and even I read that, who is it?

Rockefeller. Anybody familiar with Rockefeller? He was the multi-gazillionaire that was the big oil guy, created an oil monopoly. He was actually a Baptist, you know, and actually a very faithful Baptist.

You might think, oh, that's neat, you know, he was a Baptist, he actually supported a lot of missions, but he also supported this move to progressive Christianity called the social gospel and funded different people who were spearheading this effort to try to transform the Christian church into more of a social focus rather than focusing on these things like morals, and, you know, the resurrection of Christ and things like that.

And so, if you've heard of a fundamentalist, right, sometimes that can take on a negative connotation today, right? A fundamentalist Christian, especially people who are, you know, not very kind towards Christians, if they call you a fundamentalist, that's supposed to be a derogatory term.

[19 : 30] But the original fundamentalist back in the, I don't know if it's the 20s or 30s, were those who said, here's this social gospel being preached and we need to get back to the fundamentals of the faith.

And so, they had a bunch of folks get together and they said, these are the fundamentals of Christianity that we need to make sure we uphold. And that's where this concept of fundamentalism came in.

So, what's behind kind of liberal or progressive religion anyway, both when we look at the Sadducees or we look at this kind of thing in Christianity today?

Well, there are certain parts of religion, whether it's Judaism or Christianity, that are undesirable. There are teachings that will offend the worldly system that we live in.

And it seems like there is this desire to not offend the worldly system, that our faith would be more conformed to the world.

[20 : 39] And when you want to conform your life to the world, you have three options, right? One, you can just abandon your faith altogether, right?

If you want to conform your life to the life of the world, and there seems to be this unconformity, this countercultural aspect to your faith, to your religion, you have three options.

You can abandon your faith altogether and just go into the world. And some people do that, they grow up in the faith maybe, and they decide to reject it because they want to conform their lives to the world.

Number two, you could live a hypocritical life, right? You could say, well, this is what the Bible teaches and I'm a Christian and I give lip service to the Bible, but I'm going to live my life completely differently than what the Bible teaches me.

So there's that option. Both of these options are somewhat, some people don't like the idea, right? They don't like the idea of giving up their faith. In fact, for many people, atheism seems like a, or secularism seems undesirable because, well, those people kind of just do whatever they want.

[21 : 52] They don't have any kind of morals at all. And then, who wants to be a hypocrite, right? Whether you're a Christian or an atheist or any kind of person at all, being a hypocrite is something that is looked down on by everyone.

So what's the third option? The third option is you can take your faith and you can conform that, you can twist it, you can change it so that it conforms now to the world.

And so you can be a faithful believer, a faithful Jew, a faithful Christian that is conformed to the world and your conscience can feel good about it and you can brag about how religious you are and still be conformed to the world.

Does the Bible say, does the Bible teach that we ought to be conformed to the world? No, no. the Bible is very clear that we as Christians ought to be conformed not to the pattern of this world.

Does anybody know where the Romans 12 to? Well, I have it right here. And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

[23 : 06] So don't be conformed to the world and its system but be transformed by the word of God to a new way of life, to a different way of thinking than the world's system.

So if you want to conform your religion to the world, there's a few ways that you can do it. You know, Christianity has many concepts and ideas that are embarrassing.

For example, in Christianity, we teach that the Bible teaches, the Bible itself teaches that God created mankind out of nothing.

And, you know, today, it's a very popular view that man evolved from single-celled organisms over millions and even billions of years.

And so this idea that God created man out of nothing, it's embarrassing. I mean, science proves, right, that we evolved from single-celled organisms.

[24 : 14] Right? Isn't that what science proves? Science also, today, teaches that there's not just two genders, right? You see scientists, biologists.

Well, there's multiple genders. Science is not always trustworthy. Or at least scientists, I should say, right? So, we can't, so there's embarrassing ideas in Christianity.

Christians are opposed to things like homosexuality. Well, that's embarrassing. I mean, this is really, homosexuality is like the new virtue today.

And so if you want to be truly virtuous today, you are going to be accepting of basically anything when it comes to sexuality. Anything. And if you're not, then you are a bigot, a hater.

These are the kinds of things. And so this is the new virtue of the day. And so it can be embarrassing for many people to uphold the scriptures.

