

DO YOU ERR NOT KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES OR POWER OF GOD?

INTRO (Abbreviated)

I would imagine that most of us have what we call a “pet peeve”—something that someone does that we find incredibly annoying. Talking with food in your mouth may be one; interrupting someone else’s conversation is another. Another pet peeve for some is having to listen to a self-proclaimed “expert” who has just enough knowledge to make themselves dangerous. An example might be a hot-shot high school quarterback thinking he can teach Aaron Rodgers something about reading defenses, or a video-game junkie telling a Special Forces guy how to clear a building, or a back-yard mechanic telling a NASCAR crew chief how to tweak an engine. The *real* expert in each of these scenarios will often say nothing—they just let the so-called “expert” keep on talking.

More annoying than any of these, however—at least in my opinion—is the person who *claims* to be knowledgeable about God, but knows precious little about the Bible. Although we should strive not to be hateful—if people *dislike* us it should be for our position; not our disposition—we ought not to be silent when someone promotes their own ideas as truth. “Silence” in this case is not necessarily “golden.”

In Mark 12:18-27, Jesus is questioned by so-called religious experts who do not believe God’s Word. Because He is the Truth, He does not just nod His head and let them spew out error. He “calls them on it” and not only tells them their thinking is wrong—He tells them why they are wrong and how to start thinking right. The question He asks—then answers for them—is just as relevant for us as it was for them.

1. First, there is ***The Reality of Wrong Thinking (Proof)***

Notice again the question in v 24: “Do ye not therefore err...?” Jesus does not ask the question to gain information. In this case His question is rhetorical—the answer is so obvious that He doesn’t even expect an answer! Why do I say that? Two reasons:

A. Because He doesn’t give them a chance to answer! Jesus asked the question, but there is no pause as He waits for an answer. In Mark 3:4, Jesus asked “Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil?” Those that heard Him held their peace—they didn’t say anything—and then the Bible says this: “And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts...” (Mk 3:5).

B. Another reason we know He didn’t expect an answer was because He answered the question Himself! Notice the end of verse 27 “ye therefore do greatly err.”

What were they thinking wrongly about? We know from verse 18 He was addressing the Sadducees—a religious group in Jesus’ day who denied the resurrection; more specifically “life after death.” They were the “scientific elitists” meaning they did not believe in miracles. Their thought-process is similar to what we see in some—but thankfully not all—scientists today. What is that thought-process? “If we can’t see it or hear it or touch it or taste it, it can’t be true!” Ryrie writes: “They denied the truth of bodily resurrection, of future punishment and rewards, and of the existence of angels” (Acts 23:8). In other words, once you’re dead, you’re dead—you cease to exist and there is no more you!

Do people think that way now? They most certainly do! Does that not contribute—at least in part—to having no fear of a holy God who holds people accountable for what they do in this life?

--“If there is no after-life,” some *doctors* tell themselves “I can’t be held accountable by God for murdering this baby in the womb.”

--“If there is no after-life,” some *terrorists* tell themselves “I can’t be held accountable by God for how many people die when I detonate this bomb strapped to my chest.”

--And “if there is no after-life,” a *19-year-old boy* can tell himself, “I can’t be held accountable by God for killing 17 people—mostly kids—on a day ironically symbolized by hearts and love.”

2. Second, there is ***The Reason for Wrong Thinking (Pride)***

A. Pride seen in their source of truth

--What was their source of truth? Themselves! If you were to have asked a Sadducee “Are you smarter than God?” they would of course said “No!”

In practice, however, the opposite was true—they were a “god” unto themselves because if it didn’t make sense **to them**, it could not be true so they refused to believe it. Oh, the arrogance of puny man that chooses human reasoning over God’s **revelation**!

Every one of us gets our truth about God and life and death and heaven and hell from somewhere. We learn things from churches, friends, and parents; we hear things on the radio and see things on TV and read things in a book and each time we do we must make a decision: Am I going to believe God’s Word and let that be my source of truth—or am I going to choose the opinions of man? Here’s Paul’s answer:

“Let God be true and every man a liar!” (Rom 3:4).

