

Debating the Resurrection

Matthew 22	Mark 12	Luke 20
23{a} On that day Sadducees (those who say that there is no resurrection) came to him. [...]¹	18{a} Some Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, came to him. [...]	27 Some of the Sadducees came to him, those who deny that there is a resurrection.
23{b} [...] They asked him,	18{b} [...] They asked him, saying,	28{a} They asked him, [...]
24 saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.’”²	19 “Teacher, Moses wrote to us, ‘If a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife behind him, and leaves no children, that his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.’”	28{b} [...] “Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man’s brother dies having a wife, and he is childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up children for his brother.”
25 “Now there were with us seven brothers. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother.”	20 “There were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and dying left no offspring.”	29 “There were therefore seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died childless.”
26{a} “In the same way, the second also,” [...]	21{a} “The second took her, and died, leaving no children behind him.” [...]	30 “The second took her as wife, and he died childless.”
26{b} [...] “and the third,” [...]	21{b} [...] “The third likewise;”	31{a} “The third took her,” [...]
26{c} [...] “to the seventh.”	22{a} “and the seven took her and left no children.” [...]	31{b} [...] “and likewise the seven all left no children, and died.”
27 “After them all, the woman died.”	22{b} [...] “Last of all the woman also died.”	32 “Afterward the woman also died.”
28 “In the resurrection therefore, whose wife will she be of the seven? For they all had her.”	23 “In the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be of them? For the seven had her as a wife.”	33 “Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them will she be? For the seven had her as a wife.”
29 But Jesus answered them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.”	24 Jesus answered them, “Isn’t this because you are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God?”	
		34 Jesus said to them, “The children of this age marry and are given in marriage.”
		35{a} “But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age” [...]

¹ The Sadducees were a powerful faction within Second Temple Judaism, part of the financial, political, and priestly elite. Their views tended to downplay supernatural aspects of their religion, including denying the resurrection, an afterlife, or the existence of spirit beings like angels and demons. They were the principal rivals of the Pharisees.

² Mt 22:24; Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28b ref: Deuteronomy 25:5-6. This was a common practice in Israel, ensuring that a man’s family line would carry on and not be forgotten.

Matthew 22	Mark 12	Luke 20
30{a} “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage,” [...]	25{a} “For when they will rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage,” [...]	35{b} [...] “and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.”
		36{a} “For they can’t die any more,” [...]
30{b} [...] “but are like God’s angels in heaven.”	25{b} [...] “but are like angels in heaven.”	36{b} [...] “for they are like the angels” [...]
		36{c} [...] “and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.”
31 “But concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven’t you read that which was spoken to you by God, saying,”	26{a} “But about the dead, that they are raised, haven’t you read in the book of Moses about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying,” [...]	37{a} “But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord” [...]
32{a} “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?” [...] ³	26{b} [...] “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?”	37{b} [...] “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”
32{b} [...] “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”	27{a} “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” [...]	38{a} “Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” [...]
		38{b} [...] “for all are alive to him.”
	27{b} [...] “You are therefore badly mistaken.”	
33 When the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.		
		39 Some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, you speak well.”
		40 They didn’t dare to ask him any more questions. ⁴

³ Mt 22:32a; Mk 12:26b; Lk 20:37b ref: Exodus 3:6.

⁴ Lk 20:40 says “they” did not ask Jesus any more questions. Mt 22:46 later says that “no one” asked Him any more questions. Both of these refer specifically to this adversarial type of public questioning designed to entrap Jesus. Luke indicates that after this event, the Sadducees were so stumped that they quit trying to entrap Him with questions. Mt 22:34 shows that the Pharisees continued until they too saw how fruitless their efforts were, and everyone ceased trying to entrap Him with questions. People—like His disciples—continued to ask Him honest questions after this.