

Is There Life After Death?

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Date: 19 May 2019

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[0 : 00] Well, I can only imagine. Yeah, I can only imagine. Heaven.

John Newton, who is the writer, the former slave trader who came to Christ and repented and wrote the amazing hymn, Amazing Grace, that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now am found. John Newton spoke of heaven in this way. He said, I believe that I will see three wonders when I get to heaven.

The first wonder I will see is that I will see many people that I did not expect to see there. Secondly, I will miss many that I did expect to see there.

And thirdly, the greatest wonder of all is I will see that myself is there. Wonder of wonders. Many today do not know what to think about an afterlife.

[1 : 08] Is there life after death? If there is life after death, what is it? Many think, of course, that life just ends. There's nothing afterwards.

Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die, and that's the end. And of course, that was Paul's conclusion. If there's no resurrection, if there is no afterlife, then yes, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die.

That's it. And many in our culture live that way, of course. Some think there's some kind of continuation. Maybe they project this world onto the next, and it's just another life that leads on and continues in some way.

Many just simply do not think at all about the afterlife. In fact, I see some of them when I do funerals for unbelievers, especially. I see people get particularly uncomfortable when we talk about these things because they don't want to think about it.

and they're forced to sit there and bear this talk, this sentimental, they think, talk of wishful thinking of an afterlife.

[2 : 26] There are those at funerals that express how, you know, vague ideas of we'll see our loved ones again, or they're looking down on us, they're watching out for us.

Lots of ideas go around about what is the afterlife? What is it like? What happens? Others think, of course, that heaven is simply an unrealistic hope that has no basis.

In fact, so in Mark chapter 12 here, Jesus is asked what he thinks of the afterlife, of the resurrection.

After we die, what happens? What is it like? Now, he's asked that question by a very insincere group who already say there's no resurrection.

They're kind of tongue-in-cheek asking him, you know, whose wife will she be? You know, in that afterlife thing. And Jesus does two things at the same time.

[3 : 30] One, he refutes their wrong idea. and at the same time, establishes a reasonable basis for faith in the resurrection.

So remember that this is happening during this last week of Jesus' life. In just days before his death, he is in Jerusalem, he is there.

In a couple of days, they will have the Passover. And as he's teaching in the temple, the Jewish leaders come to confront Jesus about what authority do you have to do these things?

Remember that as he entered Jerusalem, he enters on a donkey. Remember that he deliberately arranged everything. He sends his disciples to get a particular donkey and to put their cloaks on there.

And then the people begin to put palm branches and begin to put their cloaks down. And they see this as Jesus' literal claim to kingship. Because Jesus is enacting Zechariah 9 that says, your king comes to you mounted on a donkey.

[4 : 39] Which is an animal of peace, not an animal declaring war like a horse would be. So Jesus comes in claiming peace, not that he's going to take on Rome.

So the authorities all notice this. They ask him, what is he doing? And the people, of course, respond by proclaiming him according to Psalm 118, blessed be the name of the Lord.

And he who comes in the name of the Lord the stone that was rejected became the cornerstone, Psalm 118 says.

And then Jesus, on the next day, Mark tells us, that goes into the temple and begins to clear it out. He begins to overturn the tables of the money changers and cast out the buyers and the sellers.

Buyers and the sellers. And then he prevents anyone from doing anything in the temple. He stops temple worship.

[5 : 41] And then he makes a pronouncement. This is the house, my father's house, which is called a house of prayer.

But you, and now he points and looks directly at these religious leaders, the Sadducees and the Pharisees and the elders. He says, but you have made it a den of thieves.

So, following that, the Sanhedrin, the 70 member Supreme Court of Israel, the ones who have all the authority, the ones who run the temple, who run Jewish life, the elders and the priests and the Pharisees and the scribes, all part of the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees, all different groups, part of this 70 member council.

They send representatives to him at the end of Mark chapter 11, verse 27, and they ask him, by what authority are you doing these things? And Jesus' answers is to turn the tables on them.

He gets asked the question, what does the Master always do? He turns the question back on them. And he exposes them as hypocrites and unbelievers and wicked men.

[7 : 10] Then, we come in chapter 12, we saw last week, verse 13 to 17, then they send another group to him, the Pharisees and Herodians, who are enemies, who are disagreement.