B. Pride seen in their subtilty regarding the truth. They were being sneaky about the truth and pretended they wanted to learn something from Jesus. Why do I say that? Because in verses 19-23 they pose this “situation” where a woman had seven brothers—one by one—as her husbands. Verse 19 is referring to Deuteronomy 25:5-6. We don’t need to turn there, but the concept is this: If a man dies, his brother had the obligation to marry the widow and have a child with her so that his family name—his family tree—would not end.

In verse 23, they pretended they wanted to know the truth—“In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them?” Remember, they didn’t believe in the resurrection so they painted this hypothetical picture and asked the question to show Jesus that this concept of “life after death” would be chaotic and confusing if it were true.

3. ***The Remedy for Wrong Thinking—Placement under the Word of God***

We noticed first the proof that we sometimes think wrong and the primary reason that takes place is pride. Like the Sadducees, we have the tendency to look at ourselves as the source of truth and “select” what we want to believe regarding the truth. When we do that, we are placing ourselves OVER the Word of God. The remedy, then, is to place ourselves UNDER the Word of God—to make it the authority in our lives. Notice the remedy Jesus gives regarding wrong thinking.

A. First, there is the rebuke seen in verse 27—“ye therefore do greatly err.” They pretended to want information, but Jesus knew their true intent and pointed out that they were wrong. We don’t always know a person’s intent when they ask questions. Sometimes they are sincere and really want to know Bible answers; other times they are “picking a fight” like the Sadducees were. We need God’s guidance and wisdom to know how to handle these situations. (See Proverbs 26:4-5)

B. Second, research/search the Scriptures. In verse 24, Jesus gives them the reasons *why* they are thinking wrong. The first is “because ye know not the scriptures.” They, of course, only had the OT at this time because the NT was not written. They could/should have known what Job said (Job 19:25-26) or the prophecies of Ezekiel (Ez 37:12-13) or Daniel (Dan 12:2).

Jesus does not remind them of those things, however, instead He points them to Moses' own words and reinforces the **exactness** of God's Word. In verse 26, Jesus quotes Exodus 3:6 and reminds them that when God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, He did **not** say "I WAS the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;" He said I AM their God—right now—meaning that although Abraham had been dead 329 years, and Isaac 224 years, and Jacob 198 years, God spoke of them as **currently** being their God.

Barnes writes: "They must, therefore, be still somewhere living, for God is not the God of the dead; that is, it is absurd to say that God rules over those who are "extinct or annihilated," but he is the God only of those who have an existence."

C. In verse 24, Jesus tells them the second reason for their wrong thinking—they didn't know the power of God. The remedy, then, is for them—and us—to do the opposite—to **remember** the power of God. Since they doubted the miraculous, they doubted God could resurrect dead. If they knew the Scriptures and believed what it said regarding the power of God, they would have remembered that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" (Gen 2:7). If God can create the world by speaking—and form man from the dust of the earth—He most certainly can "re-gather" us from the dust of the earth! They erred—not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God!

How are we to remember the power of God? Is it just remembering the Bible verses about God's power like Jeremiah 32:27 "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" or Gabriel's words to Mary: "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Lk 1:37)?

That's part of it, but I believe there is more to it than that. To remember the power of God is to reflect on more than what God has said He will do or what He has done for others. We need to remember what God has **done for us!**

*If you've experienced **change** in your life in the past, don't think God can't do it again—remember His power!

*If you've experienced **needs met** in the past, don't think God can't do it again—remember His power!

*If you've experienced **specific guidance** from God in the past, don't think He can't do it again—remember His power!

*If you've experienced **peace** in the midst of an emotional roller-coaster in the past, don't think God can't do it again—remember His power!

Concluding Remarks and Questions to Consider:

1. First, are you thinking wrongly about some things? How do you know if you are thinking wrong? If what YOU think contradicts what God SAYS, you do err and need to place yourself under God's Word.

2. Second, do you know **about** the power of God—or have you experienced it for yourself? You can't truly know the power of God in your life—the reality of change and forgiveness and peace—if you are not a member of God's family. How do we become a member of God's family? John 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power—the right—to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name."