

Mark 12:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

Analysis

Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection (Σαδδουκαῖοι, οἵτινες λέγουσιν ἀνάστασιν μὴ εἶναι). Mark identifies the Sadducees by their denial of anastasis (ἀνάστασιν, resurrection)—their defining theological error. Unlike Pharisees who affirmed bodily resurrection, angels, and spirits (Acts 23:8), Sadducees accepted only the Pentateuch (Torah) as authoritative, rejecting Prophets and Writings where resurrection doctrine appears more explicitly (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2).

Their approach to Jesus followed the Pharisees' failed trap (vv. 13-17), but shifted from politics to theology. The Sadducees sought to demonstrate resurrection's absurdity through a hypothetical scenario designed to create logical impossibility. Their question reveals rationalistic theology that dismisses biblical doctrines conflicting with human reason—a perennial temptation that Jesus will decisively refute.

Historical Context

The Sadducees were aristocratic priestly party controlling the temple and Sanhedrin during the Second Temple period. They collaborated with Rome to maintain political power and religious control. Unlike the populist Pharisees, Sadducees represented wealthy, conservative establishment. Their rejection of resurrection stemmed from limiting Scripture to Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) and Greek philosophical influence emphasizing the soul's immortality over bodily

resurrection. Josephus notes Sadducees denied fate, affirming human free will, and rejected afterlife rewards/punishments. They disappeared after AD 70 when Rome destroyed the temple, ending their power base. Their theological legacy warns against rationalistic reductionism that rejects biblical doctrines exceeding human comprehension.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does the Sadducees' denial of resurrection reveal about the danger of limiting Scripture to preferred portions while rejecting difficult doctrines?
2. How does their rationalistic approach to theology parallel modern attempts to reconcile faith with naturalistic worldview?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἔρχονται Σαδδουκαῖοι πρὸς αὐτὸν οἵτινες λέγοντες

Then come the Sadducees unto him which say

ἀνάστασιν μὴ εἰναι καὶ ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες

resurrection no there is Then they asked him say