

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

God of the Living
Mark 12:18-27



SYNOPSIS

This sermon, based on Mark 12:18-27, explores the nature of the afterlife, specifically addressing the Sadducees' challenge to Jesus regarding the resurrection. The sermon highlights that God is the God of the living, that earthly marriage is a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the Church, and that there is no marriage in heaven.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the Sadducees' main objection to the idea of resurrection, and how did they attempt to challenge Jesus on this topic?

2. How did Jesus respond to the Sadducees' challenge regarding marriage in the afterlife?

3. What did Jesus mean when He said that God is the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," and how does this relate to the idea of the resurrection?

4. According to the sermon, what is the marital status of people in Heaven?

5. How does the sermon explain the relationship between earthly marriage and the Church?

6. How does the sermon describe what what people in Heaven are doing?

7. How should one prepare for the "wedding" described in Revelation 19:6-8?

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ANSWER KEY

1. The Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection or an afterlife, tried to trap Jesus with a hypothetical scenario. They presented the case of a woman who married seven brothers, each dying without children. Their question was: In the resurrection, whose wife would she be, since all seven had been married to her? Their intention was to expose what they saw as a logical absurdity in the belief of the resurrection.
2. Jesus rebuked the Sadducees for their misunderstanding of both the Scriptures and the power of God. He stated that in the resurrection, people neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven. He redirected their focus from earthly concerns to the transformed reality of the afterlife.
3. Jesus referenced the account of the burning bush in Exodus, where God identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These patriarchs had been dead for centuries at that point. Jesus used this to argue that God is (present tense), not was, their God, implying that they still exist in the afterlife. This demonstrated that God is the God of the living, not the dead, and thus supports the belief in the resurrection.
4. The sermon states that no one is married in Heaven in the traditional sense. While earthly marriage will not continue in Heaven, everyone will be united in a different way, described as being "married to one another." This means that people will share a unified and communal relationship with God and each other.
5. Earthly marriage is presented as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the Church. Just as a husband loves his wife, Christ loves the Church and sacrificed Himself for it. Similarly, the submission and fidelity within marriage reflect the Church's submission and devotion to Christ. Marriage thus serves as a tangible illustration of a spiritual truth.
6. According to the sermon, those who have died but surrendered their lives to Jesus are not simply gone but are alive in Heaven. They are part of a "great cloud of witnesses," as described in Hebrews 12:1, observing and encouraging those still on Earth in their faith journey.
7. The "wedding of the Lamb" in Revelation symbolizes the union of Christ and the Church. Preparing for this event involves living a righteous life, as symbolized by the "fine linen, bright and clean," which represents the righteous acts of God's holy people. It calls for continuous self-reflection, repentance, and a commitment to following Christ's teachings.