

Matthew 22:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Analysis

Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife (Διδάσκαλε, Μωϋσῆς εἶπεν/Didaskale, Mōusēs eipen). The Sadducees address Jesus as διδάσκαλος (didaskalos, teacher), acknowledging His role without sincere respect. They cite Deuteronomy 25:5-6, the law of levirate marriage (from Latin levir, brother-in-law). **Raise up seed unto his brother** (ἀναστήσει σπέρμα/anastēsei sperma) uses ἀνίστημι (anistēmi), 'to raise up,' ironically the same verb used for resurrection—unintended double meaning exposing their skepticism.

Levirate marriage served multiple purposes: preserving the deceased's name and inheritance, providing for childless widows, maintaining tribal land distribution within families, and demonstrating covenant solidarity. The practice assumed continuity between this age and the next, between earthly family and eternal identity. The Sadducees weaponize this compassionate law into a theological puzzle designed to make resurrection seem absurd.

Historical Context

The Sadducees were the priestly aristocracy controlling the temple, collaborating with Rome to maintain power. Unlike Pharisees, they rejected oral tradition, accepting only the written Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy), and denied resurrection, afterlife, angels, and spirits (Acts 23:8). Their theology was materialistic and

political, focused on temple ritual and maintaining status quo. They viewed resurrection belief as Pharisaic innovation, dangerous enthusiasm threatening social stability. This hypothetical scenario mocks resurrection by creating apparent logical impossibility—one woman married to seven brothers simultaneously in the afterlife, suggesting resurrection produces absurd situations incompatible with created order.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do skeptics today use Scripture itself to attack Christian doctrines they reject?
2. What does the Sadducees' selective acceptance of Scripture warn about treating the Bible as a theological weapon rather than God's authoritative word?
3. How does levirate marriage demonstrate God's concern for vulnerable people (widows) within covenant community?

Interlinear Text

λέγοντες,	Διδάσκαλε,	Μωσῆς	εἶπεν,	Ἐάν	τις	ἀποθάνῃ	
Saying	Master	Moses	said	If	a man	die	
G3004	G1320	G3475	G2036	G1437	G5100	G599	
μὴ	ἔχων	τέκνα	ἐπιγαμβρεύσει	ὁ	ἀδελφῷ	αὐτοῦ	τὴν
no	having	children	shall marry	G3588	brother	his	G3588
G3361	G2192	G5043	G1918		G80	G846	
γυναῖκα	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	ἀναστήσει	σπέρμα	τῷ	ἀδελφῷ	
wife	his	and	raise up	seed	G3588	brother	
G1135	G846	G2532	G450	G4690		G80	
αὐτοῦ							
his							
G846							

Additional Cross-References

Luke 20:28 (Resurrection): 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.

Mark 12:19 (Resurrection): Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.