

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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Sermon title: God of All Eternity - Mark 12:18-27

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**INTRODUCTION:** In our study of Mark, we learn how Jesus interacted with different types of people. Today I want to share with you Jesus' interaction with the Sadducees. My points are:

1. We see the Sadducees as antagonists.
2. We see the conflict the Sadducees presented.
3. We see Jesus' resolution to the conflict.

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 12:18 <sup>18</sup> *Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.*

Nearly every people group and culture which has ever existed has believed in some sort of life after death.

- Three out of every four Americans believe in an afterlife.
- Egyptians buried their dead with supplies for the next life.
- Ancient Greeks were often buried with a coin in their mouths to pay their fare to cross the River Styx into the land of the dead.
- Some Native American Indian tribes were buried with their bows, arrows, and ponies, so they would be ready to hunt when they arrived at the happy hunting ground.
- The Vikings believed in a place called Valhalla, where they believed they would fight all day.

- In our own day and time, all varieties of cults and religions hold to some view of life after death.
- We've all heard amazing accounts of people who have "died" and returned to life ... i.e. movies like, "Heaven Is For Real," and "90 Minutes In Heaven" are blockbusters at the box office.

We all have questions about eternity, especially as we get older and realize the time to leave our earthly tent is fast approaching. We wonder:

- What will heaven be like?
- What will we be like?
- What kind of relationships will we have with one another?
- Will we eat and drink? (And most of the women want to know who's going to be doing all the cooking? 😊)
- What about babies that died? Will we know them? Will they still be babies?
- Are there pets in heaven?
- Will we have work to do in heaven?
- What about my loved ones who never trusted in Jesus? Will I realize they are not in heaven with me?
- Who will I live with? What will my "mansion" look like?

There are so many unanswered questions about the afterlife and what heaven is going to be like.

### **First, WE SEE THE SADDUCEES AS ANTAGONISTS.**

- The Jews in Jesus' day believed in an afterlife as well (except the Sadducees) and had questions about it. The Talmud, which contained both written and oral traditions, was filled with references to life after death. But the Sadducees only believed and adhered to the Pentateuch, the first five books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And they were extreme literalists in their interpretation; legalistic. Although some scholars refer to the Sadducees as the liberal party of the day, they actually were the fundamentalists. "My way or the highway."

- They were a minority sect among the Jews, but they were the most powerful and influential of all the Jewish sects. They controlled all the buying and selling in the Temple, so they were already angry with Jesus for upsetting their business dealings when he cleansed the Temple.
- They also controlled the priesthood. They hated Jesus and plotted to get rid of him.
- The Sadducees were disliked by the common Jew. They were aloof and thought of themselves as better than everyone else. They were rude, insensitive, and harsh in the judgments they handed down. They had very little compassion for the common man.
- They were also disliked for their theology. They believed in the existence of God, but rejected everything else that was of the supernatural. They did not believe in angels, or demons, or the devil. They did not believe in miracles. They did not believe in Heaven or Hell or in a future judgment or in the resurrection of the dead. Because they could not find these doctrines in their reading of the Pentateuch, they rejected them.
- This kind of theology leads to an “Eat drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die,” philosophy. Sounds kind of like people today.
- But there is a God, and he is a supernatural God. There are angels and demons, and a heaven and a hell. The Bible is our standard for living. There will be a future judgment and a resurrection of the dead, whether one believes it or not. And Jesus is our only hope.

Denying a sickness doesn't make it go away. A man I know rejected the diagnosis from his doctor. He refused treatment and died. We can say we don't believe in sin or that God would send anyone to hell, but that doesn't make it any less true. Sin has to be dealt with—cut out—and “treated”—with the blood of Christ. Jesus is our only hope.

