

Biblical Ignorance in High Places

Scripture: Mark 12:18-27

Code: 41-62

Well, let's open the Word of God again to Mark chapter 12. The only thing better than doing this twice a day would be doing it three, four, five times a day, or maybe all day. We're back in the twelfth chapter of Mark and the text that we were looking at this morning occurred on Wednesday of Passion Week and we're still on Wednesday of Passion Week when we come to verse 18. Verse 18, I'm going to read the section down to verse 27.

"Some Sadducees who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus and began questioning Him, saying, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother. There were seven brothers and the first took a wife and died leaving no children. The second one married her and died, leaving behind no children. The third, likewise. So all seven left no children. Last of all, the woman died also,'...which appears to be a mercy...verse 23, he's (should be "She's") going through men pretty fast.

Verse 23, "In the resurrection when they rise again, which one's wife will she be, for all seven had married her?" Jesus said to them, 'Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the scriptures or the powers of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven. But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He is not the God of the dead but the living. You are greatly mistaken.'"

I've titled this, "Biblical Ignorance in High Places." The Jews had always believed corporately in the resurrection. In fact, you can break out two dimensions of that confidence in the resurrection. They believed in an earthly national resurrection of the nation Israel, and they were convinced of that by Ezekiel chapter 37. In Ezekiel chapter 37 there is a vision of the valley of dry bones, that's Israel, breathed on by God, those bones are brought to life, that is a picture of the resurrection of national Israel. They viewed that scene as Israel being raised to political prominence, political domination and to the fulfillment of all the promises given to Abraham and to David, all the Kingdom promises.

Concurrent with that national resurrection would be the rise of the Messiah. The Messiah was to be a conqueror and a victor like David, a Son of David, by the way, who by His power and personality would rise, He would take power, He would raise Israel from death to victory and glory. That was the

messianic view and the view of a national resurrection under Messiah.

One writer says, "Just as David emerged from nowhere, defeated Goliath and became a national hero, then an invincible king who thrashed the Philistines, so the Jews were anticipating the arrival of a similar figure who would resurrect Israel as a nation. So they believed in a national resurrection.

This was not a stretch for them because they believed in the reality of resurrection. They drew it from their confidence in a personal resurrection. So they believed in a national resurrection, they also believed in a personal resurrection. That is, that they would all along with the proselytes who believed in the true God, be raised after death. They would leave this world and they would enter into the world to come. Some of their ancient writings reflect this, 2 Maccabees, Apocalypse of Baruch, the Apocalypse of Ezra, the Apocalypse of Enoch, these are non-biblical books that reflect the traditional views of the Jews, all of which indicate they believed in a future resurrection.

If you were to read the Talmud which is where Jewish law is collected, you would read in the Talmud a common theme concerning the resurrection. The primary eschatological teaching of Judaism is contained in the Talmud and it says a lot about resurrection.

Now where did this come from? Well it came from the Old Testament. It is all rooted, for example, in the Psalms, and I'll give you just a couple of them that you can jot down. In Psalm 16, for example, and verse 9, familiar words, "My heart is glad, my glory rejoices, my flesh also will dwell securely, You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, says David, nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay, You will make known to me the path of life. In Your presence is fullness of joy. In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." David is here articulating the confidence that he's going to go into Sheol, the grave, and he's not going to stay there, he's coming out the other side through the path of life into the presence of God. And that, of course, was not only the confidence of David, but it turns out to be a messianic Psalm predicting the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In Psalm 49:15 we read, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol for He will receive me." Again this confidence of the afterlife. It was Job who said, "Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Again, the confidence of life after death and resurrection.

Psalm 73 verse 24, "With Your counsel You will guide me and afterward...that is after this life...receive me into glory." And it goes like that through the Psalms. Maybe I'll read you one more, Psalm 139 and verse 8, "If I ascend to heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there. No matter where I go on earth, no matter where I go in heaven, You are there." The assumption is we will be on earth, we will be in heaven, and so will God.

In Hosea chapter 6 verse 1, "Come let us return to the Lord for He has torn us but He will heal us. He has wounded us but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days, He will raise us up on the

third day that we may live before Him.” Again a confidence in resurrection.