We have the Pharisees who are the scriptural Bible guys, and then you have the Herodians, who are just the politician guys, who work with Herod, who want to work through the political channels.

They're on opposite sides about taxes. Pharisees don't think they should pay any taxes to a foreign leader. Herodians are wanting to work through the system.

And so they come together, you can see that they're sent by the Sanhedrin, to unite against a common enemy, Jesus, to trap him. Because if we can get him to say, misstate something about taxes, he'll either have the people against him, or he'll have the Roman government against him.

So just say yes or no, you know, the lawyer that asked the guy on the stand, just yes or no. I don't want the full truth, I just want yes or no, because I want to twist it.

- [8 : 19] Right? Jesus doesn't allow that. He doesn't say yes or no. He poses a question. Whose image is on the coin?
- Brilliant. Who made the coin? Who does the coin belong to? Government. Give it back. Give it back.
- Give what belongs to them. So his answer is, not only is it right to pay taxes, as if we're just conceding that point, but it is actually an obligation.
- Give it back. It's theirs. It's your duty, it's your responsibility to pay taxes. Because you get things for those taxes.
- Not as much as you want. Not all the things that are right. But generally, you receive benefit from the taxes that you pay. So the debate rages way back before our day, folks.
- [9 : 27] Jesus answers unequivocally, give it back. Paul expands on that we saw last week in Romans, talking about, yes, we submit to human authority because they're the servant of God.
- And so we do serve, we have civic responsibility and duty. But then notice Jesus adds, he doesn't simply answer, yes, you have responsibility to government, but you have responsibility to even a higher authority.
- Not only give back to Caesar, but give back to God what belongs to him. Well, what belongs to God? everything.
- Your life, whether you're a believer or not, you're created by God, you're given life by God, you're given gifts by God, you owe him. You owe him everything. And then if you're a believer, you owe him even more.
- You've been bought and redeemed and saved and delivered and forgiven and entrusted and changed. The list goes on and on and on. We could never repay him.
- [10 : 34] And of course, the Christian doesn't work from a debtor perspective. We don't give because we have to give to God. Our hearts are changed. We give because we want to.
- My whole nature has changed. And as Mark tells us that when Jesus gives this answer at the end of verse 17, the crowds and those to whom he speaks marvel at him.
- They're stunned. So in comes the next group, a third attack. Coming now by a different group, the Sadducees, also part of the Sanhedrin, but they're different than the Pharisees and they're different than the Herodians.
- They're different than the scribes. They now come and pose the question about the resurrection. Is there life after death? And we see Jesus confirming belief in the afterlife, in resurrection.
- So we want to ask the question, how does Jesus answer those who deny resurrection? How do you answer those who deny that there is life after death? How do you answer that?
- [11 : 46] Jesus answers it by refuting two errors of these Sadducees that they do not know. Look at His answers in verse 24 in a nutshell.
- He turns the question back on them, of course. He asks them a question. Is this not the reason you are wrong? I mean, just blatantly, you are wrong.
- You're not off. You're wrong. Why? What is the reason they're wrong? Because, two things, because you neither know the Scriptures nor the power of God.
- You are in error in two ways. You do not understand the Scriptures and you do not understand who God is. Thanks for stealing my thunder.
- You are wrong in two things. And so Jesus, Jesus, answers in verse 24 but He breaks it into two areas and He's going to uncover that.

