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*Presenting*

## Resurrection & The Future of Marriage: Did Jesus Teach Eternal Celibacy for The Church?

LUKE 20:36



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# Luke 21:34-36

Does Luke 20:34-35 teach that there will be no marrying in the resurrection/age to come?

# TEXT

(Luk 20:34) And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

(Luk 20:35) But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

(Luk 20:36) Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

# Futurist Argument

- There would be no marrying in the age to come.
  - We yet marry today.
  - Therefore, we are not in the age to come.
- The age to come is heaven.
  - Those in the age to come do not marry.
  - Therefore, those in heaven do not marry.
- This proves that Full Preterism/Covenant Eschatology is false.

# Purpose of the Study

- The reading of the text is incorrect.
- It does not forbid marriage in the “age to come,” i.e. the current Christian age
- It aligns with the Bible’s positive view of marriage and procreation in the age to come.

# Aim and Approach

- To show that the negative ideas of marriage originated with:
  - Misinformed rabbinic Judaism
  - Gnostic origins
  - Platonic influence
  - Adoption of Greek ideas and influences by the Hellenistic branch of the church
  - Bible's focus on marriage in the age to come
  - Proper exegesis of Luke 20:34-36

# How We Are Made

- I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well. (Psa 139:14)

# Limited Atonement From The Jews?

- The Jews have taught through history, that God has a predetermined number of believers who would occupy the age to come.
- They reasoned that this was the punishment for Adam's sin
- After this number is reached, the judgment would occur.

# Platonic Eschatology of Celibacy

- These ideas are also fueled by the Platonic view of eschatology.
- Plato rejected a physical resurrection on the grounds that the body was sinful, a prison that hindered spiritual truth, and warned his followers against sexual intercourse.

# Platonist View

The Platonist version of the afterlife had no room for bodily resurrection. Instead, the soul was thought to shed the body like a husk and ascend to the heavens to dwell in eternal celibacy among the gods. The mortal body, according to Plato, was little more than a prison that hindered one from seeing spiritual truth. He therefore urged his followers to “avoid, so far as possible, intercourse and communion with the body, except what is absolutely necessary.

1. Plato, *Phaedo*, 67a. (vol. 1 of *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. Translated by Harold North Fowler. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), quoted in Sara Giles, *Resurrection and the Future of Marriage: Interpreting Luke 20:34-36 in its Hebraic Context*.”

# Philosophers Disdain Physicality

This paradigm naturally engendered disdain for all aspects of human physicality. The internet *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* explains that “the true philosopher despises bodily pleasures such as food, drink, and sex, so he more than anyone else wants to free himself from his body....philosophy itself is, in fact, a kind of ‘training’”

- Tim Connolly, Plato: *Phaedo*,” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, [www.iep.utm.edu/phaedo](http://www.iep.utm.edu/phaedo)

# Patristics and Ascetic Celibacy

Many early church fathers both practiced and advocated ascetic celibacy. Joseph Lynch comments that “the ordinary believers and even clergy who did not adopt an ascetic way of life were increasingly regarded as real but second-class Christians. **The ascetics gradually became the Christian elite,** who did what Jesus had recommended to those who wanted to be perfect.

1. Joseph H. Lynch. Early Christianity: A Brief History (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 195

# Hellenized Low View of Marriage

This worldview left an indelible mark upon the theology of the Hellenized church fathers in the second century and beyond. In particular, many of their works reveal a striking connection between their prevailing low view of marriage and the emergence of an “eternal celibacy” interpretation of Jesus’ reply to the Sadducees. A representative sampling from the first four centuries of the church offers some interesting insights in this regard.

# Justin Martyr, On The Resurrection

We begin with *On the Resurrection* (ca. 150-180 CE), a work traditionally attributed to Justin Martyr. Our author holds to ***a literal resurrection of the flesh*** and debates an opponent who rejects such a resurrection largely because it would be pointless to resurrect one's sexual organs if the resurrected are celibate (as both men presume Jesus taught).

# Justin Marty, cont.

Justin answers his opponent by pointing to voluntary celibates in the present age, most notably Christ. He asserts that Christ was born of a virgin “for no other reason than that he might destroy the begetting [of children] by lawless desire.” Here Justin refers to children conceived within the bond of marriage. In line with the ascetic paradigm, he considers all sexual desire as inherently sinful.

# Logical Outcome of Justin Martyr

- Note: Justin Martyr says sex is “lawless desire.”
- Thus, he condemns by extension marriage since it involves lust.
- And since children are the result of marriage then childbearing as sinful also.
- He condemns marriage on an erroneous view of lust (desire)

# Marriage Unlawful

The very institution of marriage, he claims, was “made lawless through lust” –that is to say, through sexual desire shared between spouses. He views Christ's single life as a condemnation of the institution and is therefore quite comfortable interpreting Jesus to mean that “in the future world, sexual intercourse should be done away with.