You see the same thing in Isaiah 26:19, you see it very clearly in Daniel 12:2, and that might be worth commenting on. “Many of those who sleep in the dusts of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.” That promises a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto death. Very familiar language, exactly the indications our Lord gave in John 5 when He said He possessed the power of judgment and that He possessed the power to send people into eternal life or into eternal judgment.

Now this is important background for this text because the majority position in Judaism is that there was a resurrection...not only a national resurrection, but an actual personal resurrection, individuals in the presence of God, important background for the text, because we’re introduced in verse 18 to some Sadducees who say that there is no resurrection.

Now the Sadducees are a sect of Judaism who deny the reality of resurrection. In fact, they deny really the supernatural. They denied the presence, or the identity, or the existence of angels, according to Acts 23:8, they denied the existence of angels. They denied spiritual existence, the existence of spirits. And they denied, therefore, the resurrection. Though they are the minority party in Israel and though they are opposites of the reigning theology, they happen to wield the power in the temple. They run the temple from the High Priest on down through the chief priests they are predominantly Sadducees. It’s their turn because they’re the majority of the Sanhedrin. It’s their turn to come to Jesus and try to discredit Him.

We saw, this morning, that the Pharisees wanted to get Him in trouble with Rome by forcing Him to answer a question that would make Him appear like a rebel, like an insurrectionist, like somebody who is going to lead this massive people against Rome in an act of vengeance and reprisal for the Roman taxation system. They wanted Him to answer their question and put Himself in that position. He evaded that, as you remember.

Now it’s the second wave of representatives from the Sanhedrin who are going to come with their question and it’s the Sadducees. Their goal is to discredit Jesus with the people, to discredit Him with the people, to have the people turn on Him. How are they going to do that? By catching Him in a dilemma? No, by making Him look stupid. That’s their goal. They want to make Him look like a fool. They are very powerful, very wealthy, very influential, aristocratic. They are the liberals. They wield the power. They think that they can accomplish what the lowlife Pharisees couldn’t pull off. While the religion of the people was the Pharisees’ religion, the structure of power was in the hands of these Sadducees.

Now politically they were eager to cooperate with Rome. They did not want to upset Rome, particularly, because they had it nice. They were getting essentially rich on what Rome let them do in

the corruption they ran in the temple. They were happy to have an association with Rome that filled their coffers. They were very eager to make sure that Rome saw them as friends. But they wanted to get Jesus out of the picture. They weren't against having Him crucified, they were for that. But their agenda was really not to upset Rome, it was just to have the people leave their affections behind and walk away from Jesus because He showed Himself to be such a fool.

The populace in general hated the Sadducees for their accommodations to Rome. They knew they did it for the sake of personal expediency and thus the Jews were angry over the relationship between the Sadducees and the Romans.

By the way, if you look back in history to find the Sadducees, you will not find them after 70 A.D. because once the temple was destroyed, they were finished. That was their whole bailiwick. And when it came down, they ceased to exist. Their power was operative only under Rome in that temple. And when that political priestly power came to an end, they couldn't survive.

Now let me talk about them religiously for a few minutes. They did have a view of religion, a kind of a strange one. Though they were liberal in the sense that they denied the resurrection, denied angels and denied the spiritual realm, they were more strict legalists than the Pharisees. In applying the internal justice of the land, they were the most cruel in matters of the law. Josephus himself, the historian, tells us they were more savage than the other Jews. The Pharisees, Josephus says, were lenient compared to them. They were the hard-line fundamentalists, I guess you could say, they were the hard-line fundamentalists who refused to accept anything but the Law of Moses. They refused to accept the oral tradition. They refused to accept the scribal tradition which was everything to the Pharisees. They prided themselves on being guardians of the pure faith of the Pentateuch. They interpreted the Law of Moses more literally than the others and they were severely fastidious in Levitical matters of purity.

But the key factor in their belief system was that they denied the resurrection. They denied any kind of future life. To put it in a simple way, they were annihilationists, when you die, you go out of existence, it's over.

