

A Study of Mark – Lesson 35

Mark 12:18-27 Marriage

12 ¹⁸ Then the Sadducees, / who say there is no resurrection, / came to him with a question. / ¹⁹ “Teacher,” / they said, / “Moses wrote for us / that if a man’s brother dies / and leaves a wife / but no children, / the man must marry the widow / and raise up offspring for his brother. / ²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. / The first one married and died / without leaving any children. / ²¹ The second one married the widow, / but he also died, / leaving no child. / It was the same with the third. / ²² In fact, / none of the seven left any children. / Last of all, / the woman died too. / ²³ At the resurrection / whose wife will she be, / since the seven were married to her?”

²⁴ Jesus replied, / “Are you not in error / because you do not know the Scriptures / or the power of God? / ²⁵ When the dead rise, / they will neither marry / nor be given in marriage; / they will be like the angels in heaven. / ²⁶ Now about the dead rising /—have you not read in the Book of Moses, / in the account of the burning bush, / how God said to him, / ‘I am the God of Abraham, / the God of Isaac, / and the God of Jacob’? / ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, / but of the living. / You are badly mistaken!”

Vocabulary

1. **Widow:** A married woman whose husband has died.
2. **Widower:** A married man whose wife has died.
3. **Commandment:** A divine order. A mandate.
4. **Rule:** A principle governing conduct. Rules can change.
5. **Resurrection:** Jesus rising from the dead. The dead rising on Judgment Day.

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Questions

1. What do we think the Sadducees were trying to get Jesus to say when they asked him about marriage and life after death?
2. How does Jesus describe life after death?
3. What kind of question did the Sadducees ask Jesus? (A straw man or fallacy.)

Notes

1. Sadducees: The priestly group that was most often tied to the rich, powerful, and the Temple. They were responsible to the Roman Governors. They collected the taxes. In addition, they also believed in the Torah, the written books of the Law. They did not believe in the Resurrection of the dead or in immortality. This is a small cohesive group of wealthy and powerful people. They were trying to trap Jesus when they asked about marriage after death. This is the only time in Mark's Gospel that the Sadducees appear.
2. Pharisees: More identified with the common people. They obeyed the Torah and also a large body of Oral Law. Together the Sadducees and Pharisees worked in the Temple and formed the Sanhedrin, the law body of Judaism.
3. The Temple Courts were places where a rabbi or teacher would speak and teach. It was a place to share learning. Here many teachers would listen to one another and comment. Also, this is the place where some of the priests tried to question and trap Jesus.
4. What is Heaven like? Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2: 9, "*What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind*

has conceived” —the things god has prepared for those who love him.”

5. Jesus had dealt with the political question with the answer of “*Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.*” Now he must deal with a Theological question of Resurrection.

6. Jesus answers this in two ways: the manner and the fact of the resurrection.

The Manner: When a person rises again, the old physical laws no longer are in place. The person is more like the angels. The physical facts, like marriage, are no longer a part of the picture. The resurrected have no eating, drinking, no bearing of children, etc. Jesus says that the life to come is not like the life we have known. Do not make the mistake of expecting heaven to be like life here on earth.

The Fact: Jesus knew the Sadducees believed in the Pentateuch, the first 5 books of the OT. They thought it held no evidence of immortality. Jesus proved them wrong. He quoted *Exodus 3:6* where God calls himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was over 400 years past their lifetimes. Therefore they must still be alive. And if the patriarchs are still alive, the resurrection is proven.

Jesus based his conviction of the resurrection on the fact that the relationship between God and a good man is one that nothing can break. “*and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” *Matt. 28:20.*

7. “To set up a straw man” is an idiom in English. It can mean many things, but here it is used as an argument set up so the Sadducees could easily defeat or refute Jesus. We see this today in our political debates:

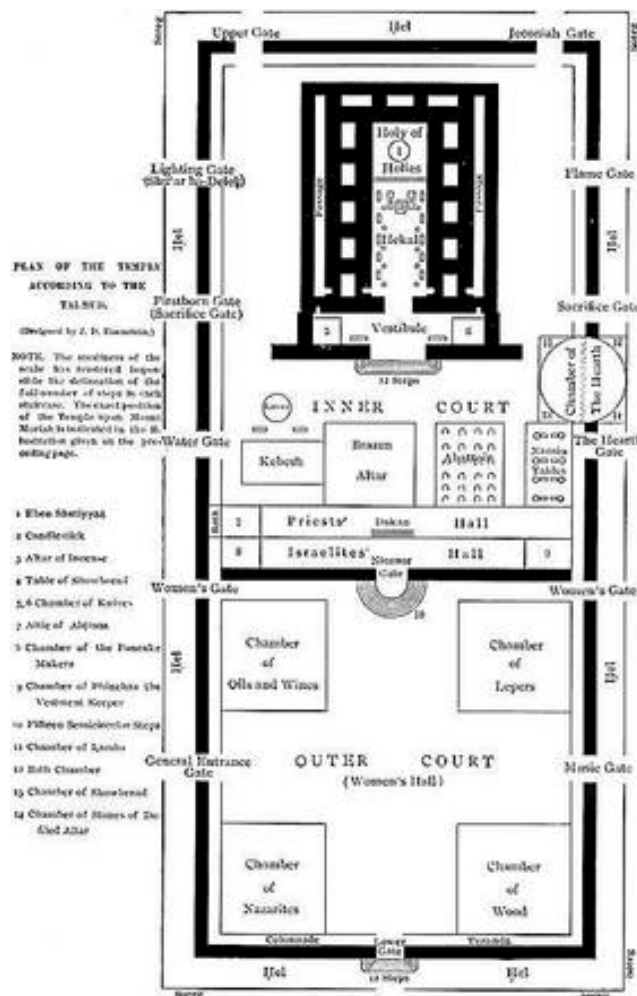
Person A: Our society should spend more money helping the poor.

Person B: Studies show that handouts don't work; they just create more poverty and humiliate the recipients. That money could be better spent.

In this case, Person B has transformed Person A's position from "more money" to "more handouts", which is easier for Person B to defeat.

Wikipedia on-line

The Straw Man is a type of fallacy because the arguer is attempting to refute his opponent's position, and in the context is required to do so, but instead attacks a position—the "straw man"—not held by his opponent. In a Straw Man argument, the arguer argues to a conclusion that denies the "straw man" he has set up, but misses the target. There may be nothing wrong with the argument presented by the arguer when it is taken out of context, that is, it may be a perfectly good argument against the straw man. It is only because the burden of proof is on the arguer to argue against the opponent's position that a Straw Man fallacy is committed. So, the fallacy is not simply the argument, but the entire situation of the argument occurring in such a context.



www.fallacyfiles.org/strawman.html

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Map of the Temple in Jerusalem