1. On the resurrection 1..3 (ANF 1:295)

# Martyr's Eschatological Worldview

- No marriage
- No sex
- No children

# Futurists Marriage View

- This is the same eschatological view of the futurist.
- Only, they have misinterpreted the “age to come” and substituted an interim age between the last days and the age to come.
- Old Covenant | last days = Christian age | age to come

# Futurist Vs Bible

## Futurist:

Old Covenant Age | Christian Age Present | Age to Come

*Marriage, Sex, Children*    / *Marriage, Sex, Children*    | *No Marriage, Sex, Children*

## Bible:

Old Covenant With Last Days 30-70AD    | Age to Come

*Marriage, Sex, Children*    | *Marriage, Sex, Children*

(Gen. 1:22; 9:1, 22:17, Ps. 102:28; Isa 49:20; 60:11, 12; 65:20, 23; Ezk. 37:25)

# Clement of Alexandria

Influential church father Clement of Alexandria (182 CE) went a step further by rejecting a literal resurrection and arguing instead that the New Testament supported **the Platonic idea of eternal disembodiment in the heavens**. **He was a moderate ascetic who supported marriage but discouraged the enjoyment of conjugal relations. Husbands were instructed to suppress any physical desire they might feel for their wives because “the human ideal of continence, I mean that which is set forth by Greek philosophers, teaches that one should fight desire.”** This worldview provides the backdrop of his interpretation of Jesus’ reply to the Sadducees:

- Stromata 4.5 (AN 2.416)

# Clement cont.

“For in this world,” [Jesus] says, “they marry, and are given in marriage,” in which alone the female is distinguished from the male; “but in that world it is so no more.” There, the rewards of this social and holy life, which is based on conjugal union, are laid up not for male and female, but for man, *the sexual desire which divides humanity being removed.*

1. Clement of Alexandria, The Instructor 1.4 (ANF 2:211). See also 2:10 (ANF 2.263)

# Irenaeus

- Irenaeus of Lyons (175 CE) affirmed both a bodily resurrection and a literal Messianic kingdom on earth. Nevertheless, he interpreted Jesus' reply to the Sadducees much like his contemporary Clement, with one notable difference. Irenaeus explained the apparent **cessation of marriage** in more pragmatic terms.

# Irenaeus, cont.

...all those who have been enrolled for [eternal] life shall rise again...Those, on the other hand, who are worthy of punishment, shall go away into it...Both classes shall then cease from any longer begetting and being begotten, from marrying and being given in marriage; so that the number of mankind, corresponding to the foreordination of God, being completed, may fully realize the scheme formed by the Father.

- *Irenaeus, Against Heresies 2.33 (ANF 1:411)*

# Irenaeus on 2<sup>nd</sup> Baruch

- He borrows the idea of a “number of mankind” from the Jewish tradition that a certain number of humans are ordained to be born; to this tradition he adds his own conclusion that **when the foreordained number is reached, the resurrected are turned into unmarried celibates to prevent any further multiplying.**
- 2 Baruch (90 CE) describes a tradition in which God responds to Adam’s sin by determining the number of men who would be born and decreeing that the dead would not live again until that number was complete. (2 Baruch 2:34-35)

## 2 Baruch

- And I will bring them again into the land which I promised with an oath unto their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and they shall be lords of it: **and I will increase them, and they shall not be diminished.** (Bar 2:34)
- And I will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God, and they shall be my people: and I will no more drive my people of Israel out of the land that I have given them. (Bar 2:35)

# Irenaeus and the LXX

But Irenaeus is unique among the church fathers in that he also attempts to produce Old Testament support for the “eternal celibacy” interpretation of Jesus’ reply. He rests the full weight of his case upon Isaiah 6:11-12 as translated in the Greek Septuagint (LXX)

# Irenaeus cont.

*“For, behold,” says Isaiah, “the day of the Lord cometh past remedy, full of fury and wrath, to lay waste the city of the earth and to root sinners out of it.”.... And when these things are done, he says, “**God will remove [us] men far away, and those that are left shall multiply in the earth.**”.... For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just... **as many believers as God has prepared for this purpose, to multiply those left upon earth, [these will be under the rule of the saints to minister to this Jerusalem....***

# Irenaeus

- Isa 6:11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,
- Isa 6:12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.
- And I said, How long, O Lord? And he said, Until cities be deserted by reason of their not being inhabited, and the houses by reason of there being no men, and the land shall be left desolate. (Isa 6:11)
- And after this God shall remove the men far off, and **they that are left upon the land shall be multiplied.** (Isa 6:12)