Josephus again, we go to him because he's the historian of that era, and he tells us that they believed that the soul and the body perish together at death and went out of existence. There are therefore no penalties for bad behavior and there are no rewards for good behavior cause there's no future. There's no afterlife. They had no interest therefore in Messiah. They had no real interest in salvation.

And you ask the question, "Well wait a minute, if they're scriptural literalists, how can they deny that the resurrection is in the Old Testament?" And the answer to that is because they held to the singular supremacy of the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. And I quoted some verses to you earlier

about the resurrection, didn't I? But where did I start? In the Psalms and forward. For them, everything was subordinate to the book of Moses. Moses was the pure faith, they were the protectors of the pure faith and they therefore affirmed the absolute uniqueness of the writings of Moses. So they said the doctrine of the resurrection can't be found in the books of Moses...Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Numbers. It's not there, they said, and all the rest of the Old Testament was commentary on Moses and if it wasn't in Moses' writing, then it couldn't possibly be true.

And by the way, historically the Pharisees argued with them over this all the time and the Pharisees poked around in the books of Moses trying to find verses they could cite that would convince the Sadducees that Moses' writings did include this. They would use Numbers 18:28, Deuteronomy 32:39, various places in the writings of Moses where they thought they could prove that this could indicate resurrection. None of the ones they used, by the way, were very convincing and the Sadducees remained unconvinced. The more the Pharisees argued with them, the stronger their position became because the Pharisees had such a terrible time pulling it off.

Now, on the other hand, the Pharisees were very definite about the resurrection. They got in to the resurrection like they got into everything. The Sadducees limited everything to literally and precisely what Moses said, and the Pharisees took everything in the Old Testament and did the opposite. They just expanded it endlessly so that the Pharisees actually discussed whether a man would be raised, clothed or unclothed. That was a debate. They tended toward the fact that he would be raised clothed, for obvious reasons and then the argument came...would he have new clothes, or would he be raised in the same clothes that he wore when he died? And then they discussed whether when people were raised, would they be raised with the same infirmities and the same defects and the same characteristics that they had when they died. And the general consensus was, yes, they'll come back the same way they were with all the same defects and liabilities.

All Jews would rise and get this, there were many of them who believed that all the Jews would actually rise in Israel. How's that going to happen? Some of them taught that all over the earth there were tunnels and when a Jew was buried in a foreign land, his body rolled through the tunnel until it finally came to Israel.

So here you have these Sadducees who just say exactly what Scripture says literally and there's nothing in there about the resurrection, so we don't believe it. And their opposites, the Pharisees, who can spin off of anything in the Scripture, myriad endless debates about nonsense, you can see that they didn't get along very well. They're at opposite ends and they debated often. They both want to get rid of Jesus. The Sadducees want to get rid of Him for obvious reasons, He's just devastated again their operation, right? The day before He came in and just wreaked havoc.

So, some Sadducees, verse 18, who say there's no resurrection, came to Jesus and again same day, Matthew says the same day, so we know it's Wednesday, they don't really play a role in the general

ministry of Jesus because they stay in the temple. The Pharisees were all over the country, there were Pharisees everywhere, scribes everywhere, rabbis everywhere. But the Sadducees don't play any real part in the general ministry of Jesus. The only time they ever get activated is when He goes to their place and does what He did there. That does get their attention. Now they are again threatened by Jesus who did this at the beginning of His ministry three years earlier and now He's done it again and had Jesus is threatening to shut them down and to draw people away from them and to break their bank, if you will, and they need to deal with Jesus.

Now the resurrection is a big deal to them. They have to fight over this issue all the time with everybody else because everybody else believes in it. Acts 4, "As they...meaning the Apostles...Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead and they laid hands on them and put them in jail."

Why did they put them in jail? The Sadducees had them arrested and put in jail for preaching...what?...the resurrection. This was a big deal to them 'cause this was a threat. Not only was Jesus a threat to their temple operation, the Apostles preaching Jesus were a threat to their theology and that would ultimately be a threat to their power. In the fifth chapter of Acts, "The High Priest rose up along with all his associates...verse 17...that is the sect of the Sadducees, they were filled with jealousy, then they laid hands on the apostles and put them in the public jail. And they told them, 'We give you...verse 28...strict orders not to continue teaching in this name and you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood on us.'"

