

Making Mistakes with the Scriptures by Carl McMurray

Mark 12:18-27 is the account of the conundrum that the Sadducees placed before Jesus concerning the woman married to seven brothers, i.e., whose wife would she be in the resurrection? Jesus' answer reveals three mistakes they made that prevented their understanding. These same mistakes sometimes limit our understanding today.

First, in verse 24, he said they were mistaken in not understanding the scriptures. They were taking the scriptures out of context. They were taking instructions that God had given them concerning raising up children and keeping a family name alive in Israel, and they were applying those instructions to the resurrection (that they didn't even believe in) and to heavenly life. It is much like people who read of harps in heaven and reason backwards that every kind of instrument is acceptable in the worship of the church today. It is taking scripture out of context to do so and Jesus said that one who does this does not understand the scripture.

Second, he also indicted them as not knowing the power of God. The Sadducees were so caught up in THIS life that they could not imagine God and/or men living in a spiritual plane where the rules of existence were unlike anything they were used to. That's why they mistakenly tried to apply earthly rules to spiritual existence. We do the same thing when we try to personify God as a man, one who reasons like a man, changes his mind like a man, or even goes back on his word like a man. When we get caught up in saying or thinking that God is going to save men and women who do not believe or are not obedient we are making this mistake. God is NOT a man and he is immutable.

Lastly, in verse 26-27, Jesus makes a necessary conclusion in saying that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that he is the God of the living, not the God of the dead, therefore these three must continue to live. There IS life after death, and a resurrection. The Lord expects us to use our minds and understand the scriptures. It is absolutely wrong to seize upon one passage on a subject and deny the truth revealed in other passages such as is sometimes done with John 3:16 (believe and be saved) while ignoring additional passages dealing with what goes into the salvation experience such as repentance, confession, baptism, and living a faithful life. A necessary conclusion would be that ALL the preceding subjects are necessary rather than one, to the exclusion of all or some of the others.

Don't be a Sadducee in your Bible study. Study contextually, inclusively, and trusting in God to bring all things to pass as He wills, even things we don't understand.