- [12 : 50] In verse 25 He's going to talk about the power of God, how they do not understand the power of God. Verse 26 He's going to talk about how they do not understand the Scriptures. So He answers them in order.
- So first He says, you're wrong. Verse 24, you do not know the power of God. the power of God to raise the dead. You do not know.
- So I want us to look at three things here. We'll look at the conspirators who are these guys. Jesus' charge and then His clarification. So in verse 18 we see who these conspirators are.
- Mark tells us that they're called Sadducees who say there is no resurrection. And the Sadducees tended to be, according to Josephus and others, they tended to be older.
- They tended to be the wealthy. They tended to be associated with the priesthood. These are the guys that run the temple. The chief priest, Caiaphas, and his father-in-law, Annas, the previous chief priest, were Sadducees.
- [13 : 58] These are guys who are also literalists in the sense that they only accept the written word of God in the first five books of Moses.
- That is their scripture. If you can't see it or teach it in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, or Deuteronomy, then it doesn't exist.
- Okay? So these guys are literalists and biblicists in the sense that we only trust that written record by Moses. Okay? So if it's from Joshua, if it's from Kings, if it's from one of the prophets, it doesn't matter to us.
- We only trust what God had his servant Moses record. So, therefore, the first five books of the Bible don't say anything about resurrection.
- So they don't believe in a resurrection. We find out later that according to Paul in Acts 23, they also don't believe in angels or spirits, demons, the spirit world.
- [15 : 05] They don't believe in that. Even though you do see that in Genesis, but they interpret that differently. Because angel can mean messenger, so they must interpret angel as just a human messenger of some kind.
- I don't know what they would do with Genesis 3. I really don't. So, they do not believe, which is why they're sad, you see. See, I still got one.
- I laugh. You laugh every time. I know, it's an old joke. So, notice in verse 19, as they pose Jesus this situation, first they cite from Deuteronomy, one of the books they believe in.
- They cite Moses in verse 19, who says in Deuteronomy 25, 25, teacher Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and, watch this, and raise up offspring for his brother.
- So, the only resurrection they believe in is this natural family propagation kind of raising up. So, stepping in for the brother, the next brother steps in, who didn't have any children and died before he left children, the next brother steps in and helps his brother, redeems his brother, and provides offspring for the name of that brother to survive and for the inheritance of his family.
- [16 : 33] We've seen this in Scripture. Judah's son, Genesis 38, Judah's son, yeah, Judah's son was an evil man and God killed him.
- He died before he gave, before he had any children. So, Judah said, the next brother, stand in. Next man up. He didn't want to propagate for his brother.
- So, God killed him. None of the brothers wanted to do it. The wife of this brother was named Tamar.
- Heard of her? She eventually tricks her father-in-law to impregnate her, posing as a prostitute. She is in the line of Jesus Christ.

Just one of the scandalous names in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Another one is Ruth. The whole book of Ruth is about this kind of thing.

[17 : 43] Ruth was married to Naomi's son. He died before they had children. Ruth decides to cling to Naomi. Remember that beautiful story in the book of Ruth? She clings to Naomi.

She wants to be her family. She wants to believe in her God. Right? She comes with Naomi and the story unfolds very dramatically that, oh, who will carry on Naomi?

Naomi's lost both sons. No name to carry on. In steps Boaz. An old man, but a good man.

And he steps in. But there's a problem. There's a closer relative. There's a closer relative. So Boaz can't have her. So they go through the whole ceremony that Deuteronomy 25 describes, taking off the sandal and hitting the guy on the head and spitting in his face for not being willing to carry on the duty of the brother.

And then Boaz steps in and gladly marries Ruth, a treasure, a beautiful woman, a beautiful soul, and carries on the line of King David.

[19 : 01] It would have ended there. God knows what he's doing. Right? They didn't know ahead, but all of a sudden Naomi's holding in her lap. Grandpa of David.

So we've seen this kind of thing. So they're talking about this kind of situation. To raise up through the family name. They ask this question and they pose this situation kind of ridiculous that there's seven brothers and it goes all the way through the seven and they all die and nobody gives an offspring.

But she's married to all seven. And so the Sadducees think we'll show the absurdity of the resurrection idea. Life after death by just extending it. You know, so when we die and oh, when they rise, you know, in the resurrection, I'm sure that's how they asked it too.

Whose wife will she be? She's the wife of seven? Is that the kind of life you picture in the afterlife? How ridiculous. You believe in that?

Right? And of course, Jesus sees through it. We can see through it the way Mark writes it for us. But He sees through it and He gives them a charge in verse 24.

[20 : 22] Right directly. And it's in the form of a question. Is this not the reason you are wrong? You are mistaken. You are in error.

The word there for wrong or mistaken means literally being led astray. Is this not the reason you are still being led astray?

What reason? Well, actually, it's two reasons. It's about something you don't know and you don't understand and you don't comprehend. You don't comprehend the Scriptures and you don't comprehend the power of God.

That's why you're wrong. And these two reasons are inversely the very reasons for faith in the resurrection. If you do understand the power of God, then it becomes reasonable that, yeah, He's powerful enough to raise from the dead.