They didn't want anything to do with Jesus, they wanted Jesus out of the way and they did want to get the Apostles out of the way as well, and so they had them arrested and they were hateful toward them as they had been toward the Lord.

And by the way, Josephus tells us that it was the Sadducees who murdered our Lord's brother, James. Their goal...back to Mark 12...their goal here is to make Jesus appear stupid, to make Him a fool because everybody knows Jesus affirms resurrection...everybody knows that. By the way, they are very, very familiar with the fact that He raised Lazarus from the dead just a few weeks before this, they know that. And when He raised Lazarus, He said, "I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in Me shall never die." and Jesus actually said to His sisters, "He will rise again." And they said, "I know, in the last day." They knew that Jesus believed in the resurrection. They wanted then to trap Him in a logical absurdity and turn Him into a fool so that the people would see Him as less able to handle the Scripture than they were. Understand that? They wanted to show Him up.

So, just two things to see in this text. Number one, the absurd scenario, which is hypothetical...the absurd scenario. If you can't silence Him as an insurrectionist because He won't take the bait, as we learned in the last section, they're going to make Him into a fool and destroy His credibility. They

know He talks about resurrection, John 5 again, verses 25 to 29, so they use that as their ploy. Verse 19, "Teacher," again they come with this feigned respect, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother." Formerly they call Him teacher, they desire to demonstrate that He is in fact an incapable teacher. This is what one writer called polished scoffing.

And so they pick up this notion from Moses, found in Deuteronomy 25...Deuteronomy 25 is where the idea comes from that they present to Jesus in verse 19. "If a man's brother dies, leaves behind a wife, leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother."

Now let's go back to Deuteronomy 25, because we're going to learn a lot by doing that and will return to our text in just a couple of minutes, but I want you to see this pattern here and explain a little bit about it to you. We can pick up in Deuteronomy 25 at verse 5. "When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man." Did you get that? Okay. Brothers are living together in nearness to one another, the family is in some sense still intact, one of them dies, has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. "It shall be that the firstborn whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel. But if a man doesn't desire to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go out to the gate, to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel. He's not willing to perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' Then the elders of the city shall summon him and speak to him and if he persists and says, 'I don't desire to take her,' then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face and she shall declare, 'Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house. In Israel his name shall be called the house of him whose sandal is removed.'" And you don't want that on your door. That means you don't take up the responsibility to have a child and an heir so that the family estate can continue.

This is a very foundational custom. It actually appears, first of all, in Genesis 38, in the household of Judah, son of Jacob. A man by the name of Onan, according to Genesis 38, refused to comply with this and he refused to raise up a child to his dead brother's wife and God killed Onan, very important early in the history of Israel that the tribal inheritances remained in the tribes. The law was originally given in the patriarchal period to preserve the name and honor of the oldest son and his tribe and his land. And when the child was conceived by that second husband, he took the name of the first brother so that his inheritance would go through that child. It was possible thus to continue the family and Moses laid it down as a standard, requiring the nearest kinsman to marry the widow and raise children to perpetuate the family and to hold on to the land and the inheritance.

Now this was only valid when the brothers were still single. Okay, I want to clarify that in case you're a little confused. They weren't supposed to get divorced if they were married, or take an extra wife. This is for the preservation of God's people and the tribal identity and the lands assigned to them.

You remember the story of Ruth? Ruth would be a closely related incident that Ruth is a widow, she doesn't have a child to continue the family of her husband. And they're all dead. Everybody's dead. She can't raise up an heir. She meets a man named Boaz...the family, I should say, Elimelech, her father-in-law, is dead and she's alone, Ruth, she's the only heir and she has no husband and no way to raise up a son. She meets Boaz. Boaz is a near relative to Elimelech, her father-in-law, and he qualifies for what is called Levirate marriage, that's the word...Levirate from the Latin referring to a brother. Boaz is willing to be her husband and he is called the kinsman....what?...redeemer. He marries her, gives her a son named Obed and through him comes David and the Messiah Jesus.

