

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Commission: A Study of Matthew 21–28

STUDY FIVE

Will We Be Married in Heaven?

Matthew 22:23–33

The Lord doesn't wonder what He will do with us when we're no longer on this earth. He has a perfect plan.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

SPOUSES sometimes wonder, “Will we be married in heaven?” When one spouse nears death, the question pulls on their heartstrings with an urgent tug. As husband and wife hold hands in their final moments together, neither can imagine not being married in heaven. How can they live an eternity as “two” after living a lifetime as one?

The question of marriage in heaven is only one on a long list of questions we have about the afterlife. How will we recognize each other in heaven? Will we have wings like angels? What will we do? What will we look like? What happens to our bodies after they decay?

In our culture, fanciful notions mix with superstitions to form a thick fog of misinformation about the afterlife. In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, Jesus shines His truth through the haze of false ideas to clarify our view of what happens after we die.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

In the space below, write down a question you may have about heaven, and offer this question to the Lord while you take a moment to pray before you seek answers in His Word.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

During His long day of teaching at the temple, Jesus fended off several verbal attacks.

A delegation of priests and elders approached Jesus first, demanding proof of His authority (Matthew 21:23). A group of flattering Pharisees lobbed a loaded question about paying taxes to Caesar (22:15–17).

Then, in this study's passage, [Matthew 22:22–33](#), some Sadducees tried to tangle Jesus in a web of theological controversy about the afterlife.



Observation: Critics' Question, Jesus' Answer, Crowd's Response

We begin *Searching the Scriptures* by observing the text, noting the *where*, *when*, *who*, *what*, and *why* of the dialogue.¹ The “where” was the temple, likely one of the covered porticos where rabbis often taught. The “when” was Tuesday of Holy Week. The “who” were the Sadducees, Jesus, and the watching crowd. “Why” did the Sadducees approach Jesus? Let's find out.



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The Sadducees and Their Question—Matthew 22:23–28

Observe the Sadducees' question in *Matthew 22:23–28*. What do you think they insinuated with their lengthy introduction?

Between the lines of the Sadducees' elaborate question are their theological beliefs, which we'll explore in more detail in the interpretation section. For now, let's look at Jesus' masterful response.

Jesus' Rebuke and Answer—Matthew 22:29–32

What two points did Jesus make in His initial rebuke in *Matthew 22:29*? How do these points about the Word and God complement one another?

What three assertions did Jesus make in *Matthew 22:30*?



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In *Matthew 22:31–32*, Jesus moved from the specific question to address the larger issue. In the space below, summarize Jesus' argument in favor of the resurrection of the dead. Find the Old Testament verse Jesus quoted by looking in the footnotes or margin of your Bible.

The Sadducees' problem was they didn't know the Word of God, and they didn't know the God of the Word. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Crowd's Astonishment—Matthew 22:33

Matthew frequently recorded the crowd's response. How did the crowd react in *Matthew 22:33*? Compare with previous responses in *7:28*, *9:33*, *12:23*, and *15:31*. What point did Matthew make throughout his gospel by highlighting Jesus' appeal to the masses?

The people cheered when Jesus turned the tables on the corrupt religious elite. Now we'll explore how Jesus' teaching corrected the Sadducees' misbeliefs and gave His followers hope about our future in heaven.



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Interpretation: Understanding the Resurrection of the Dead

According to Matthew, the Sadducees believed that “there is no resurrection from the dead” (Matthew 22:23). In their view, “the soul perished with the body and . . . the concept of the resurrection was a myth.”² So why did they ask Jesus about the resurrection if they didn’t believe it?

Jesus replied confidently, “*when* the dead rise”—not *if* (22:30, emphasis added). Our existence does not end at death as the Sadducees believed back then and many people still believe today. The resurrection assures us that we will reunite after death with those who’ve died in the Lord, and Christ-followers will live with Christ for eternity. **What hope!**

Jesus also stated that the dead “will neither marry nor be given in marriage,” and He clarified, “In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven” (22:30).³

What did Jesus mean and *not* mean? How will we be *like* angels? How does marriage on earth prepare us for our relationships in heaven—with Jesus and with others? For help with your interpretation, read Pastor Chuck’s *Insights on Matthew 16–28*, page 177. For an online resource, consult [Constable’s Notes](http://netbible.org) at netbible.org.



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Does your interpretation of this passage help answer your question about the afterlife that you wrote down at the beginning of this study? If so, how?

Did Jesus mean to say that we won't be close to our husband or wife in heaven? He didn't say that. No, we'll become even closer in heaven. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Resurrection as Foundational Truth

The apostle Paul filled in some of the details about our resurrection in *1 Thessalonians 4:13–18*. What is the basis of our resurrection hope? When will the resurrection happen? What encouragement does this truth give you personally?

What about the souls of believers who die before Christ appears? Paul answered the question in *Philippians 1:20–24* when he was considering his own death. What did he say would happen when he died, according to verse 23?



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Like seeds planted in soil, our mortal bodies go into the grave when we die. But our souls immediately go to heaven to be with Christ. “To be absent from the body,” Paul assured us, is “to be at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8 NASB). How does Paul describe our bodies when Christ resurrects them and reunites them with our souls, according to *2 Corinthians 15:42–44, 51–53*?

The Sadducees denied the resurrection because they falsely assumed life in heaven would be like life on earth. However, Jesus taught that we cannot view eternity through the lens of our earthly experience. Just because people marry on earth doesn't mean they will marry in heaven. The Sadducees' premise was wrong, so their question was irrelevant.

Exactly what will heaven be like? While a veil of mystery obscures the details, we do know that freedom from death in our resurrected bodies means freedom from pain, darkness, despair, and disease. It also means we will experience perfect relationships without sin's inevitable conflicts. The bonds with those we love on earth will be even closer and stronger in heaven.

When death comes near, we can get caught up in a lot of fear. The Lord gave us a little hint of what life in heaven will be like when He said, “We will be as the angels.”
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Jesus Speaks to Us Today

As we linger over the many truths from this passage, let's focus on two that we can apply today. First, let's avoid the mistake of the Sadducees who did not “know the Scriptures” (Matthew 22:29). Through these *Searching the Scriptures* studies, you're studying God's Word in ways you may not have studied before. Try adding to your knowledge by memorizing passages that are meaningful to you and then meditate on these words of truth throughout your day.



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What verses or passage from Matthew would you like to memorize? Write the verse in the space below.

Next, let's avoid the second mistake of the Sadducees who did not "know the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). Fear will pull up the seedlings of faith if we don't sink roots into a deep appreciation of the power of God. ***God can raise the dead!***

If He can do that remarkable feat, what other demonstration of power can you ask Him to display in your life and relationships?



A FINAL PRAYER

Knowing God's Word and His power can help you avoid many pitfalls in your journey of faith. Use the following space to write a closing prayer to God who revealed a glorious future for us with Him in heaven. Indeed, He has the power to accomplish all that He promised. Express your reliance on His Word and your faith in His power to help you with a specific situation you're facing today.



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ENDNOTES

1. Learn more about Pastor Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* method on the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](http://insight.org)" at insight.org.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on Matthew 16–28*, vol. 1B (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2020), 174.
3. The Sadducees also did not believe in angels or spirits. By comparing the resurrected dead to angels in the afterlife, Jesus refuted this misbelief of the Sadducees as well.