## **Second, WE SEE THE CONFLICT THE SADDUCEES PRESENTED.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 12:19-23 <sup>19</sup> “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. <sup>20</sup> Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. <sup>21</sup> The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. <sup>22</sup> In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. <sup>23</sup> At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”

- The Sadducees came to Jesus and addressed him as “Master.” They were attempting to flatter Jesus and cause him to let down his guard—but it didn’t work!
- They knew Jesus respected the Law of Moses, so they appealed to that. They constructed a puzzle they felt Jesus could not solve, embarrassing him in front of those gathered in the Temple.
- Referring to an Old Testament law from the book of Deuteronomy, they composed a hypothetical situation, thinking they were going to trap Jesus. This law made provision for families, tribal names, and inheritances to keep them intact. If a man died with no living children, his next of kin would marry the widow and raise up their children in the name of the deceased.
- Based on this law, the Sadducees come to Jesus with a tale of a man who dies without leaving an heir. The man had seven brothers. When he died, the next brother took the wife, but he died before producing an heir. Each of the brothers married the woman in succession and each died before producing an heir. Finally, the woman died. (After dealing with seven husbands, any woman would die)
- The question they presented Jesus with is: Who will she belong to in the resurrection of the dead? Of course, the Sadducees didn’t even believe in an afterlife. They were simply trying to embarrass Jesus. They thought they had created a puzzle that Jesus could not solve.

### **Third, WE SEE JESUS’ RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 12:24-27 <sup>24</sup> *Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?”* <sup>25</sup> *When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.* <sup>26</sup> *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’?”* <sup>27</sup> *He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!*

**EXPLANATION:** Jesus was not as easy to defeat as they had figured. He put the Sadducees in their place while at the same time, he answered some pertinent questions regarding eternity.

1. They were ignorant of God’s Word – These men regarded themselves as scholars in the Word of God, but they were ignorant of the essence of the message. Because they were adamant at only believing in the first five books of the Scripture, they were missing the rest of the Old Testament. The truth of the resurrection is all through the Old Testament, but they were oblivious.

Isn’t it amazing that people will go toe to toe with you arguing a point in Scripture about which they haven’t even studied for themselves?

We need to know through personal study what the Scripture teaches and not just perpetuate what we’ve been told or hold to traditional beliefs just because that’s the way we’ve always done things. *Not only were they ignorant of God’s Word, but*

2. They were ignorant of God’s power. These men believed God created the universe out of nothing. They believed God formed man out of the dust of the earth. But they did not believe that God had the power to raise the dead.

We serve an all-powerful God. There is nothing beyond the realm of possibility with Him. If we have faith and believe him, we can see the impossible take place.

Does the modern day church fit into this category? I believe many times we are just like the Sadducees! We say we believe in an all-powerful God, but we deny the power thereof.

- Now Jesus gets to the heart of their puzzle. He sets them straight about the errors in their belief system.
  1. He clarified the nature of heavenly relationships. While marriage is a wonderful and divinely ordained institution, it is an earthly institution, not a heavenly one.
  2. Then Jesus confirmed the reality of the resurrection. The Sadducees came at Jesus using Moses as part of their argument, so Jesus comes back to them with Moses to answer their question. He points to Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush, where God refers to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the present tense, not as dead men, but as men who are alive. Jesus said that God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. Everyone will experience the resurrection. Whether we face heaven or hell depends on what we do with Jesus.
    - Much of the nature of our existence in heaven will remain a mystery until we arrive there. We do know some things:
      - Matthew 17 - We will still be known as ourselves in heaven. We will retain our individuality. We will simply be a better, perfected, and glorified version of who we are.
      - There will be no marriages in heaven, but love will be perfected there.
      - Revelation 21:4 - There will be no death or tears in heaven.
      - I Corinthians 15 - We will receive a new body in heaven.
      - I Thessalonians 4 - Jesus is coming again bringing the departed saints with him. He will gather us all together and take us all home to heaven. Our loved ones who knew Jesus are more alive today than they ever were.

**CONCLUSION:** Jesus concluded his conflict with the Sadducees by telling them they were wrong. They knew the Scriptures, but were blind to the truth which was right before their eyes.

What about you? Are you following the right path based on the truth of the Scripture? Or do you err, like the Sadducees, on half-truths, and worldly philosophies? Have you come to Jesus for salvation and everlasting life in the resurrection?

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