[25 : 29] And so there are efforts to twist the scriptures. One way is through turning much of the scripture into metaphor or symbol, right? So there are some people who are embarrassed by the resurrection, that Jesus rose from the dead.

Nobody rises from the dead. What a silly idea. When you're dead, you're dead. And so there are people, they would call themselves progressive Christians today, and they would say, well, the story of Jesus rising from the dead, it's just a metaphor.

It didn't actually happen in history. The man Jesus, he died in a grave, and he's still there. His body is still there.

And really, this whole story was just told to be a metaphor for how life transformation can happen when we follow the compassion and love that Jesus showed us.

and that's what they'll teach. They'll look at the miracles that the Bible says that Jesus performed. For example, you have the feeding of the 5,000, in which the lunch of a little boy of five loaves and three fishes, is that what it was?

[26 : 51] At least for the 5,000? Was transformed to feed over 5,000 people, probably over 10,000 people if we count women and children. And progressive Christians, not all of them, but many, there's definitely a spectrum, will say that, you know what, that story, now the food was not actually multiplied.

There was no actual miracle involved. But the story was told, you know, I'm sure there was a boy there, and people were hungry, and some people had food and some didn't, and people didn't want to share that they had food because then they'd have to share it with somebody else.

And there was this brave boy who came out, and he was willing to share his meal, and when he did that, everybody else, they shared their, they brought their meal out, and they shared their meal too.

And so it was, it was like a multiplication of his meal. And it was a miracle of human compassion and kindness. These are the kinds of things that they'll teach.

Sometimes, instead of using metaphor, some liberals, progressives, will focus on certain portions of scripture and neglect others.

[28 : 11] For example, it's very common for progressives to focus just on the four gospels. I mean, hey, these are the stories about Jesus, right? And so those are the most important scriptures, and they way outweigh anything else.

And so we can, if we can just focus on those, and we can neglect anything else in the Bible, wow, there's a lot of twisting you can do, right? And so it's a very popular thing in our culture today, especially when it comes to sexual immorality, homosexuality in particular.

Well, Jesus never said anything about homosexuality. He never condemned that. And so it must be fine. It was fine with Jesus.

He never said anything about that. And so these are the kinds of things. Of course, all scripture, what does the Bible say? All scripture is from God.

All scripture is from Jesus. He is the word of God. And so we can't subdivide the Bible like that and try to give priority to some things and de-emphasize others.

[29 : 22] Liberal movements tend to be short-lived. They kind of come and go. They'll maybe last for a generation and then they'll die off and then a new kind of liberal idea will come forth.

Interestingly enough, the Sadducees, they kind of died out. So after the temple was destroyed in 70 AD, which was less than a generation after Jesus' resurrection, they kind of started, we don't see them in history anymore.

Their faith, their viewpoints, their movement died out. But what I see happening throughout history is that some movement, some liberal movement within Christianity will rise up, it will have some level of popularity, deceive many people, and then it will get exposed for its inconsistency.

Many times these liberal movements tend to be self-destructive because they're incohesive internally. And then the teachings are exposed and then the movement kind of implodes.

And some people, they'll just abandon the Christian faith altogether. Some people will move on to the next movement, the next liberal progressive movement. And others, the light will come on and they'll say, wait a second, this isn't what the Bible teaches.

[30 : 49] And they'll actually conform themselves to the Word of God, which is obviously the best option. So how do you avoid all these deceptions? They're constantly among us.

The Bible warns about deception regularly. What is the number one thing that we can do to avoid deception as Christians? read this, know this.

Jesus brings this up in this interaction. Verse 19, here is their question. Mark 12, 19.

Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies and leaves his wife behind and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

Now this is kind of strange, at least it seems strange to us. Where are they getting this from? Well, they're getting this from Moses, as they say. There's this law, part of the law of Moses.

[31 : 51] This is in actually Deuteronomy 25. If you have a Bible, go ahead and turn there. We're going to read this briefly. But they call this the leveret marriage.

Leveret marriage. Leveret is just a Latin word for brother-in-law. But here's this law, Deuteronomy 25, 5. And we'll read it and just talk briefly about it.

Deuteronomy 25, verse 5. If a brother, if brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family.

