

Mark 12:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

Analysis

Jesus concluded: 'He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err' (οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ θεὸς ζώντων· ὑμεῖς οὖν πολὺ πλανᾶσθε). This powerful statement affirms God's relationship with living persons, not non-existent corpses. Those who died in faith remain alive to God, awaiting resurrection. The present tense 'is' (estin, ἔστιν) emphasizes God's eternal, unchanging nature and ongoing relationship with His people. Death doesn't sever relationship with God—believers absent from the body are present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23). Jesus' final assessment: 'ye therefore do greatly err' (poly planasthe, πολὺ πλανᾶσθε, you wander far astray). Denying resurrection contradicts Scripture and God's character. This warning applies to all who reject resurrection—they fundamentally misunderstand God and salvation.

Historical Context

The Sadducees' error stemmed from wrong hermeneutics—wooden literalism missing theological implications. Jesus demonstrated how to read Scripture theologically, drawing resurrection doctrine from God's covenant faithfulness. Paul argued similarly: if no resurrection, Christ isn't raised; if Christ isn't raised, faith is futile (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). Early church faced Greek mockery of bodily resurrection (Acts 17:32)—Greeks believed in immortal soul but rejected bodily resurrection as crude. Christianity insisted on both: intermediate state (soul/spirit with Christ) and final resurrection (glorified body). Creeds affirm: 'I believe in the

resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.' Reformed theology distinguishes soul's immortality (continuing conscious existence after death) from body's resurrection (future physical restoration). Both doctrines rest on God's character as 'God of the living.'

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the phrase 'God of the living' affirm both intermediate state (believers alive after death) and final resurrection (bodily restoration)?
2. What does Jesus' condemnation of the Sadducees ('ye greatly err') teach about the seriousness of denying resurrection?

Interlinear Text

οὐκ	ἐστιν	ὁ	Θεὸς	νεκρῶν	ἀλλὰ	Θεὸς	ζώντων·
not	He is	G3588	the God	of the dead	but	the God	of the living
G3756	G2076		G2316	G3498	G235	G2316	G2198

ὅμως	οὖν	πολὺ	πλανᾶσθε
ye	therefore	greatly	do
G5210	G3767	G4183	G4105

Additional Cross-References

Romans 14:9 (Parallel theme): For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Romans 4:17 (References God): (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

Mark 12:24 (References God): And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

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