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Heavenbound or Earthstruck?

Mark 12:18-27

It is truly astonishing what happens in Bible stories when they are retold by young theologians. The following is an example of such scholarship.

In the first book of the Bible, Guinness's, God got tired of creating the world, so He took the Sabbath off. Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night. Samson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah. Samson slayed the Philistines with the ax of the apostles.

Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Amendments. The First Commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple. The Fifth Commandment is to humor thy father and mother. Moses died before he ever reached Canada. Then Joshua led the Hebrews in the battle of Geritol. The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.

David was a Hebrew king who fought with the Finklesteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines. Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you. He also explained, "Man doth not live by sweat alone." The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 decibels. The epistles were the wives of the apostles. One of the opossums was St. Matthew who was, by profession, a taximan. St. Paul cavorted to Christianity. He preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage. A Christian should have only one wife. This is called monotony.

We laugh at young kids when they make humorous mistakes recounting biblical stories. It's a fun age when their vocabulary exceeds

their understanding of the words they use. They can be naive as to the meaning and significance of the words they are saying, and in doing so it trips them up. It's humorous when kids are ignorant of the meaning of Scripture...but when believers who have been around for a while are ignorant of understanding the scriptures...it's quite sad. Folks, we can no longer afford to be ignorant of the scriptures. We cannot be silent when we have a question in order to try and mask our ignorance. The only question that is foolish is the one not answered. We cannot afford to let the dust accumulate on our Bibles at home. Why? Because faulty understanding of the Bible leads us by the hand to faulty assumptions. Those faulty assumptions get us in trouble. They lead us to believe things that are just not true. The things we truly believe will guide our actions. Therefore, if we are believing things that are just not true...our actions based on faulty belief will get us into trouble. Bad thinking delivers bad actions. My purpose this morning is to direct us to the right way of thinking..God's way from the Bible and expose faulty thinking that could get us in trouble. We can trace almost all heresy, or faulty thinking to either a misunderstanding of the Scriptures or a low powerless view of God.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Mark chapter 12. This is in the middle of the "Stump the Jock" section. The religious authorities of Jesus day are trying everything they can to discredit Jesus and make him appear foolish. He parries their baptism trap answering their questions of His authority. He counters their Allegiance trap with the visual aid of a Roman coin. Ultimate allegiance must be to God and God alone. Now its the Sadducees turn at trying to make Jesus look foolish in front of the crowds.

The Sadducees were an Jewish aristocratic party. Upper crust. Materialistic wealthy. Not as numerous as the Pharisees, yet they occupied influential positions on the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court. The Sadducees who held that only the first five books of the Bible, the Torah, or the first five books of Moses were authoritative, or true. The Sadducees did not believe in anything supernatural. They denied any life after death. No future resurrection. No Heaven. No hell. No future rewards. No future judgment. No angels. No demons spirits. They were nihilists. When its over...it's over. Because they believed that

the resurrection was not something taught in the first five books, they refused to believe the resurrection. This misunderstanding of the Bible got them into trouble. No future. No heaven. No hope. They believed all there was to live for was the here. The present. God wants us to create our own heaven on earth. So, they became very world enamored...earth struck and materialistic. No future..no hope. The Sadducees were a group without a future hope and that was why they were Sad- You-See. Read with me Jesus's encounter with the Saducees. (READ)

