

## MARK 12:18-27 PUT AWAY THE WINGS

<sup>18</sup> Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. <sup>19</sup> “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. <sup>20</sup> Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. <sup>21</sup> The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. <sup>22</sup> In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. <sup>23</sup> At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” <sup>24</sup> Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? <sup>25</sup> When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup> 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’? <sup>27</sup> He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

When it comes to tomorrow, we have a tendency to merely project our past and present into the future. Of course, all we have on which to base our thinking is our experience and it serves us well as far as avoiding dangerously naïve business and life decisions. However, when it comes to our attempts to describe what life will be like beyond the grave we have really exceeded our resources.

Although the Sadducees were trying to trap Jesus in order to discredit him, Jesus responded by correcting their faulty thinking. The Sadducees held that only the written law of the first five books of Moses was authoritative. Therefore, they rejected the oral tradition and the innovations of the Pharisees; one of which was the resurrection of the dead. Without any Scriptural understanding of the kingdom of God beyond this world, they used a caricature of heaven to fit their purpose. Jesus response was, “*Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?...You are badly mistaken!*”

So often when we venture into the realm of the resurrection life we base our description on our experience in this life and a particular aspect of “heaven” that we have gleaned from a passage of Scripture that is consistent with our desire. To this, Jesus says, “*You are badly mistaken!*” First, we have missed the full counsel of Scripture. Second, we have diminished God to fit our level of understanding. And third, we have missed the essence of the resurrection. Jesus teaches us that we “*will be like the angels in heaven.*” He is not saying that we will be angels, for they are another category of creation, but that we and our circumstances will be so completely transformed that the difference between our present life and our resurrection life will be on the order of the difference between being human and being an angel. Let us live, not with the hope of escaping this life, but rather with the hope of our total transformation into a perfect relationship with God. God has already determined the shape of the kingdom. We need to concentrate on coming to know the King and not the “shape of our wings.”

**Lord God, you have created me to be in perfect relationship with you. Help me to spend my days seeking the revelation of your nature so that I might come to know you and as your faithful subject obey you as my king. Amen.**