

Theme: Jesus showed that Scripture teaches that life continues after death when God's people experience the fullness of life and the promises of God.

I. Intro - What Happens After Death?

- A. This has occupied human thoughts & concerns forever
- B. Reincarnation? Just like life on earth? spirits who hover around (Ghost)? Download myself onto a computer? (Transcendence)? Does it just end?
- C. Same questions in the ancient world! - some believed no life after death; some in disembodied existence; some in a life much like this one.
- D. What does happen to us? Does Scripture speak to this?

II. The Sadducees Question Jesus

- A. Understanding the Sadducees
 - Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. Mark 12:18
 - 1. The first and only time they are named in Mark
 - 2. Along with the Pharisees the other major group in Judaism - but they had major disagreements
 - 3. The Sadducees were closely related to Jerusalem and the Temple - and did not survive after 70 AD
 - 4. They only accepted the Torah - no prophets or writings
 - 5. They denied the resurrection (& angels - Acts 23:8)
- B. The Sadducees Question Jesus about the resurrection
 - 1. The Pharisees had failed with a political, practical question - so they try a theological question
 - 2. The invented story involving levirate marriage

“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 have children 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. Mark 12:19-22

- a. They are referring to Deuteronomy 25:5-6
 - b. This law was meant to protect the name and property of the dead man.
 - c. We can see this in action in the story of Ruth
3. They spring the trap: whose wife in the resurrection “At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” Mark 12:23
- a. She had 7 husbands - how will this work?
 - b. This sounds like a mess! Surely this shows there is no resurrection! They think they have Jesus trapped!

III. Jesus’ Brilliant Answer

- A. Jesus’ initial rebuke of the Sadducees
 - Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? Mark 12:24
 - 1. Jesus twice says they are in serious error (v24, 27)
 - 2. Their error has two causes
 - a. They don’t know the Scriptures - He will show them
 - b. They don’t know the power of God

3. These two factors explain why they think the resurrection is an absurd idea.
4. The same two areas affect many people today. If I do not understand the power of God, I will not understand how God can do miracles - like raising the dead! And if I do not understand the Scripture I will likely misunderstand what God actually intends.

B. Jesus teaches on the nature of the resurrection

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

1. Jesus first has to correct the question. Like the question of the Pharisees about paying taxes to Caesar, the question is built on false premises and can not be answered as they have posed it.
2. The Sadducees' question assumes eternal life in the resurrection will just be a continuation of this life.
3. The Pharisees actually tended to view eternal life this way. They said the woman would be married to the first man!
4. Jesus says the first thing to understand is that eternal life in the resurrection is different from our present life - it is more like what the angels experience.
5. Luke gives even more information on this
Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, ³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. Luke 20:34-36

- a. There is a distinction between this age and that age
- b. Marriage and death are part of this age, not eternity
- c. Our existence will be closer to the angels than our present existence in this fallen world.
- d. NOTE: there are also great continuities, but that is not the focus here due to the Sadducee error.

6. The Sadducees have completely misunderstood what the resurrection and eternal life actually mean.

C. Jesus shows the Scripture teaches eternal life

Now about the dead rising — have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!" Mark 12:26-27

1. Interestingly, Jesus proves the resurrection from the Torah, not the Prophets or the writings, since the Sadducees only accept the Torah.
2. Jesus goes to God's revelation of Himself to Israel by His covenant Name of Yahweh.
3. Israel has been in covenant with God because He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" - the covenant is the promise He made to Abraham and re-ratified with Isaac and Jacob.
4. He does not say "I WAS the God of Abraham" but "I AM the God of Abraham" - Abraham is still alive!
5. The whole covenant is based on God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they did not receive the fulfillment in their life. So if they are dead - the promise failed!

6. But the promise did not fail, because the real promise was about their eternal inheritance!
All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. Hebrews 11:13-16
7. The promise and the hope are not focused on this age and this creation but rather on the age to come and the new creation!
8. The Sadducees had reduced everything to this age - with disastrous results!
9. No wonder Jesus sees this as a horrible error!
He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. **You are badly mistaken!** Mark 12:27

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do I see the importance of the resurrection?
 1. Jesus considers their mistake to be a serious error!
 2. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul says the resurrection of the body is part of the Gospel itself!
 3. Some say believing in a future life makes you no earthly good - but the opposite is true!
 4. To believe there is no life after death leads to despair, cynicism, or hedonism - for this life is all there is! Those who try to escape this are living inconsistent with their beliefs!

If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” 1 Corinthians 15:32 (Isaiah 22:13)

5. Today this is YOLO - you only live once!
6. In reality, you either live twice and die once, or you live once and die twice!
7. Christ has proven this by His own resurrection from the dead - and He gives eternal life to all who trust in Him!
8. Don't buy the lie of YOLO - look to Christ and receive eternal life!
9. Having the hope of the resurrection and eternal life leads to godliness of life now!
Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. 1 John 3:2-3
10. This is why we say “I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen!”

- B. Do I see the focus of the resurrection? (Beatific vision)
 1. There is continuity between this life and our life in eternity (see discussion guide teachings)
 2. But Jesus' focus here is on the discontinuity, including the real focus in eternity.
 3. There are several key discontinuities
 - a. This life is temporal and ends in death; that life is eternal and there is no more death.

- b. This life is typically focused on marriage and family,; that life has no marriage and procreation and is focused on God.
 - c. In this life, we only see dimly, and we don't know all that will be; but we do know that in eternity we will see God as He is - this is the Beatific vision.
4. Our eternal hope is not a continuation of this life, but in beholding God, the delight of our soul and the source of our life.

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1 Corinthians 13:12

- a. Every joy in this life is but a reflection - we always find ourselves longing for more. This is because we were made for something more!
"If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world." - CS Lewis
- b. Every joy in this life is but a reflection of the joy for which we were made and truly long - to see God face to face.
- c. Every relationship and joy in this life is just an echo of the relationship and joy for which we were made and truly long - to know God and enter into His life.
"God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper; and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean." - Jonathan Edwards

- 5. Don't run about trying to satisfy the hunger of your soul with the junk food of this life - it is found in God alone!

C. The Table of Our Eternal Feast

- 1. This Table is a foretaste of our eternal feast!
- 2. It reminds us that all gifts in this life are pointers to the Reality for which we long
- 3. Come & feast - & look forward to the Eternal Feast!

Life After Death?

Mark 12:18-27
August 11, 2024
Communion

Genesis 27:28; Deuteronomy 33:15-16 (Paraphrase)
Teaching keywords: Resurrection; heaven, hell, and eternity; salvation and deliverance; eschatology

May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness — an abundance of grain and new wine, with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills; may you be blessed with the best gifts of the earth and the favor of our Lord, until you sit at His Wedding Feast on the final day! Knowing your eternal blessing is secure, go forth and be a blessing! Genesis 27:28; Deuteronomy 33:15-16 (Paraphrase)

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