The Saducees lay this theoretically tragic story about a woman who's very deadly to her husbands. Her husbands were all brothers. They come off very pious to very in verse 19 asking a question that probably had been effective in prior resurrection debates...yet they would not fair so well against Jesus. They bring up the Old Testament Law regarding Leverite Marriage. It details this Law in Deuteronomy 25:5. A man who is co-inheritor of the family lands with his brother dies and leaves a childless wife behind. In order to preserve the dead man's family lands and carry on his family name, the unmarried brother is to take his sister in law as a wife to honor and fulfill his brother. If I lived back then, I think this law would make me very interested in the woman my brother choose to marry. So the Sadducees continue in their argument-question. If the second brother marries this widow and then dies, and the third performs yet another Levirate marriage and He too dies and the 4th through the 7th as well. Then on top of all that the woman dies. When they all "supposedly" go to heaven...which of the brothers will be the husband to this woman? This was the best argument that they could come up with that there was no resurrection? Wow? They must have assumed that one woman could not possibly have 7 husbands so if all were alive together in heaven. one could not live in sin in heaven therefore. No such thing as the resurrection. How could god possibly figure that one out. So they ask Jesus which one would be the rightful husband? Good question. Some of you who have been married more than once either due to death or divorce may have wondered the same thing. Jesus is real clear here. And in answering the Sadducees he exposes their faulty thinking. Faulty beliefs lead us to faulty assumptions that get us into troublesome actions.

Point #1. Do not assume that heaven will be more of the same life. Do not think that life in heaven will be just another longer period of what we did here on earth. The Sadducees faulty assumption was that life in heaven "for those who believed such nonsense" would just be more of the same. No. Jesus says v. 25 "in heaven their won't be what we know today as marriage." There will be no death, no need to continue the race and multiply people. No sexual relations. I have heard people say well, I have a great marriage and if I can't be married in heaven, then I don't want to go. My guess is that if Jesus says there is no marriage or Marriage type benefits in heaven...then He has something much, much better. More fulfilling, more exciting, more pleasure filled than marriage. Just think of the possibilities in a place where people love perfectly. No, do not assume that heaven will be just more of the same...a continuation of this life.

We will be "like the angels in Heaven" in regards to our immortality. We will live forever. Heaven will not just be the same old earth stuff. It will take living to a whole new dimension.

When I was a kid I just couldn't imagine living apart from my family. I loved them, they loved me we got along well and had a great time. It really hurt when I was in 6th grade my oldest sister got married and she told me she was moving away. I realized I probably wouldn't see her much any more. As a kid our mom's and dad's provided us with so much what we needed to survive and the thought of living without them just wasn't there. Then when we got into the teen years, and college years and meet the right mate...we quickly see the need for a new family relationship. The focus of our love and devotion shifts. There is a leaving from mom and dad and a cleaving to our mate. It's not that we love our parents any less, but our priority and hearts are elsewhere. We have given up the good for the better. We have a new home a new relationship.

When we get to go to heaven we will experience a little what it's like begin a new home, a new more intimate relationship. Now I love my wife and find my marriage here on earth very fulfilling, but what is in store for me in heaven, if I know God, will be far, far more exciting.

Point #2 Individuals will be recognized in eternity. Even though there won't be marriage as we know it here on earth, I believe that we will

be able to talk with and recognize each other in our perfectly perfected bodies and perfectly crafted personalities. The best of us will be preserved and yet we will still be wholly us. We in heaven in our glorified bodies will be much more lovable. In verse 26 Jesus speaks of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These are individuals, people whom we can recognize and talk to. This is Jesus counter argument against the Sadducees.

Verse 26. Jesus knew that they only held the Pentateuch as authoritative.(Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers and Deuteronomy). So He taunts them, "Have you not at least read the books of Moses?" The story about Moses and the burning bush in Exodus 3. The Sadducees were no match for Jesus knowledge of the Bible. It was like Michael Jordan in a slam dunk contest against Urkel. No contest. Jesus says, "Listen fella's don't you read your Bibles?" God is speaking to Moses and says, I Am. That's my name. I AM the God of Jacob. I AM the god of Abraham. I AM the god of Isaac. I Am is a present tense verb. God did not say I WAS. He said I AM. If He still is the God of these men...and He is. Then they must still be around. They cannot be non-existent, they cannot be nothing. God had a very special agreement with these three men. It was a covenant so alive, so dynamic, powerful and profound that it demanded a continued relationship. The promises that God gave these three men were not all fulfilled in their life here on earth..so they must be continued in an eternal everlasting relationship. God does not make an everlasting relationship with dead dust and dirt balls. God is not the God of nothing...He is the God of life. He is not the God of the dead and past tense..He is God of the living. Folks we have a God that is a very present tense God. How do we know. God said it himself. He is not the great "I WAS" He said it himself...I AM that I am. I am the great I AM. I AM the God of the past present and future.

