

Matthew 22:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

Analysis

Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh (ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ δεύτερος καὶ ὁ τρίτος, ἕως τῶν ἑπτὰ/homoiōs kai ho deuterōs kai ho tritos, heōs tōn hepta). The Sadducees compress the narrative, rushing through six additional marriages in a single verse. This brevity serves rhetorical purpose—emphasizing the absurdity rather than the compassion or tragedy. Each brother fulfilled legal obligation, married the widow, died childless, passing the responsibility sequentially.

This hypothetical scenario reveals the Sadducees' reductionistic theology. They cannot conceive of existence fundamentally different from present experience. Resurrection, if it existed, must simply mean returning to bodily life with all its social relationships, legal obligations, and physical processes intact. Their imagination cannot grasp transformation, only continuation. Paul later addresses this same materialistic misconception: 'But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?' (1 Corinthians 15:35), answering that resurrection involves a glorified, spiritual body, not merely resuscitated flesh.

Historical Context

The Sadducees' theological materialism reflected their social position. As wealthy priestly aristocrats controlling the temple economy, they benefited from the status quo and rejected doctrines threatening present order. Resurrection belief implied divine judgment, future accountability, and reversal of earthly power structures—all threatening to their privilege. Their rejection of afterlife mirrors ancient

Sadducean collaboration with Rome: focus on maximizing power and pleasure in this life only. Early church father Jerome noted Sadducees' denial of resurrection stemmed from sensuality and worldly mindedness, not intellectual rigor. Their skepticism served self-interest rather than honest inquiry.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does worldly privilege and comfort often breed skepticism about resurrection and eternal judgment?
2. What does the Sadducees' rapid summary of six marriages reveal about their real concern—winning an argument rather than understanding truth?
3. In what ways do people today reduce eternal realities to mere extensions of temporal experience?

Interlinear Text

ὁμοίως	καὶ	ὁ	δεύτερος	καὶ	ὁ	τρίτος	ἕως	τῶν
Likewise	also	G3588	the second	also	G3588	the third	unto	G3588
G3668	G2532		G1208	G2532		G5154	G2193	
ἑπτά								
the seventh								
G2033								