It was an important and known law and again Levirate refers to the brother-in-law. So the Sadducees referred to that law. Now let's go back to the gospel of Mark. The Sadducees make reference to that law there in verse 19 by saying what they say, Moses wrote for us, and they're quoting right out of Deuteronomy 25:5.

Now based on that, they come up with the bizarre scenario. Here it goes. "There were seven brothers, first took a wife, died leaving no children. The second one married her and died, leaving behind no children. The third likewise. So all seven left no children. Last of all, the woman died also." Here's the joke. "In the resurrection when they rise again, which one's wife will she be for all seven had married her?"

They were drawing their theology of the resurrection from the Pharisees. The Pharisees were arguing about what the clothes were like when you came out of the grave. And the Pharisees would have affirmed that you would be married in heaven as you were married on earth. The Pharisees said the next life is going to be exactly like this life. The Pharisees said that relationships are forever, they're permanent. Some actually, according to Maimonides, believed that in the next life, people would not only be married but they would have children.

Well I would agree with the Sadducees at this point, that kind of theology makes the resurrection an absurdity. If we're going to be in the same state that we're in in the next life, the same state that we've been in here, then there are some things that are going to be very difficult to sort out. So you have an absurd scenario that is hypothetical.

Now starting in verse 24 you have an astute solution that is scriptural. This is really marvelous. Jesus said to them, 'Is this not the reason you're mistaken that you do not understand the scriptures or the power of God?' I mean, that is a straight-forward indictment. The problem you're having is because of your ignorance...you're ignorant of Scripture and you are ignorant of the power of God.

In Matthew 22:29 Matthew frames it this way. "You are mistaken, not understanding the scriptures nor the power of God." The problem here is not with me, the problem here is with you. You've just put your ignorance on display. And He turns the tables and instead of it turning out to be Him that is the fool, they are the fools. You are mistaken. The verb mistaken is *planao* from which we get the word planet, wandering bodies. The verb means to cause to wander, to lead astray. You are leading yourselves astray by your biblical ignorance. You're mentally wandering. You've been cut loose from reality. You've been cut loose from reason. You've been cut loose from truth. That is why false teachers in Jude 13 are called wandering stars. This is the reason. Number one, "You do not understand the scriptures." That indictment could be basically put on all the people who misrepresent the truth. You do not understand.

The "not" here is *me* in the Greek which denies subjectively and implies not only negative ignorance but positive unwillingness. You do not understand...implying you do not care to understand the scriptures. You have no ability and you have no interest in understanding the scriptures. You, in reality, are the fools.

And, of course, they prided themselves on the scriptures. They prided themselves on their literal understanding of the writings of Moses and our Lord just completely turns the table. You are the fools. You don't understand the scriptures.

Secondly, he says, you also don't understand the power of God because the power of God is revealed in the Scripture. How could you possibly not understand that God could create a resurrection form if He wanted to if you truly understood the first chapter and second chapter of Genesis? If God created everything in six days with the tremendous intricacy in terms of the macro universe and the micro universe, and He did that by simply speaking into existence. Why is it that you're so stuck on the fact that he couldn't do something different in the life to come than what you see here? You misunderstand the Scripture and you certainly misunderstand the power of God. Had they known the scriptures, they would have known that God promises resurrection. Had they known the Pentateuch, they would have known that God promises resurrection. And had they known the power of God, truly they would have known that God can create any kind of life that He wants. They were spiritually dead. They were spiritually blind. And consequently it was ignorance in high places.

Did they think God was only what they could conceive Him as being? Did they think that God was not capable of sorting out husbands in heaven, or creating a kind of life in which their scenario was an absurdity? And again, this is the kind of indictment you lay over any false religion.

