

Matthew 22:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

Analysis

Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? (ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει οὗν τίνος τῶν ἐπτὰ ἔσται γυνή;/en tē anastasei oun tinos tōn hepta estai gynē?) The Sadducees present their supposed reductio ad absurdum—if resurrection exists, this scenario creates impossible marital conflict. **For they all had her** (πάντες γὰρ ἔσχον αὐτήν/pantes gar eschon autēn) states the dilemma: seven equally valid marital claims, legal under Mosaic law.

The question assumes resurrection means simply resuming earthly existence with all its social structures, legal relationships, and physical processes intact. This materialistic conception cannot envision transformed existence transcending earthly categories. Jesus's response (verses 29-32) demolishes this assumption, revealing resurrection as radical transformation into angel-like existence where marriage doesn't exist, and proving resurrection from Scripture itself (Exodus 3:6). The Sadducees' clever trap exposes only their own ignorance of Scripture and God's power.

Historical Context

This question represents classic Sadducean apologetics against resurrection. Josephus, the Jewish historian, confirms Sadducees rejected resurrection and afterlife, believing 'souls die with the bodies' (Antiquities 18.1.4). Their materialistic theology focused exclusively on Torah's explicit statements, rejecting Pharisaic oral tradition and prophetic/wisdom literature that more clearly taught

resurrection (Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2, Job 19:25-27). The Sadducees' question had likely been used successfully against Pharisees in previous debates, making their confidence in trapping Jesus understandable. Jesus's response would have shocked both groups—He sides with Pharisaic resurrection belief while correcting both parties' misconceptions about its nature.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's answer to this question (verses 29-32) reveal resurrection as transformation rather than mere continuation of earthly life?
2. What materialistic assumptions about heaven and eternity do Christians today unconsciously hold?
3. How should the truth that there's no marriage in the resurrection shape our view of earthly marriage—its goodness, its limits, and its temporary nature?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	τῇ	οὖν	ἀναστάσει	τίνος	τῶν	ἐπτὰ	ἔσται
in	G3588	Therefore	the resurrection	whose	G3588	of the seven	shall she be
G1722		G3767	G386	G5101		G2033	G2071
γυνή	πάντες	γὰρ	ἔσχον	αὐτήν·			
wife	they all	for	had	her			
G1135	G3956	G1063	G2192	G846			

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