

The import of the passage concerning the nature of marriage in heaven¹ considers the question concerning how close, intimate relationships will be maintained in heaven. When Jesus said that we would be like angels in heaven, He is indicating that there is more to it than we can really understand at this point: we must wait until we get there. Remember that this story, including ideas from several incidences, is not “truth” but just something to make us think.

One day the Great Teacher met a group of people near a certain town who gathered around him. This group included Pharisees and Sadducees, and He sat down to teach them. He spoke of the Kingdom and its eternal nature, and there was (as always) a conflict between the Sadducees (who did not believe in the resurrection) and the Pharisees (who did). The nature of eternal relationships was the main topic of the discussion.

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman² who had been married several times. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman does not treat marriage seriously. We remember that the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, had earlier asked you a question¹, and you strongly argued that we simply did not understand about heaven. But, Teacher, what will the manner of relationships be in the life that is eternal?”

In that case, Jesus had replied that the Sadducees were in error because they did not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection, He had explained, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels³ in heaven.

Jesus asked the woman about her husbands⁴, and she explained that she had loved each of her husbands dearly and deeply⁵. She felt that some especially were “soul-mates”.

The Sadducees, of course, did not believe that she would have a relationship after this life at all. But the Pharisees also scoffed here because they saw a contradiction in being able to have more than one totally committed relationship.

Once again, the Teacher made us realize that we did not really know what it would be like in heaven. We think only one-dimensionally – we concentrate on our relationship with others in terms of how we saw them on this earth, but do not fully realize the multi-dimensional aspects of relationships in heaven. Indeed, we should be concentrating on our relationships with God.

The real question is not “which one of the men was the actual soulmate of the woman, and thus would be her intimate connection in heaven,” but “what keeps us from being intimately connected with everyone – especially considering that we are the family of God”.⁶ Just like the angels, we will not be paired off and “married”, but will enjoy much broader and deeper relationships with everyone there. These relationships will all be magnified in every part of their multifaceted nature. And there will be integrated indwelling for all that is similar to the three persons of the Godhead⁷.

Then Jesus re-phrased what he had said when He answered the Sadducees: “But about the what life will be like for the resurrected dead - have you not read what God said to you, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is the God of the **living**, as full as you can imagine it and more⁸.”

When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching and the image He brought them of His Kingdom.

1. Matthew 22:23-33
2. consider John 8:1-11
3. Matthew 22:30
4. John 4:18
5. divorce or widowhood? I note that the passage in John 4 doesn't say what happened to the other husbands, either – so I do not feel compelled
6. Note that similar parallel deep relationships can be found in “secondary” parents, siblings, etc.
7. see 1 John 4:13-16
8. He has promised us life to the full; John 10:10