

Luke 20:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Last of all the woman died also.

Analysis

Last of all the woman died also (ὕστερον πάντων ἀπέθανεν ἡ γυνή, *hysteron pantōn apethanen hē gynē*)—The adverb *ὕστερον* (*hysteron*) means 'afterward' or 'finally.' After outliving all seven brothers, the widow herself dies. The stage is now set for the Sadducees' question about resurrection.

This detail is crucial to their argument: if she died after all seven, none can claim priority based on ongoing marriage. The woman's death completes the scenario, removing any earthly resolution. The Sadducees will argue that resurrection creates irresolvable contradictions with Mosaic law—forcing Jesus to either deny Moses or deny resurrection.

Historical Context

High female mortality in childbirth meant many women died before their husbands. That this woman outlived seven husbands would be extraordinary but dramatizes the dilemma. Widows without children or living brothers-in-law often became destitute, dependent on charity—another reason levirate marriage was merciful legislation in its context.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this story highlight the vulnerability of childless widows in ancient patriarchal cultures?
2. What does it mean that God's law protected the socially vulnerable through institutions like levirate marriage?
3. How do we honor the purpose of biblical laws (protection, justice) without merely replicating their forms?

Interlinear Text

ὕστερον δὲ πάντων ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἡ γυνὴ¹
Last G1161 of all died also G3588 the woman G1135

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 9:5 (Parallel theme): For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

Ecclesiastes 1:4 (Parallel theme): One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.