That's who God is. And then secondly, what do the Scriptures say? Now, the problem with these guys is they only accept the first five books which don't mention resurrection other than this raising up for the brother in a material sense.

[21 : 38] So what does Jesus do? Well, He explains by clarification, first of all, in verse 25. First, He's going to answer the second thing He says they don't understand.

They don't understand the Scriptures. They don't understand the power of God. He's going to start there. How is it that they don't understand the power of God? Here's His answer. Verse 25. For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Huh? How does that explain? Now, He in part answers their question about marriage. Whose wife will she be? Nobody's.

There's no marriage in heaven. You are in error by thinking that the life to come is somehow going to be a continuation of the life on earth.

You're still thinking earthly. You're still thinking in earthly terms. You're thinking in temporary terms that we live by on earth. What is the purpose of marriage? The purpose of marriage is intimacy, companionship, procreation.

[22 : 48] Well, there's no need for that in heaven. Heaven is completely different. And then He says, you'll be like the angels.

What's that? By the way, they don't believe in angels and Jesus throws that one in there too. By the way. Oh, by the way, they're like the angels. Talk about misunderstanding.

Him. The angels who Luke says, when Luke records the same story, he talks about the angels who are not able to die.

Angels who have a different kind of life existence, live in a different kind of body. Angels do have bodies, by the way. Right? Because they're seen and observed. They're touched.

Right? They speak and are heard. But a different kind of body. They have bodies like Jesus and His resurrection. Right? It's still a body.

[23 : 50] In other words, afterlife isn't about turning into some kind of non-corporeal floating spirit somewhere. It is a body. Like Jesus' raised body.

Which can be touched. Which can eat. I don't know if it has to eat. But it can eat. So, you know, if you want to eat in heaven, you won't need to. But there is a banquet there.

I don't know. But like the angels, they're not able to die. In other words, you become eternal. Why does he talk about the power of God?

How is the power of God in this? Well, God, as the Sadducees should know from Genesis 1, is the creator of all things. The one who brings into existence the things that are not by simply speaking.

How does Genesis record it? God said, let there be light. And there was light. God said, let there be a separation.

[24 : 59] And there was a separation. Let there be a firmament above and a land below. Let there be a separation between the water and the land. And it was so. He who can speak into existence the things that are not, is he not able to create a new creation?

To raise them from the dead? To raise them from the dust? This is what Paul's getting at in Romans 4, 17.

He talks about the God in whom Abraham believed. What kind of God did Abraham believe in? Abraham believed in a God who gives life to the dead and who calls into existence the things that do not exist.

So in other words, Paul is connecting God's power to raise the dead with his power to create originally. It's the same power. So if you don't believe in the afterlife, you don't understand who God is.

You don't understand his power. But if you understand his power, his creative power, his almighty power, you have no problem reasoning that he can, of course, raise from the dead.

[26 : 11] Of course he can. That's not hard for him. So resurrection from the dead to life is different from earthly existence.

It's beyond the physical. At the resurrection, the earthly ends. The need for marriage ends.

All life is new. So what is it like? Have you read the scriptures and really seen what the scriptures say about what life will be like?

If you read them, you'll find very general, vague descriptions. Because how do you describe something that you cannot imagine?

That you can only imagine? As the song says, we can only imagine. It gives us some pictures. It'll be glorious. We'll walk on streets of gold.

[27 : 15] Will we really walk on streets of gold? Will we really live in a giant cube of a city? Does God literally mean that? Or is he giving a dramatic picture?

I don't know. I don't know. You have to be careful about interpreting prophecy and the dramatic language it uses.

Remember that the literal interpretation of these Sadducees missed the resurrection in the book of Exodus.

Remember that the literal interpretation of the scribes and the Pharisees missed the kind of Messiah that would come to earth. Right?

Because they took it literally. Yeah, he is a literal Messiah. Yes, that's true. But he's literally the son of David. That means he will sit on an earthly throne and he will vanquish earthly enemies. Right?

[28 : 15] And build an earthly kingdom. Right? Wrong! Wrong! Jesus says to the disciples in the upper room. How could you not see? How have you been reading the Scriptures?

So, Paul explains that there's a real change that happens in the resurrection. He talks about how what you sow in the ground, when you put a seed in the ground, right, Gardner?

