

Luke 20:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

Analysis

Jesus declares: 'For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.' This statement follows Jesus' argument for resurrection from Exodus 3:6—God calling Himself 'God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' (v. 37) centuries after they died proves they still live. The phrase 'not a God of the dead' (Greek 'ouk estin theos nekron,' οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς νεκρῶν) indicates God doesn't form covenants with those who cease to exist. 'All live unto him' (Greek 'pantes autō zōsin,' πάντες αὐτῷ ζῶσιν) means all are alive to God—from His perspective, the patriarchs live. This establishes both resurrection and immortality of the soul.

Historical Context

Sadducees denied resurrection (v. 27), accepting only the Torah (first five books) as Scripture, which they claimed didn't teach resurrection. Jesus brilliantly argued from Exodus—a Torah text Sadducees accepted—to prove resurrection. His argument's logic: God's present-tense identification as 'God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' implies ongoing relationship, which requires their continued existence. Jews buried patriarchs centuries before Moses' burning bush encounter, yet God speaks of relationship in present tense. Early church emphasized resurrection as Christianity's foundation (1 Corinthians 15). This text also supports immortality—believers' souls continue consciously existing after death, awaiting bodily resurrection.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' argument from Exodus 3:6 prove both the resurrection and the immortality of the soul?
2. What does 'all live unto him' teach about God's perspective on death versus human perspective?

Interlinear Text

θεὸς	δὲ	οὐκ	ἔστιν	νεκρῶν	ἀλλὰ	ζῶσιν	πάντες	γὰρ
a God	For	not	he is	of the dead	but	live	all	for
G2316	G1161	G3756	G2076	G3498	G235	G2198	G3956	G1063

αὐτῷ	ζῶσιν
unto him	live
G846	G2198

Additional Cross-References

John 14:19 (Parallel theme): Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

2 Corinthians 6:16 (References God): And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2 Corinthians 13:4 (References God): For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