And then he explains himself in verse 25, "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." When they rise...in the parallel passage in Luke 20 verse 34, "they" is sons of this age...people, human beings living in this age, a Hebraism for the

people living in the world. When the people in the world rise from the dead in the next life, they neither marry or are given in marriage. The whole complex of sex, reproduction, birth, family ceases to exist. This is contrary to the notions of the everlasting planetary dominating rulership of Mormons and planetary procreation with their multiple wives. It is also contrary to the Islamic view of everlasting sex on green pillows with 72 virgins, or whatever they promise the martyrs. The whole complex of sex and reproduction and birth and family is for this life and is not for the life to come. That is an absolute statement, folks. So if you're wondering, there is no marriage in heaven. There are no sexual relationships, no families and no exclusive relationships in heaven.

Further, helping to define this, our Lord says, "But are like angels in heaven...bur are like angels in heaven." It doesn't mean we're going to be angels. And our Lord throws this one in because they don't believe in angels. They denied angels.

In Luke he says, "The sons of this age don't marry, or give in marriage, but the sons of the resurrection, Luke says, are like angels." So in the next life, in the next age, we'll be like angels.

What does that mean? They are glorious. They are eternal. They are heavenly beings. They do not cohabit. They do not reproduce. They do not die. Marriage is only for this life. And by the way, I have to hurry and say in 1 Peter 3, "It's the grace of life, it's the best this life has to offer." Please, young people, get married. It's...it's the best. Don't hang on waiting for the Messiah to return. Just pick somebody. It's the best. Marriage is necessary. Why? For procreation. Fill the earth, right?, God told Adam and Eve. It's necessary for procreation. It's necessary, listen, for replacement of the people that die. And it's necessary for advancement of successive generations and to harvest all the richness that God has poured into this world. We need a population to draw it all out in all of its magnificence.

But in the next world...no one dies and no one is born. In the relationship of marriage, therefore unnecessary. Each of us is perfect. Right now we're incomplete and it is not good for a man to be...what?...alone. We are completed by a partner. A woman is completed by a partner, man is completed by a spouse. In heaven we don't need somebody to complete us. In heaven we are absolutely and perfectly complete in and of ourselves. As individuals we lack nothing and we will love everyone perfectly and everyone equally. Marriage is not necessary, it has no purpose. It is only for this life.

So, God isn't up there worried about how He's going to sort out the relationships of these people who show up in heaven with a fist full of wives. That's not going to be a problem, not an issue. You Sadducees are so ignorant. You're the ones who don't know the Scripture. You're the ones who don't know God. You don't know His power. You...if you knew His power truly, this wouldn't be a problem. As I said, you would know that the same creative power that is exhibited in the book of Genesis can be demonstrated again. You have a small, weak, inadequate perception of God.

Paul helps us with that. Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 35. "Someone will say, 'How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?'" That sounds like the Sadducees. "Well, ha-ha, how are the dead raised, right? What kind of body are they going to have?"

Well, you fool, that which you sow doesn't come to life unless it dies and that which you sow you do not sow the body which is to be but a bare grain perhaps of wheat or of something else." You put a tiny seed into the ground, you get an entire tree. The body that grows is in no way comparable to the seed that was planted. Seed dies, decomposes. And what comes out of it is a completely different plant. God, according to verse 38, gives it a body as He wished and to each of the seeds a body of its own. The difference between the body and the seed that dies and the body of the plant is massive.

Verse 39, "All flesh is not the same flesh, like seeds, there's a flesh of men and a flesh of beasts, and a flesh of birds, another a fish. Their heavenly bodies, earthly bodies, the glory of the heavenly is one, the glory of the earthly is another. There's a glory of the sun and the glory of the moon and the glory of the stars and star differs from star and glory."

In other words, Paul is saying God can create anything He wants any way He wants to make it, whether it's in the plant world, whether it's in the animal world, or whether it's in the material world. So also, verse 42, is the resurrection of the body. "Sown a perishable body, raised an imperishable. Sown in dishonor, raised in glory. Sown in weakness, raised in power, sown in natural body, raised a spiritual body." Huge difference.

Down to verse 47, "The first man is from the earth, earthy. The second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy. And as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly, just as we have borne the image of the earthy, or the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly."

Verse 51 sums it up. "We will not all sleep, but we all will be changed." We're not all going to die. Some of us are going to be taken in the Rapture. But whether we're taken in the Rapture or whether we die, we're all going to be changed.