When you put a seed in the ground, what comes out of the ground doesn't look like the seed, does it? You put a seed in the ground, it's all dead and shriveled and, you know, a little thing, and you put it in the ground, you water it, and the sun comes, and all of a sudden up springs something that doesn't look anything like the seed.

And so Paul says that's like the resurrection. See, what gets put in the ground isn't what is to be. So he says, so it is with the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15, 42.

So it is with the resurrection from the dead. What is sown is perishable. What is raised is imperishable. What is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness.

[29 : 32] It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. It's raised a spiritual body. Notice he does not say it's raised a spirit. It's sown a natural body.

It's raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there's also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living being.

The last Adam, Jesus, became a life-giving spirit. It's not the spiritual that is first, but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust.

The second man is from heaven. And as was the man of dust, so also are we of the dust. And as is the man of heaven, so also are we, those who are of heaven.

Just as we have been born the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood, this body cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

[30 : 34] Nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we all shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall all be changed.

Transformed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable. And this mortal must put on immortality.

And when the perishable puts on the imperishable, and when the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

Note the essential changes Paul talks about. It must change. Flesh and blood can't inherit the kingdom. The kingdom is a heavenly kingdom.

It's an eternal kingdom. This body can't inherit an eternal thing because this body is going to perish. I notice that more every year.

[31 : 44] Thank you, Kidney Stunt. We get these reminders. Paul talks about this body we groan, right? We can relate to that.

That's what makes us long for the heavenly. For the new body. So it's a radically different life, you see.

It's a body that's not in dishonor but glorious. It's not a weak body but a powerful body. It's not a natural body but a spiritual body. And it is God's power that enacts that.

God transforms this humble body into a body of glory and eternity and unending joy.

I can only imagine. Huh? So, Jesus' first answer to them is you do not know the power of God that can raise the dead.

[32 : 47] Then he answers a second. His second answer refutes a second error. You are wrong in that you do not know the scriptures which show the resurrection, which reveal the resurrection.

Now, Jesus could have cited Job 19 where Job talks about I will see God after death. He could have brought up Psalm 16 where David says you will not abandon my soul to the grave.

He could have brought up Isaiah 26 that talks about the dead will rise. He could have brought up Daniel 12 which says that the dead will awake to eternal life.

But Jesus brings up none of these explicit teachings of resurrection because the Sadducees wouldn't accept it. Oh, no, no.

Torah. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Talk about those. Alright? I'm your huckleberry.

[33 : 55] We notice three parts here. Jesus first confronts them, then He gives the citation, and then a conclusion. So in verse 26, He asks them a second question.

As for the dead being raised, have you not read? Have you not read? Have you not read? Have you not read? Now, when Jesus is talking about reading the Torah, this is the very thing that the Sadducees claim is their best, that they're the experts in.

They're all about Torah. They're all about Moses' writings. They know it inside and out. And yet, Jesus has the audacity to say, have you not read? Of course, they've read it.

They've read it over and over and over again. So what's He getting at? Have you not read? To read means to know accurately.

Literally, to know between. To read between the lines. To read with thoughtfulness, with carefulness.

[35 : 05] To read slowly. If I could tell Christians anything about studying the Scriptures, read slower. You read too fast.

We're in a hurry. And we read over the words that give us, wait a minute, there was an explanation there. Did I miss that? This is what we do on men's group on Monday nights.

In fact, we write the text out and I say to the guys, okay, what do you see? What's there? What connections are going on between these words? Wait a minute, did you pick up this word over here?

Oh yeah. We do that every week, right? Learning to read slowly. Learning to read carefully. To ask questions as we read.

So Christian, have you read? I know you've read. But have you read?

[36 : 11] Maybe you say, oh, you know, I'm not good at reading. I'd be better at listening. That's okay. I told Abby's boyfriend, you can get a free app on your phone and push Mark, chapter one, audio.

It'll read to you. So he's been listening. That's kind of easy. Oh, I can just push a button? Yeah, we live in that kind of age. Mark's meant to be read and heard aloud anyway.

That's the way it's written. So what is Jesus talking about? Read what? What does he cite? Well, instead of going to any of those other references, he goes to the Pentateuch.

He goes to the book of Exodus. Have you not read in the book of Moses, you know, the one you accept, about the passage of the bush?