So there's this concern here. There is a man and wife, they form a household together, but they don't have any children. And the man dies. And there's this concern that she would get remarried, which is totally fine, that she would get remarried.

In fact, many times it was expected to get remarried. But there was this concern that she would marry a stranger. Now, a stranger can many times mean a foreigner. But here, I think, probably means not a Gentile, because obviously that was forbidden of the Jews to marry Gentiles at all.

[33 : 01] But somebody outside of their tribe, somebody outside of their larger family. And so, we'll continue reading here and maybe talk more about that as we read on.

Her husband's brother shall go into her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. So the man's brother, the man who died, his brother, should take her as wife and raise up a child, not necessarily a son, but a son or a daughter, to her.

And it continues on. And it shall be that the firstborn son, well, I guess it says son here, which she bears, will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

And so, the idea here is that the second brother will come in, he will take her as his wife. Now, I think it's assumed here that this is a single man.

This is a brother, not somebody who's married, who already has a wife, even though there was some allowance for polygamy back in the Old Testament.

[34 : 11] But here we assume that this is a single brother. In fact, I think we can assume that because it says they're dwelling together, they're living together. Typically, a married brother would have his own household separately.

But the firstborn of this second union would be to inherit the household or the property of that first brother who died.

And so, really, this is a concern about the property. When a man and a woman are married, they own property together, right? And if the husband dies, that property still belongs to the woman.

Some people think, oh, well, women didn't have any property rights back then. And that's not true at all. In fact, the law of Moses specifically provides for property rights for women. But if she buries somebody outside the tribe, then he would, they would own that property together and that property would leave kind of the larger family.

And so that was the concern here, to keep the property specifically within that brother's family and household. And that there would be a son who would be able to take that inheritance later on in life and keep it in the family.

[35 : 27] So that was the concern. Verse 7, But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate of the elders and say, My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel.

He will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of the city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, I do not want to take her, then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders.

Well, before I finish this, so this is not required. Now, it's highly recommended. We'll find out here. But this is not required. You don't have to take her as your wife.

You know, if you've been around, you know, your brother and his wife and she's just a constant nag and, you know, dripping faucet as the Bible says, you might say, you know, I don't want to have anything to do with this lady. But it is highly recommended and we'll see here how that's the case.

But if he stands firm and says, I do not want to take her, then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, so shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.

[36 : 37] And his name shall be called in Israel the house of him who had his sandal removed. Now, that's wild, isn't it? That's a pretty kind of funny thing. But this was part of the law of Moses.

And so, you know, we could get into the details of, well, why is this a law? And I certainly don't think that this is something that we should adopt as Christians today. I think there were some unique things here that were unique to Israel, specifically the land that they owned and keeping it in their families was important when it came to the Israelite people.

One thing, though, to kind of tie in here is there's a story that is famous not just among Christian circles but across even those who are not Christians as well. And it's a story of a woman who lost her husband before she had children.

Her name was Ruth. There's a whole book in the Bible about her story and her life. And there is actually quite a tie-in here to this law and how it worked.

Because remember, Ruth went back. She was actually a Gentile woman but she married a Jew. Her husband died. She didn't have any children. She went back home to Israel with her mother-in-law Naomi and ended up having basically, you know, if you watch the movie version of it, a very romantic thing with a man named Boaz who was a family member.

[38 : 04] I can't remember exactly what kind of relative he was regarding Naomi. But there's this part of the story where Boaz is interested in Ruth but there is another kinsman who is of closer relation and he actually is required to give up his right to marry Ruth.

And so he passes on Ruth and he specifically says something to the effect of basically it would be too expensive for me. And so Boaz, you can take her.

So we call that the kinsman redeemer. And so, which, you know, is also a really a symbol of Christ and us, right?

He is our redeemer, our kinsman redeemer. So anyway, that's kind of the backdrop of this account, this story that they're telling.

It's a contrived story but a story nonetheless. So anyway, they tell this story about seven brothers and each one is married to this woman and none of them have kids and ultimately they all die, right?

[39 : 17] Finally, it says at the end of the story, and the woman, she dies also. And I think, well, maybe that was just God's mercy on her finally after losing seven husbands in a row without having any kids.

But obviously a very contrived scenario. I can't imagine that this would happen in real life. But this is part of the debate tactic, right? And really a concept of logic. If you've ever studied logic, there is this concept of reductio ad absurdum.