In verse 52, "The dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." Perishable puts on the imperishable. The mortal puts on immortality. God has the power to do this. And He demonstrates it in the myriad ways in which He puts His creation on display.

They were ignorant of the Scripture. Let's go back to Mark 12. They were ignorant of the Scripture and they were ignorant of God, God's power. Our Lord even seems a little sarcastic according to Matthew 22:31, He says, "Haven't you read about the resurrection?" You're supposed to be the experts.

Oh, and by the way, you're stuck on Moses, let me take you to Moses. Verse 26, "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses," that is a serious indictment of those who deemed themselves the experts on the writings of Moses. "Have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, to Moses, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'"

What does that have to do with anything? That's Exodus 3:6. "I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I am the God of Jacob." The impact of this is, I am and they are. Get that? God speaks of His covenant relationship with the patriarchs who aren't around, who have died. And He says, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am and they are, not I was and they were." It doesn't say, "I was the God of Abraham, I was the God of Isaac, I was the God of Jacob, which He would have had to say if they were out of existence." He makes an identification in the present tense, though they were all dead by Exodus 3.

In Genesis 26:24, in Genesis 28:13, God calls Himself the God of Abraham after Abraham has died. In Exodus 3 and then again in Exodus ...three times in Exodus 3 and another time in Exodus 4 God calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all three, as I said, have died. God says, "I am the God of these men and He is not a God worshiped by corpses. I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I am the God of Jacob, emphasizing the personal reality of each, the personal existence of each." And then He seals this by saying, at the end, verse 27, Jesus speaking of God, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are greatly mistaken."

Who are the fools? They are the fools. They are the fools. He is not the God of dead men. He is the God of the living. There in the most obvious place in the writings of Moses was the evidence of the afterlife. All those years and years and years of poking around in the writings of Moses to prove there was no resurrection and they're right under their noses in that glorious place in Exodus 3 verse 6 God identifies Himself as the God of those who are living. He devastated them...devastated them. He proved the resurrection from their Pentateuch. He was no fool. They were the fools.

There will be a resurrection and you will be in it, a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto death. There will be a resurrection. Every person will live forever.

Well His final word to them, "You are greatly mistaken." And the Sadducees fade away, just like the Pharisees did. They were totally frustrated by so simple an answer that the people must have thought...what kind of fools are they that they missed that? You really don't want to get in to this kind of discussion with the Son of God. You can't win.

For us, isn't it wonderful to think about the resurrection? That this is not the end? That this is not the way we're going to be forever in any sense, physical, spiritually, we're going to have a glorified body,

perfect in every way in form, and more importantly perfect internally in spirit. We will be perfect lovers of God, perfect worshipers of God, perfect lovers of one another. We'll have perfect knowledge. We'll be perfectly motivated to do perfect service, rendering perfect obedience and doing it all with absolute undiminished joy and we'll do that forever and never ever have to take a deep breath. We'll never be weary, never be tired, never be bored, never be discouraged, never be disappointed, joy upon joy upon joy upon joy. And when we are raised, just so that we don't leave anything up to speculation, it says that when Jesus comes, Philippians 3:20, "He will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." He's going to give us a form like His resurrection form and a spirit that is perfectly holy. And this is all by grace, isn't it?

Well, next Sunday morning the scribes are going to come at Him about the great commandment and that is a fascinating and important encounter.

Father, we thank You for the time we've had again today to worship and to praise You and to sing and pray and fellowship. We thank You also for Your Word which powerfully, powerfully opens up truth to us. We thank You that Christ is always on display in the gospels and His majesty is seen. There's no one like Him, no one. The more we look, the deeper we look, the more carefully we consider every tiny detail of His life and ministry, the more wondrous He becomes and more glorious. And to think that He calls us His own and that He loved us and gave Himself for us that He might take us to heaven forever to be with Him. We are unworthy of that. What an honor it is, what an undeserved honor for us. What a joyous anticipation. May our gratitude demonstrate itself in obedience and love to Him, we pray in His name. Amen.

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