Remember the passage about the bush? Anything about the bush in the Old Testament, remember? Was there a bush? Something? Yeah, a burning bush.

[37 : 22] Yeah, yeah, out in the desert. Yeah, Moses. Remember? He left Egypt. He's out wandering around the wilderness and he's shepherding sheep. What a life for one who thought he was called to be the deliverer of Israel.

He's out there shepherding sheep. Forty years, all of a sudden he's a burning bush. And the bush talks. And the bush says, take off your shoes, boy.

You're on holy ground. Approach carefully now. And the voice from the bush identifies himself. I.

I. In the Hebrew, it's emphatic. I. I. The God of Abraham. The God of Isaac. The God of Jacob.

Have you not read that? Have you not read that? Of course you have. It's a well-known text. I can refer to it simply as the passage about the bush. You'll know exactly what it is.

[38 : 26] It's in the Torah. It's in the book of Exodus. It's God speaking to Moses who you treasure. What is amazing about this text, we wouldn't know this in English.

Because in our English translations, the translation is I am the God, right? So I'm not the God of the dead but God of the living. That's what we think that the translation is.

That's not so. In the Hebrew, there's no verb. And even in Mark's Greek text, there's no verb. Mark is faithful to translate it from the Hebrew without the verb.

So in other words, Jesus is not arguing from the tense of the verb. He's not arguing from the saying that God said, I am. Not was, but I am. He's not doing that.

Well, doesn't that kind of take the whole punch out of the argument? What's he saying then? By the way, in Hebrew, you can't argue from tense because there's no such thing as tense in Hebrew verbs.

[39 : 33] That's Greek. Greek has all kinds of tenses, right? English, I don't know if we have any anymore, but we got American tense. Past tense and imperfect tense.

Hebrew doesn't have tenses. It has either completed action or incomplete action. No definition to that. So even if he was trying to argue, it wouldn't be legitimate.

So what is he saying here then? It's about God's relationship. I am who? I am the God of who? Abraham.

And the God of Isaac. And the God of Jacob. Have you not read? In other words, if you're reading carefully, you're going to say, why those three?

Because wasn't he God of others too? Wasn't he the God of Noah and Enoch and, you know, Joseph and Daniel and all these other guys?

[40 : 41] Why those three? Well, those three are the patriarchs. And what was significant about those three?

What did God say to those three? What kind of relationship did God have with those three? Well, he made the same promise to each one, starting with Abraham. In Genesis 12, when he called Abraham, called him to leave his country, leave his family, go to a place that you do not know and I'll show you when you get there.

Just keep going. And when you get there, I will bless you. I will make you a great nation. I will give you a great name.

And those who bless you will be, I will bless. Those who curse you, I will curse. I'm all in for you. I'm doing everything on you. And by the way, in your offspring singular, in one of your offspring, I will bless all the families of the earth.

He made a promise. And He told Abraham, when Abraham was circumcised, He told Abraham, this is an eternal covenant.

[41 : 53] This isn't a temporary, this isn't just as long as you live on this earth. This is an eternal covenant. In fact, God did this dramatic cutting, covenant means to cut, and He cut all these animals, right?

And He had Abraham walk, and the smoking oven walks through. In other words, God is saying, may the same happen to me if I don't keep this promise. This is an eternal covenant. I will give you this blessing, this great nation, and the land, all of it for eternity.

That was His promise. Then in Genesis 26, He repeated the same words to Isaac. Genesis 28, He repeats the same promise to Jacob.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Just those three. Come along Joseph, different. Come along Moses, different. The promise was to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

An unfulfilled promise in their lifetime. And by the way, when Jesus cites from Exodus 3, Exodus 3 does not mention the word resurrection.

[43 : 10] It just mentions, I am the God of. So how do we understand resurrection from that verse? Well, we're reading carefully. We're asking these questions. How is God the God of Abraham?

What does He say to them? How does He relate to them? How did Abraham understand this promise? So when I read in Exodus 3, 6, I am this kind of God, if we're reading carefully, what we're going to do is go back to Genesis 12.

What did He say to Abraham? All the way through Genesis, what did He do with Abraham? How did He relate to Abraham? What about when Abraham died? What happened then? And ask questions so we can understand what He means.