You take an idea, a concept, and you try to put it in a scenario that would reduce it to an absurdity. And that's what the Sadducees are doing here. They're taking this idea of a resurrection and they have an assumption, an underlying assumption.

And the assumption is, is that marriage is eternal. And there really isn't much in the Bible, in the Old Testament anyway, about that concept. When you get married here in this life, do you continue to stay married in the next life?

And so they're using this assumption that marriage will continue on into the next life to bring this concept, this idea of resurrection to an absurd conclusion.

[40 : 31] I mean, a woman can't be married to seven men in this life. That's not allowed. That's not appropriate. And so that, you know, how could that, how could this happen in the future?

How could this happen in the eternal state that she would be married to seven men? How is this supposed to work? And so reducing this whole concept to an absurd conclusion.

This is something that is a good debate tactic to use if you are on the right side of a question. One of the things I think of, and again going back to some of the conflict between Christianity and the world, this whole concept of homosexuality that is celebrated and taught and even shown as virtuous today, whereas Christians in the Bible teaches against such relations.

But there is this argument made from the world that says this, specifically geared towards Christians. Christians, well, you say that homosexuality is bad and wrong, but well, just look at the animal kingdom.

And there are people, scientists again, will point to the animal kingdom and they'll say, look at all these different animals that you can see that actually have homosexual relationships among them.

[41 : 55] See, look, it's natural. It's good. It's right. And so you can take that concept and you can reduce it to absurdity.

Well, what else do animals do? Like the cat that throws up on my floor at home and ends up licking up her own vomit. That's what animals do, right?

And so ought we as human beings to live like animals? No. God created us differently. To live according to morals and standards that are upheld to a much higher degree, obviously, than animal behavior.

We certainly don't, as humans, want to live as animals in any way, shape, or form. So Jesus answers them. And he said to them, this is his response, are you not therefore mistaken because you do not know the scriptures nor the power of God?

He's saying, listen, read your Bible. That would answer your question. You don't understand the scriptures.

[43 : 04] You don't know the scriptures. Just read it. Open it up. This isn't just a minor oversight. You know, all of us have questions about the Bible.

Many of us have mistakes that we make as we're reading the Bible. Some mistakes are insignificant. Some are truly significant.

But you're mistaken because you do not know the scriptures and you do not know the power of God. See, the Sadducees, their viewpoint was based on what they could see. I can't see spirits.

I can't see angels. I can't see my loved one who's passed away. They're gone. They're in the grave. And so their viewpoint is based on sight, based on experience.

And that's one of the earmarks of liberal religion. In 2 Timothy, verse 3, Paul speaks to this idea of denying God's power.

[44 : 04] He says, But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

And then he ends with this. Having a form of godliness, but denying its power. Having a form of godliness, just following some rituals, doing some rules, you know, putting on some cool religious garb, maybe lighting some candles, but ultimately denying the power that is in the scriptures, that is in our faith.

He continues on, For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they're like the angels in heaven. Jesus is actually, it seems to me, revealing something new that hasn't really been revealed before to this time.

What the state, what our eternal state will be like. He says, we'll be like the angels. Now, what does that mean? Does that mean, you know, there's actually in common culture, this idea that when you die, you become an angel.

Some people actually say that, right? You know, somebody dies and they become an angel. In Hollywood, I think of one of my favorite movies, It's a Wonderful Life, have you seen that, right? And there's this concept in there that Clarence, the angel, used to live on earth, and then he became an angel, and he graduates, but he's still got to get his wings, and all that.

[45 : 43] But that's not what the Bible teaches at all. Angels are a separate creation from human beings. So you don't become an angel when you die. So when he says here, like the angels, he's saying, hey, your eternal state will be similar to how the, when it comes to relationships, as the angels.

There won't be any procreation anymore, so no having of children. There won't be any exclusive marital relationships. We'll just be, but you'll still have relationships, but they won't be exclusive marital relationships.

For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven. So there won't be marriage in heaven.

When we die, our marriage relationships will be dissolved. We actually speak to that during a marriage ceremony, right? We say, till death do us part.

At death, that marriage relationship is dissolved, and that's why you can marry another person. The Bible allows for that. And for many, that might have an emotional impact on you, right?

