

Luke 20:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Analysis

Master, Moses wrote unto us—The Sadducees cite Moses (Deuteronomy 25:5-6), their only accepted Scripture. **If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother**—the law of levirate marriage (from Latin *levir*, 'brother-in-law'). The Greek describes ἀναστήσῃ σπέρμα (*anastēsē sperma*), literally 'raise up seed.'

This law protected childless widows and preserved family inheritance within tribes. The brother's duty ensured the deceased man's name and property line continued. The Sadducees will use this honored Mosaic institution to construct a scenario they believe makes resurrection impossible or absurd.

Historical Context

Levirate marriage (*yibbum* in Hebrew) appears in Genesis 38 (Tamar and Judah's sons) and Ruth 4 (Boaz and Ruth). It was practiced but not universal in Second Temple Judaism. The duty could be refused through the ceremony of *chalitzah* (removing the sandal). The institution protected women in patriarchal society where widows without sons faced destitution.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does levirate marriage reveal God's concern for the vulnerable (widows) within Israel's social structure?
2. When have you used Scripture correctly cited but wrongly applied to attack rather than understand?
3. Why do theological opponents often begin with common ground before springing their trap?

Interlinear Text

λέγοντες Διδάσκαλε Μωσῆς ἔγραψεν ἡμῖν ἐάν τινος
Saying Master Moses wrote unto us If any man's
G3004 G1320 G3475 G1125 G2254 G1437 G5100

ἀδελφῷ ἀποθάνῃ ἔχων γυναῖκα καὶ οὗτος ἄτεκνος
brother die having a wife and he without children
G80 G599 G2192 G1135 G2532 G3778 G815

ἀποθάνῃ ἵνα λάβῃ ὁ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ τὴν γυναῖκα
die that should take brother his G3588 G80 G6846 G3588 G1135
G599 G2443 G2983

καὶ ἐξαναστήσῃ σπέρμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ
and raise up seed G3588 brother his
G2532 G1817 G4690 G80 G6846

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 38:8 (Resurrection): And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