So consider what was promised to Abraham and what did Abraham look for? The book of Hebrews explains the faith of Abraham. This gives us insight into how this statement of God that I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob translates into resurrection truth.

So the book of Hebrews writes this way in 11, 8. By faith Abraham. Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he was to receive as an inheritance.

[44 : 23] And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, watch this, as in a foreign land. Why a foreign land?

It's his inheritance. It's his land. But he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with who?

Isaac. And Jacob heirs with him of the same promise? For, here we get the clue, for he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

He wasn't looking for the dirt in the promised land. He was looking for something better. Something that God built. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age.

Since she, what? Considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one man and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of the heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of the sand by the seashore.

[45 : 41] Watch this now. Then the Hebrew writer says this, These all died in faith, not having received the things promised.

Huh? Huh? Well, that just doesn't sound right, does it? They all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having, what? Seen them and greeted them from afar and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

For people who speak thus make it clear that they're seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country that is a heavenly one.

Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God. God is not ashamed to be saying, I am the God of Abraham. He trusted me.

And Isaac, he lived in tents. And Jacob, he came around. And then he lived in tents.

[46 : 56] He got it. He got it that it wasn't about earthly. He got it that it wasn't about here and now. Your best life, not now. Need a new book? Your best life, not now.

Sorry, Joel. Not many readers of Joel. I wonder why. He's God of the living.

Why? Because he's faithful to keep his promise. An everlasting blessing. A city that is not earthly. On earth.

Did Abraham receive the promise? No. Hebrews just told us no. Did he see the great nation that God promised him to be? No. He saw Isaac. And he saw, I think he saw Jacob born.

Yeah, he saw Jacob born. I don't think he saw anyone else. He lived 175, you know. Isaac was born when he was 100. But no nation saw a couple of offspring.

[48 : 05] Did he see all the families of the earth come to be blessed through one of his heirs? No. Did he see the city of God? No. Abraham recognized that the real promise was a heavenly one, a better country, one that was prepared and built by God.

And that's what's behind God identifying himself as the God of Abraham, God of Jacob, the God of Isaac, a God of promise who makes an eternal promise, who is not the God of the dead.

That's the God of the Sadducees. The God that when you die, that's it. What do the Sadducees have to live for?

By the way, that's another reason they're Sadducee. What do they have to live for? What's the deal? If there's no afterlife, why go to all the effort?

That's why they were just simply into their status and their power. Get rid of this Jesus. So let's apply this.

[49 : 09] Does any of this apply to us? What has God promised believers? We see what God promised Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

What did He promise those who believe in Him? Well, let's go back to the most basic verse of all, John 3.16. There's a promise there, right?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only, one and only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

And then two verses later, Jesus says in John 3.18, whoever believes in Me will not be condemned. You have no condemnation. You're delivered out of condemnation into life.

That's a pretty good promise. Whoever believes in Me eternal life. Whoever believes in Me is not condemned. We can walk through the New Testament and see all these other promises. A promise of new life.

[50 : 12] A promise of a new beginning. A promise of forgiveness. Of rescue from the penalty of sin. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will never die. He who believes in Me will rise again. We have lots of promises.

Do you believe that? You believe the gospel. That God is this all-powerful God who is also holy and at the same time merciful.

How does He do that? How is He holy and merciful at the same time? He's holy and He must judge sin and yet He's merciful to sinners who repent.

Do you recognize that you are a sinner, a rebel, and debt to God? And do you recognize that God sent His only Son to remedy our situation?

[51 : 13] Because He is a holy God and we can't keep His commands. Because we cannot save ourselves. He sent His Son to live a perfect, holy, righteous life. And then to offer His life in our place.

To pay our debt, to pay our sin. And then the, as Luther says, the great exchange. I'll take all your cruddy sins and I'll give you all my perfect righteousness.

And then you stand before the Father righteous, not condemned, eternal life, joy forever. Father, let's pray.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You, Lord, for Jesus and His answers. We thank You, Lord, that there is reasonable basis for faith in the resurrection.

We thank You, Lord, that You point this out to those who are in error. Encourage us comfort us, equip us. We pray in Christ's name.

[52 : 20] Amen. Amen. So, if you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, it wouldn't be sad, you see. we're going to fly away. I'll fly away.