[46 : 59] Thinking, well, I love my husband. I love my wife. I don't want to be separated from them in eternity. I want to stay married. For some people who might be in a less than wonderful marriage, maybe a troubled marriage, maybe you're married to an unbeliever, or somebody who's a tyrant, or a woman who's a nag, or whatever it might be, that might be a relief.

The afterlife will be separated. But for many people who are in a loving marriage, who have spent a lifetime together, that whole concept might come with grief and disappointment.

I don't want to be separated from my husband. I don't want to be separated from my wife. These two people have become one, and grown closer and closer throughout a lifetime of love and service to one another.

And is this separation? I'm going to be separated from them for all of eternity? But I don't think we should look at it that way, right? Just because our relationship changes in its nature does not mean that our relationship won't exist.

We'll still have a relationship with our spouse. It will continue on. It will just look different. In fact, all the relationships that we have here today, on this earth, as long as they're with people who are in Christ as we are, will continue on forever, for eternity.

[48 : 37] And in many ways, our relationships, even with our spouse, will be deeper and closer than they ever were in this earth. I have a quote here from an Irish Presbyterian.

I didn't get his name, but I thought this was a worthwhile quote. Here's what he says in talking about this subject. Will I still have a special relationship with my wife in heaven?

Will you still treat your parents as father and mother? Will our close friends here be our close friends there? It's all very well to look forward to meeting tens of thousands, but are we not created in such a way to still want an inner circle?

Such questions are natural, but not easy to answer. We will certainly know one another in heaven. King David looked forward to being reunited with his dead son there. I shall go to him, he said.

Paul urges bereaved Christians not to sorrow as others who have no hope, for God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus. The reason for not grieving like unbelievers is that their parting is not permanent.

[49 : 46] They will meet again. We cannot know less in heaven than we did on earth, and so we will recognize there those known to us here, and that surely is comforting. We're also told that many aspects of marriage will no longer be appropriate in glory, where, quoting from Mark, they neither marry nor are given in marriage.

There will be no reproduction. The husband will not need a helper, nor the wife, someone to cherish her protectively. Children will not require parental care. The relationship between Christ and his church will be so obvious as to render unnecessary a human illustration.

Does this mean then that your husband or my best friend will be no more to us than anyone else among the multitudes of the redeemed? No, I don't think so. For every good thing will be better in heaven than on earth.

If God has given you a Christian husband or wife, parent, or child, brother, or friend, you can be sure that whatever the parameters of your future relationship with them may be, the friendship will be closer there than it is now.

You will know them more intimately, love them more intensely, delight in them more fully. It is impossible that we should lose anything good in that place where good abounds. We can look at Christians whom we love especially and praise God that we will continue to love them more and more forever and ever.

[51 : 09] The relationships will be different but they will continue. And like he said, you know, there will be lots of people in heaven but, you know, at least in the beginning, right, we'll probably hang out with our crew here on earth that we hung out with.

Again, it will look different. the hierarchy of parent and child or husband and wife won't be there anymore.

But we'll still have loving relationships with each other. There won't be the little brother or the little sister anymore, right?

We'll all just be, I think we'll probably all be the same age, right? At least in form and how we look to each other. And you know what? You can actually wrestle with your grandfather in heaven.

Have a wrestling match or play baseball or football or you can run a marathon with your grandmother in heaven or in the afterlife.

[52 : 17] Isn't that neat? Here's how he finishes, but concerning the dead that they rise. Have you not read in the book of Moses in the burning bush passage how God spoke to him saying, I'm the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

He is not the God of the dead but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken. He goes back to, he doesn't look to Daniel who talked about the resurrection or the Psalms of David.

He goes back to this passage that you wouldn't really look to as a proof of the resurrection. And I think he does that because one, this is a passage that everybody is going to know.

And it's a story. It's not just a song or a prophecy. This is an account that actually happened where God himself is speaking to Moses in the burning bush.

He avoids maybe some of the the other debates about metaphors or whether the, maybe whether the, the other books of the Bible, the prophets are actually really inspired scripture.

