

Mark 12:18-27 “Living Hope” 11/13/22

Outline:

- 1) Questioning the resurrection (12:18-23)

Acts 23:6 Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.”⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.⁹ Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?”

Deut. 25:5 “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.⁶ And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.⁷ And if the man does not wish to take his brother’s wife, then his brother’s wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to perpetuate his brother’s name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband’s brother to me.’⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, ‘I do not wish to take her,’⁹ then his brother’s wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother’s house.’¹⁰ And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.’

James Edwards, “The custom of levirate marriage was not devised (as were, e.g., polygamy and concubinage) for the expressed purpose of allowing a man to have more than one wife, nor to condone sexual promiscuity or immorality. Levirate marriage was, rather, a compensatory social custom designed to prevent intermarriage of Jews and Gentiles and to preserve honor and property within a family line in cases where a woman’s husband was deceased.” (James Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 366)

James Edwards, “They believed that at death the soul perished along with the body, and hence that there were no future rewards or punishments.” (James Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 365)

2) Clarifying the resurrection (12:24-25)

Dan. 12:1 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

R.T. France, “Earthly life is temporary, and therefore requires the procreation of further life, in the context of marriage, for its continuance, but heavenly life is eternal, and there is no place in it for procreation. Marriage and reproduction belong only to the earthly sphere (note that it is marriage, not love, which Jesus declares to be inappropriate in heaven). Angels, as eternal beings, have no need to reproduce.” (R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 472)

C.S. Lewis, “The letter and spirit of Scripture, and of all Christianity, forbid us to suppose that life in the New Creation will be a sexual life; and this reduces our imagination to the withering alternative either of bodies which are hardly recognizable as human bodies at all or else of a perpetual fast. As regards the fast, I think our present outlook might be like that of a small boy who, on being told that the sexual act was the highest bodily pleasure, should immediately ask whether you ate chocolates at the same time. On receiving the answer ‘No,’ he might regard absence of chocolates as the chief characteristic of sexuality. In vain would you tell him that the reason why lovers in their carnal raptures don’t bother about chocolates is that they have something better to think of. The boy knows chocolate: he does not know the positive thing that excludes it. We are in the same position. We know the sexual life; we do not know, except in glimpses, the other thing which, in Heaven, will leave no room for it. Hence where fullness awaits us we anticipate fasting.” (C.S. Lewis from *Miracles*, Chapter 16)

3) The hope of the resurrection (12:26-27)

William Lane summarizes well, “If God has assumed the task of protecting the patriarchs from misfortune during the course of their life, but fails to deliver them from that supreme misfortune which marks the definitive and absolute check upon their hopes, his protection is of little value. But it is inconceivable that God would provide for the patriarchs some partial tokens of deliverance and leave the final word to death, of which all the misfortunes and sufferings of human existence are only a foretaste. If the death of the patriarchs is the last word of their history, there has been a breach of the promises of God guaranteed by the covenant, and of which the formula ‘the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob’ is the symbol. It is in fidelity to his covenant that God will resurrect the dead. In citing Ex. 3:6 Jesus showed how resurrection faith is attached in a profound way to the central concept of biblical revelation, the covenant, and how the salvation promised by God to the patriarchs and their descendants in virtue of the covenant contains implicitly the assurance of their resurrection.” (William Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 430)

John 11:25 “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Psa. 16:11 You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

1Cor. 2:9 ...as it is written,
“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

James Edwards, “God’s power to create and restore life bursts the limits of both logic and imagination. The glorious realities of the life to come can no more be accommodated to the pedestrian routines of earthly life than can butterflies be compared to caterpillars. Present earthly experience is entirely insufficient to forecast divine heavenly realities: we can no more imagine heavenly existence than an infant *in utero* can imagine a Beethoven piano concerto or the Grand Canyon at sunset.” (James Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 368)

Isaiah 25:6 On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

7 And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

9 It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”