

## Mark 12:18-27

### “No microscopes in heaven”

- I.     **Introduction**
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- III.   **Vs. 24-27 Ignorance of the Word and power of God**

#### Introduction

This is the only place in Mark’s account that the Sadducees appear, and their questioning of Jesus is very reminiscent of the other accounts of them. To understand their questioning, you would need to look into just **WHO this group** was and **WHAT they believed**. They were one of the three main religious movements during the time of Jesus and were aristocrats. They tended to be wealthy and held powerful positions, made up mostly of priests, including that of chief priests and high priest. They also held the majority of the 70 seats of the ruling council of the Sanhedrin. They kept peace by agreeing with the decisions of Rome being more concerned with politics than religion. Because of this they didn’t relate well to the common man, who sided with the Pharisees. Even though they held the majority of seats in the Sanhedrin, they had to go along with the ideas of the Pharisaic minority, do to the Pharisees popularity with the masses. Religiously, ***the Sadducees differed with the Pharisees in the authority of scripture as the Pharisees believed that oral tradition was equal to the written Word of God, while the Sadducees considered only the written Word to be from God.*** They held many beliefs that contradicted Scripture:

1. They denied God's involvement in everyday life.
2. They denied any resurrection of the dead.
3. They denied any afterlife, believing that the soul perished at death, denying any

penalty or reward after the earthly life.

4. They denied the existence of a spiritual world, i.e., angels and demons.

The Sadducees ceased to exist in A.D. 70. When the Temple was destroyed because of their political and priestly ties.

## **II. Vs. 18-23 The case of the unlucky widow**

Vs. 18-23 The Sadducees had a strong belief in the scriptures specifically the books of Moses; so not surprisingly they use a particular legislation that God gave Moses to prevent the break up of the family. The case study is from Deuteronomy 25:5-10 and the obligation of brothers to take care of his brother's widow. Theoretically, this would go on as long as there was brother's and no child born when the child was born that child would be seen as heir of the original husband **this would ensure two things:** That ***the family name would continue*** and ***that the family property would remain within the family.***

Since the seven husbands had died and now also the wife the interest in the case was upon whose wife she would now be **IF** there was such a place called heaven. Apparently this case was supposed to present a difficulty to those who believed in life after death.

**Their denial of the resurrection was not over a particular type of life after death but any possibility to it.**

It is clear by Mark's comments that this was not a serious question but one that intended to mock Jesus and the Pharisees, though it doesn't appear to be a question that was designed to entrap Him that would lead to His death. These aristocrats were the rationalists, materialists and secular humanists of the day. They come to Jesus to ask a question that they believed was complete nonsense with the aim of making Him look foolish. But their contrived story is so strange that it makes them foolish and Jesus could

have just skipped ahead and said “*This woman had seven husbands in a row and they kept dying, you might want to know what she was putting in the soup!*”

### III Vs. 24-27 Ignorance of the Word and power of God

Vs. 24-27 Before Jesus answers their question in two parts He first tells them they are mistaken on two accounts:

1. **The scriptures**: God has insight and knowledge beyond that which we possess. It is for this very reason that He has given us the Word of God so that we can look into the scriptures to gain the insight we need to make it through what we don't understand.
2. **The power of God**: God has power that is infinitely greater than the power we humans have.

These Sadducees, like many today, limited themselves to only what they knew. People tend to trust solely upon business, science, religion, politics, psychology or family more than they do God's Word and God's power. Every human failure can be attributed to one or both of these things “**not knowing the scriptures or not knowing the power of God**”.

The great scientist and philosopher, Pascal once noted that “**The ultimate purpose of reason is to bring us to the place where we see that there is a limit to reason.**” The trouble with rationalists, materialists and secular humanists is that they, like the Sadducees, rely on only things that they can verify with their limited knowledge and power. People and life is far more complicated than just what we can verify! **When people start the equation with the presupposition that there is no God, there is NO life after death, they have already stated by their presupposition that any thought of those ideas are irrelevant to their situation and purpose of life.** All of this because they can not prove it with their limited knowledge and power.

So Jesus boldly declares, “*Their wrong*” because they refused to see the full scope of reality beyond time, space and matter. ***You can't view the resurrection in a***

*microscope but the rationalist, materialist and secular humanist is more than that they are a human! They can not escape the great spiritual questions simply because they don't conform to the scientific method of discovery.* Everything we see in time space and matter dictates a belief in intelligent design. It is illogical to believe in random chance creating anything but chaos! *No one has ever observed random chance creating anything but chaos!* We can test this theory over and over and the outcome will always be the same, chaos. So if there is a Designer, it is illogical that this Designer would create with such complexity, variety and creativity without the possibility for that which He created to know Him who created them. That means that the emotions, intellect and will of humans not only have the capacity to know their creator but can intimately connected to Him. These things can't be tested but our whole life experience testifies to the reality of it. It encompasses all of time, space and matter and never changes or advances. As far as God's knowledge and power what was true at the beginning is still true today, even with all of our human advancements. There is not a subatomic particle anywhere in space that God does not have full knowledge of and power over!

Jesus answers their question in two parts:

- a. Vs. 24-25 **The manner of the resurrection:** The Sadducees assumed either God could not raise from the dead, or that He could raise them only back to a life that would just like the material present. Further more Jesus points out that Angels (whom the Sadducees didn't believe existed) were also created but in their sphere have no need for propagation thus no need for marriage to continue their existence. There are the same number of angels today as there was at the beginning, they are the same angels and in eternity though we will still be humans we will be like the angels in respect to no need to procreate. So Jesus dismisses the Sadducees hypothetical case because they lack the knowledge of the Word of God that Jesus possessed.
- b. Vs. 26-27 **The matter of the resurrection:** Jesus speaks on the second aspect of the resurrection and uses Moses whom they only recognized. The point Jesus is making to the Sadducees in Exodus 3:6 is that God reveals to Moses His real present relationship to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; men whom in Moses time had been dead

for over 400 years. The question Jesus is imposing to them is “***How can the living God have a relationship with men who had been dead for over 400 years if they cease to exist after they die?***” The answer is they aren’t dead but very much still alive, thus there must be life after death. **Jesus words establish not only the immortality of the soul but indirectly the resurrection of the dead.** That also means that humans do not remain in an imperfect condition and will recover a body that will be raised in perfection! Paul writes on all of this to answer the question of the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15 where he writes, “*So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.*” He went on to say, “*And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*”