[53 : 25] And he goes to the Torah, Genesis, the book, the beginning of beginnings. He says, look, this is how God spoke to Moses. And he references that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

These men, their bodies by now are in the grave. But notice what God does not say. He's not saying, hey Moses, I was the God of Abraham and I was the God of Isaac and I was the God of Jacob.

He says, no, today, right now, I am their God. And that is proof positive that those men are not dead, even though their body, they may be separated from their body for now.

but they are alive just as much now as they were before. He is the God of the living and not the dead.

What a brilliant response. Also, this indicates that the details of the Bible matter. Some people think, oh, well, you know, the tense of words don't really matter.

[54 : 33] Well, according to Jesus, they do, don't they? And then we'll finish up with this. He says this, you are therefore greatly mistaken. Not just kind of mistaken.

This is a big deal. The resurrection is a big deal. This is a huge mistake to believe that there is no resurrection from the dead, that this life is all there is.

In fact, it's such a big deal that even Paul, later on, he also has to address this situation. And so in that famous passage in 1 Corinthians 15, he says this, 1 Corinthians 15, 12, now if Christ is preached that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there's no resurrection from the dead?

He said our whole faith is founded on that Jesus rose from the dead. And if he did not rise from the dead, then our faith is in vain. And you should go do something else.

Find another religion if Jesus didn't rise from the dead. But if Jesus did rise from the dead, then so will we. And we will be conformed to his image. We will actually have bodies like his.

[55 : 42] Isn't that incredible? I'll finish off. Verse 13, 1 Corinthians 15, 13, but if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ whom he did not raise up if in fact the dead do not rise. for if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile and you're still in your sins. But thank God we are not in our sins because Christ is risen and we will be risen to be like him one day.

Amen? Let's finish up there. We're over our time, but are there any quick thoughts or questions?

There was a lot to this one. A lot of questions really about what does the afterlife look like and our relationships and a lot of them we can't really answer. But I figured I'd give at least a few moments for questions or comments.

[56 : 53] Anybody? We may not have anything. We got one up here.

Sorry, I didn't give you a heads up, Keith. And I can just, here, we'll just do this. So the one thing that I just was, as you're talking about the afterlife, to think about with relationships and how they're going to be different, I like what, I can't quite remember what he said, but anything good that's here on earth, is not going to be gone.

So relationships, if you think about it, are really limited in some ways by sin and our problems, right? There's not going to be any sin in heaven. And so our ability to have good relationships and to be close to the people that we're close with now, with sin removed, I mean, just think about how much better they're going to be.

And so, just some things to think about because I know that it's kind of a hard concept in some ways to think, well, I'm not going to be married in heaven, what's this going to be like? But just having some confidence and faith that God is so good, what he has is so good, and that there we're going to experience, you know, really the great things that we long for now will be realized there.

And so, but sin being removed, I think, is just a big deal with relationships. Wow. That's incredible. Yeah, sin separates, right? Not just from God, even though God has taken that separation out of the way, but it can separate us from each other, right?

[58 : 22] Our own sin, but not in heaven, not in the afterlife. Lois wants to know, do children age? Do children age?

What a great question. You know, the Bible says, Jesus rose from the dead, and he got a new body. Jesus was 33, 33 or 34 when he died, and his disciples recognized him with his new body.

I can imagine that in heaven, or in the afterlife, heaven or earth, that we'll probably all be about, you know, look, you know, our physical appearance will be probably around that same age.

That's my guess, best guess. But children who die young, I would imagine, would need to, I mean, they have to grow and mature, and in a sense, we all age regardless of our bodies, right?

We all grow in wisdom and understanding, but, you know, that's probably as much as I can say about that, yeah.

[59 : 37] Because our resurrected bodies we won't get until Jesus comes again, right? So, anything else? You ask hard questions.

Thanks, Lois. All right, we'll finish up with that. Let me pray, and then we'll dismiss you. Father, we love you.

Thank you so much for your word. You know, we don't have all the answers, and you don't provide all the answers, but you do give us many things that we can know and that provide so much comfort.

I'm so looking forward to spending eternity not just with you, but all of my own family and friends and the many relationships that I enjoy down here on earth and living those out forever and ever with no more sin, and no more of the many sinful things, habits, and other things that get in the way of our relationships.

Just having relationships that continue to grow deeper and purer day by day. Thank you for your promise to us of all those things. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.