

paintings than by scripture. We tend to view them as either chubby babies or beautiful women with wings. In the Bible they are powerful beings created by God who are in service to Him. They are always male, and most don't have wings. We do not become angels when we die, but Jesus tells us one way we will be like the angels; we will not be married after we die. But Paul compares the relationship between a husband and wife with Christ and the church.

29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church-- 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. -Ephesians 5:29-32 NIV
Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Revelation 19:7 NIV
22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one-- 23 I in them and you in me--so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. - John 17:22-23 NIV

What was your initial reaction to Jesus' declaration that we won't be married after being resurrected? As you read the passages above, are you able to envision the church, in complete unity with God, Jesus and one another at the marriage supper of the Lamb?

For those who've lost loving spouses this can be difficult to accept. But Paul describes a new relationship in a new creation in transformed bodies in which all believers (men and women) are united with one another and with Jesus as His bride. Paul calls it a profound mystery that Jesus, and all believers, will be one.

WRAP-UP

Ultimately Jesus used the Sadducees' own authoritative text to disprove their theology. They knew neither the scriptures nor the power of God. God's plan of redemption was laid out from Genesis to Revelation and culminates in a new dwelling place for a resurrected people as the bride of Christ. When we are resurrected, we are transformed. We may not know all the details yet, but we can trust in the character and the power of God.

MEMORY VERSE

24 Jesus replied, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God. 25 For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven. - Mark 12:24-25 NLT

Challenge – Don't be afraid to wrestle with difficult passages in your bible. Don't just Google or trust Ai but look for trusted commentaries and check out the cross-referenced verses as you seek God for clarity in understanding His word.

Life After Death Gospel of Mark Ch. 12 - Week 2

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of Jesus' final days in Jerusalem the confrontations intensified. In this week's passage the Sadducees bring a theological question regarding life after death. This was an issue that created a fierce split between the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection of the dead and Sadducees who did not. Even today we hear various interpretations of what happens when we die. And while the details of our resurrection are not entirely clear, the Bible does give us some indication of what happens when we die. So, there are some things we know, and some we won't find out until we meet with God face to face. But it is clear that the gift of God is eternal life and Jesus conquered death. Let's sift through what we've heard from the culture around us and seek to find what the Bible says about life after death.

Ice Breaker

How many movies can you name that featured a character after they had died? (e.g. Clarence in It's a Wonderful Life)

Key Passages

24 Jesus replied, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God. 25 For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven. ... 27 So he is the God of the living, not the dead. You have made a serious error." - Mark 12:24-25, 27 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Whataboutism and Gotcha Culture

The Law (1st 5 books of the bible) and the Prophets (Prophetic books of the Old Testament) were often referenced as the authority for spiritual guidance for the Jews. But the Sadducees only recognized the Law of Moses, and it was from the book of Deuteronomy they developed an unlikely scenario in an attempt to trap Jesus. It is the same "gotcha" culture as someone asking, "Would a person living alone on an island be condemned to hell even if he had no chance to hear the Gospel?"

18 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. ... 22 In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. 23 At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?" - Mark 12:18-20, 22-23 NIV

We know the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead. How do you think they expected this question to support their views? Have you been confronted by non-believers who pose a "whataboutism"? Rather than trying to defend Jesus, how would you address the issue underlying the question about condemning someone who had never heard the Gospel? What does it reveal about the person's view of the character of God?

You probably know someone who just loves to argue. They take delight in the challenge to prove others wrong and themselves right. God sees beyond the anger, and the arguments to the heart that needs healing. Don't let yourself be pulled into such arguments. Ask God to help you see them through His eyes. It is not a clever defense but God's kindness and unconditional love that leads to repentance.

2. Know the Scripture

24 Jesus replied, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God. - Mark 12:24 NLT

The Sadducees were wealthy priests, who were conservative politically and theologically and believed the five books of the Torah were the only authoritative books. So, when Jesus essentially said, "You've been deceived and led astray, and you don't understand what's written in the Old Testament.", it was a slap in the face. What they had done is a pretty common error – they were "cherry picking" passages that supported their viewpoint without considering the whole of scripture. Most of us focus on familiar verses and skip over the difficult ones.

What do you do when you come across passages that don't seem to line up with your understanding of Scripture? Do you have a reference or a Bible teacher that you check out to better understand challenging passages?

Many Christians avoid the Old Testament and say, "It doesn't apply to us, we are no longer under the Law." If we do this, we miss 2/3 of the message God has for us. The bible can be likened to a multi-act play with an over-arching theme which points us to Jesus. The first 3 Acts (Creation, Rebellion and Israel) help us understand our origin story and God's faithfulness in the face of our unfaithfulness. In the 4th Act Jesus intervenes to make a way to restore

what was lost through our sin, and in Act 5 the church is formed concluding with a New Creation in Act 6. We need to consider the whole bible to understand our place in God's story.

3. Eternal Life

The question meant to trap Jesus instead revealed the error of the Sadducees. They assumed that after our resurrection we would continue the life we began on earth. But the resurrected life is a transformed life. And Jesus gives us insight into how it will be different from our previous life on earth.

24 "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. - John 5:24 NIV

According to the verse above, how do we obtain eternal life? How has your life been transformed in ways that show you are living fully alive in Christ? If you have given your old life to Jesus in exchange for His, you have already begun your transformed and eternal life.

We are culturally obsessed with heaven, but the bible is focused more on Resurrection, New Jerusalem or New Creation rather than on heaven.

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

- Revelation 21:1-3 NIV

21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. - Romans 8:21-23 NIV

25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. - Mark 12:25 NIV

These passages describe a new dwelling place for God with His people- an entirely new creation.

Where is the dwelling place of God with His people according to Rev 21:1-3? How will all creation be changed (Rom 8:21)? What is the sign of the culmination of our adoption into God's family (Rom 8:32)? In what way does Jesus say we will be like angels when we dwell with Him?

Our image of an angel is influenced more by greeting cards and Renaissance