Jesus has effectively slam dunked the competition. Sadducees...you have it all wrong. There is a life after death. God is the God of the living and not the dead. There is a future. There is a heaven. There is a hell. There are rewards. There are punishments.

Why is the belief in resurrection important? Heaven will not just be a reawakening of the same old thing...faulty assumption. Heaven means there will be a transformation! Death for us will be swallowed up

in victory! We will be able to get along with those saints we struggle with because now their personalities and ours too will be transformed into immortality and in perfect glory.

The Sadducees missed it because of two reasons. One they were ignorant of God's Word and two, they were ignorant of God's power. Look at verse 24. Jesus says, is this not the reason you totally missed it on this doctrine of resurrection? You are ignorant of the God's word and ignorant of his power. You do not believe that the God who created the world is able to resurrect people from the dead? Do you stand here and argue about God's ability to figure out who will be married to whom in heaven. I think the God who created man out of dust Genesis 1 can resurrect man from the dust of the ground after their human body dies. I think it to be a very simple thing for God to put together a person that has been burned by a fire or mutilated by a wreck. The whole person will be resurrected and our individuality will be preserved in eternity. The best distinctives that make you who you are will be recognizable. If I know you here on earth I will know you in heaven. I will not be a bigger fool in heaven than I am now. Resurrection does not just restore life as we know it, resurrection brings new life.

Are you earthbound like the Sadducees? This is all there is..so I'd better live it up here? Or heaven bound. Is God on the top of your love ladder so much so that all other loves in your life pale in comparison? Things will not just stay the same in eternity. Resurrection will bring a new life. A different set of priorities. It will bring us a new passion a perfect love. If we say there can be no supernatural, no miracles...where does that leave us? No hope. No future only a depressing bog of our own selves to wander around in. We cannot afford to cling to a powerless view of God. We cannot afford to be ignorant about the Scriptures. The deceiver likes nothing better to take church folks who know just a little about the Bible and twist it to draw them into horrendous cults. The cults best feeding ground? Church bred youth who have heard all the stories but can't think for themselves. They've heard the bible their whole lives but they don't know or understand it for themselves. They have a powerless opinion of god and have not embraced the Word of God and made it theirs. Folks we can't afford to be ignorant. We cannot afford to be earth struck Sadducees in love with the priority list of this

world. We must be heaven bound thinking people not earth struck sheep who are in love with this world. Where is your love? Home is where the heart is...where is your Home? Where is your heart? God wants to make our priorities and passion heaven bound. Because there more to this life. More than just living and dying. More than these eyes alone can see

Notes for small group study on sermon:

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Mark 12:18-27

Warm-up:

1) What aspects of this earthly life would you like to see still remain in heaven? What are you looking forward to not being the same?

Dig-in:

1) What was odd about the question asked by the Sadducees? Why did they even ask that particular question? Did the Sadducees reveal any false assumptions in their question?

2) What did Jesus say was the root of the Sadducees problem? What do faulty beliefs lead us to? What did they misunderstand?

3) Explain Jesus counter argument against the Sadducees belief that life does not go on after death. Read the Moses burning bush account in Exodus 3.

4) The Sadducees were known for their materialism. Why would their belief in no resurrection lead them to that earthbound priority? In what ways do your beliefs control your actions?

5) Look up Genesis 1:1, 5:24, 22ff. How would these passages also refute the Sadducees claim of no resurrection.

Reflect:

Which do you feel you know more about? The scriptures or the power of God? Is there something you can do next week to gain a better understanding of these?