

# The God of the Living

## Matthew 22:23-33

**MPS** Jesus is the living God who gives eternal life to all who believe in Him to live in His light.

**OBJ** Every person should believe in Jesus to receive eternal life because of the answer to three questions.

### READ Matthew 22:23-33

*The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, 24saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.' 25Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. 26So too the second and third, down to the seventh. 27After them all, the woman died. 28In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."*

*29But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 32'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." 33And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching. **Matthew 22:23-33***

Today we come to the second "testing" of Jesus, on the same day as the previous testing. A different group of religious leaders confront Jesus, the Sadducees. The Sadducees were mostly comprised of the wealthy members of Sanhedrin. And while they served alongside them, they strongly held disdain for and opposed the Pharisees. One of the best known was the High Priest, Antiochus. As we learn in this text, the most notable aspect of their doctrine was that they denied the resurrection, believing that the soul perished with the body at death.<sup>1</sup> Their accepted canon of Scripture was limited to the Pentateuch, Genesis through Deuteronomy, and the superiority of the law of Moses. Since there was no belief in a resurrection, they only valued life on earth, which led them to align with the Roman rulers. [The Sadducees were as hypocritical as the Pharisees in their question, though, as it was also intended to ridicule Jesus.](#)

**The Sadducees approach Jesus with their own question.** Very likely, the question was a hypothetical scenario they created, thinking it would confound the law.(.24) They cite a law from Deuteronomy 25:5 where a man is required to take his brother's wife, in the event of his death, to care for her and give her children, so his family line can continue. Now this may seem strange to us, because we are so normal today, but this was common in the ancient world. Then, they press it to a more extreme circumstance, with six straight brothers dying, so that she ends up being married seven times. Then, once they all pass, they ask whose wife she will be in the resurrection.

**Jesus tells them that they neither understand the Scriptures nor the power of God.** In the resurrection, or eternity, there will be no marriage, but people will be like angels in heaven. Jesus doesn't bother to argue over the resurrection but builds His argument on the reality of it. Marriage is a creational institution to serve God's purposes in this world but it will not remain in eternity. There is no marriage between people in heaven because the Bride will be betrothed to the Bridegroom; God's people will be with Him. And as such, marriage on earth holds the ultimate high and holy purpose of revealing for us what relationship with God will be like, except that relationship will be perfect, unlike marriage on earth. Jesus goes on to say not that people will become angels, but rather like angels, using them as an analogy for comparison to say that in one way we will be similar to them. But all of this is really a distraction from the main argument they attempt to make to ridicule Jesus. The Sadducees try to validate their rejection of the resurrection by trapping Jesus in a wrong interpretation of the Scriptures. And that is always a fool's errand of the One who is the Living Word.

**Next, Jesus addresses their real issue, the resurrection.[.31-32]** He uses the central part of the Old Testament to show

<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, [The Gospel according to Matthew](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 558. Morris records, "They rejected all teaching of a life after this one (Josephus, "The Sadducees hold that the soul perishes along with the body," Ant. 18.16; cf. War 2.165) and evidently felt that in this area they had a strong position; as far as they could see, there was nothing about a resurrection from the dead in the Old Testament Scriptures, and specifically in the law."



what He stated about them, that they “*know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.*” He cites God speaking to Moses to reveal Himself in power to send him to Pharaoh. God identifies Himself by saying, “*I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*”(Exodus 3:6) He ends by stating, “*He is not God of the dead, but of the living.*” Jesus highlights the present tense of this statement, which states the present and ongoing existence of God. And it is this statement from which God will ultimately say to Moses, tell them “*I AM WHO I AM*”, which identifies Him as the One who is eternally existent and present. Scholar R.T. France notes, “the object of that revelation is to assure Moses of the active, saving presence of God with his people to rescue them from Egypt. **Could this living, saving, covenant-keeping God establish a relationship with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob only to allow it to be terminated by death? ‘To be the God of’ implies a caring, protecting relationship which is as permanent as the living God who makes it. ‘With unsurpassable brevity this sentence says that faith in God includes the certainty of conquering death’ (Jeremias, *NTT*, p. 184).**”<sup>2</sup> Jesus proves His point and the resurrection with God’s words from the Scriptures! God has revealed Himself to people throughout history as the God of their fathers, who is still God today. In using this association, God would disprove His own point and discredit His eternal nature and being if the patriarchs, their forefathers, were only dead.<sup>3</sup> **But God has provided what He prophesied and promised! He really does give life to all who believe in Him, because He is the living God!**

**Jesus is the living God who gives eternal life to all who believe in Him to live in His light.**

What does it mean for Jesus to be the God of the living? Do you understand what it means to not merely believe about or know of, but to believe IN Jesus?

**OBJ Three Truths that declare our hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.**

Jesus really is the God of the living. And those who believe in Him walk in the light of His life.

**1. The Living God is the One brings you out of sin’s death and darkness to the light and life of His kingdom.**

*“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ” Ephesians 2:4-5***

God is the One who makes us alive with Christ. If Jesus is alive, then those who put their trust in Him are alive with Him! And because He is our life, the life we have is equal to His life – it is eternal!

***Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. John 5:24***

***“Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” John 8:51***

These are the words of Jesus Himself. He says that the person who hears His word and believes in Him has eternal life, has passed from death, leaving it behind, and to life. The Sadducees did not know Jesus because they did not believe in the power of God. **By faith in Jesus Christ, life both now and forevermore are the believer’s new reality!**

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

**Do YOU believe this so that you have put your faith in Jesus? Have you passed from death to life, so that when you pass from this life it will be unto eternity with God?**

**2. The Living God is the One who leads you to walk as children of light.**

<sup>2</sup> R. T. France, [Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 321.

<sup>3</sup> John Nolland, [The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 906. Nolland helpfully states, “The argument is that God will not have continued to represent himself as their God if he had finished his work with them and abandoned them to the grave.”



Too often people think or act as if following Jesus is a decision one makes now for a benefit they claim later. But eternal life with God through Jesus Christ begins immediately at the moment of regeneration, when Holy Spirit makes you new! And life with God means that He is with you, always and at all times. **God is God of the living, not only the giver of life, but the gift of life; God sources His life in the believer by His Holy Spirit to empower us to walk as children of light.**

Jesus says that those who believe in Him will walk in His light of life now.

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." **John 8:12***

Paul also teaches how trusting in Jesus changes the way we live now when he instructs the Ephesian.

*"for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), <sup>10</sup> and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord." **Ephesians 5:8-10***

**God's Word is the light of life for the believer.** Jesus told the Sadducees that not only did they not know the power of God that gives life, but they did not know the Scriptures. If one is to know God's power, then they must believe in His Word, where His power is revealed. The Sadducees did not know the Scriptures because they had mishandled them in unbelief. **Faithfully handling God's Word is central to our faith and to knowing His power in life.**

**APPL1** Love for Jesus will always determine whether you believe His Word to experience the power of God in your life.

Paul exhorts Timothy, *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."* (2 Timothy 2:15) The Sadducees did what is commonly known as "proof-texting", taking a verse out of context and using it to mean or apply in a way that is not consistent with its meaning in the original context. Proof-texting is, probably, the easiest and most common way to mis-understand God's Word, and it remains one of the main means of deception among Christians today. It leads to deception and disillusionment with God. Though a common error, it is also one of the most used techniques by false teachers who mis-handle the text to serve one's own purposes. Yes, one should preach FROM the Bible. But even more important, one should preach THE Bible. **When the Bible is preached, Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, shines the light of life in those who believe to walk in God's commands by God's power.**

**APPL2** You must LOVE Jesus MOST, in priority and in practice, to put His Word as first, or you will use God's Word to justify what you do love most.

### **3. The Living God is the One who leads you to eternal life where He IS the light by which we shall live and walk!**

Revelation makes two powerful declarations about the One who is our light and life. First, we are told that Heaven is lit by the glory of God. **The living God is all the light that we WILL need, therefore, He is the only light that we DO need.**

*"And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

*<sup>24</sup>By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it," **Revelation 21:23-24***

And second, we are told that the light He IS will be forever.

*And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. **Revelation 22:5***

**ILLUS** **Have you bought any LED 10-year bulbs for your house yet?** We have. And when they said "10 year", I thought that meant 10 years. I did not realize it was in light bulb years. You see, there are human years, there are dog years, 7 to 1, and there are light bulb years, 10 to 1. In the first four years of living in our house, I am sure we have replaced those bulbs four times already. They must be a scam.



**But I tell you; Jesus is no scam!** He will not flicker nor burn out. Life in heaven with God is not like life here on earth; it is far better, greater, and more glorious in every way that we have even yet dare to imagine or conceive! And when you believe to put your faith in Jesus, you get the whole light of His life in you!

**ILLUS** **Have you noticed how things have become so convoluted today in the decisions you face?** I recently went to get lunch. And most lunch places have conveniently organized their menu with the most popular selections represented by a number. So, I stepped to the register and said, "I'll have number four." What was created to simplify the process and save time immediately got convoluted by a barrage of questions.

- "Would you like 2 super-size?" "S, M, or L?"
- "Would you like chips, fruit, or some rabbit food unfit for human consumption with that?"
- "Would you like dessert or cookie for ½ off?"
- "Do you want to apply for credit and get \$5 off?"
- "Do you have rewards with us?"
- "Would you like to upcharge to feed starving children and buy them each a pair of shoes?"
- "How much tip would you like to give me for the "awesomeness" that I am today?"
- "Sir, is there any reason we cannot count on 5 Star review before you leave today!"

Personally, I blame Burger King for this by starting the "Have it ur way" that has now led to "entitlement ordering"!

With Jesus, you get everything, ALL of GOD! There's only one salvation n Jesus Christ, from dark to light, death to life, eternal torment to abundant life forevermore! God has NO version of salvation that does not include resurrection unto eternal life. **You are either saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone once for all and unto it ALL, or you are not saved at all!**

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