# Irenaeus' Millennium

- Irenaeus presents Is. 6:11-12 as proof that the most worthy Christians - among whom he includes himself – will be resurrected and “removed” to a heavenly Jerusalem **to live as celibates during the millennium**. They will rule over **the *least* worthy believers who remain on earth at Christ's return in order to do the marrying and multiplying**.
  - This problematic theory fails to align with the OT, where prophecies of marriage and childbearing in the future age are **consistently styled as a great reward for God's people Israel**. It also appears to mistakenly attribute the prophesied servitude of Israel's oppressors (Is. 60:10-12) to her regathered exiles, who are at that time subservient to no one but God and his Messiah (Is. 14:1-2, 49:20-23). **The fruitful marriage prophecies of the OT are in fact rooted in the Abrahamic Covenant promise of marital fruitfulness (e.g. Gen. 22:17)**. Consequently, they are never once portrayed as a consolation prize set in contrast to the superior blessing of eternal celibacy; to the contrary, they and the other Abrahamic Covenant blessings are portrayed as the very pinnacle of God's kingdom rewards, while an allegedly superior celibate class of people is nowhere to be found. Irenaeus' idiosyncratic scheme is thus foreign to the OT but nevertheless survives in various forms to this day.

# Sarah Giles

But this reading comes at the cost of the passage's historical context. Scholars almost universally recognize it as a prophecy of judgment that describes the people of Judah being "removed" to exiles. The subsequent "multiplying" (**mentioned only in the LXX**) thus refers to the surviving remnant who fruitfully reproduce (Is. 6:13), ensuring the continuation of the nation. All of this took place long before Christ's first advent.

See John N. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39, (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 7 189-191.

Jesus also applied this text in the NT to the Jews of His day, Matt. 13:13-17, John 12

Therefore, they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: (Joh 12:39)

"HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HARDENED THEIR HEARTS, LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, LEST THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEARTS AND TURN, SO THAT I SHOULD HEAL THEM." (Joh 12:40)

These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. (Joh 12:41)

# Giles

In other words, the “removal” in Is. 6:11-12 has nothing to do with the resurrection. This perhaps explains why we do not find later church fathers employing Irenaeus’ interpretation of the passage as a proof text for the eternal celibacy view.

# The Prophets Saw Jesus' Day

- Isaiah rejoiced to see Jesus' day.
- He looked beyond his time for the ultimate fulfilment of Isa. 6:11, 12.
- Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." (Joh 8:56)

# Tertullian

- Nevertheless, this view continued its rise to prominence in the following century by way of two notable church fathers. The first of these, Tertullian (220 CE), was a gifted theologian from Africa who composed entire treatises extolling **asceticism in general and celibacy in particular**. In a letter to his wife, he urged her to remain a celibate widow after his death based upon his reading of Jesus' remarks to the Sadducees.
- But to Christians...no restoration of marriage is promised in the day of the resurrection...The question raised by the Sadducees has yielded to the Lord's **sentence...There will at that day be no resumption of voluptuous disgrace between us. No such frivolities, no such impurities, does God promise** to His (servants).

# Origen

- Tertullian's characterization of marriage as **frivolous, disgraceful, and impure** betrays a strong inclination to read the passage through an ascetic lens. His contemporary Origen of Alexandria (184 CE) took a similarly dim view of marriage. Considered one of the most influential theologians of the third century church, Origen was an **outspoken Platonist** and **avowed ascetic** who reportedly **castrated himself** in a zealous commitment to celibacy.

# Platonic Ascetic vs The Prophets

- The concept of a resurrected physical body clashed sharply with Origen's ascetic paradigm. He thus viewed the resurrection and many other Old Testament eschatological prophecies **in a purely figurative sense**.
- This interpretive matrix is evident in his polemic against **some Christians in his day** **who evidently believed on the basis of the OT that marriage and childbearing would continue for the resurrected**. Such a belief, in his view, could only be motivated by lustful desire:

# Origin Cont.

“2. Certain persons, then, refusing the labour of thinking, and adopting a superficial view of the letter of the law, and yielding rather in some measure to the indulgence of their own desires and lusts, being disciples of the letter alone, are of opinion that the fulfillment of the promises of the future are to be looked for in bodily pleasure and luxury; and therefore they especially desire to have again, after the resurrection, such bodily structures<sup>62</sup> as may never be without the power of eating, and drinking, and performing all the functions of flesh and blood, not following the opinion of the Apostle Paul regarding the resurrection of a spiritual body. And consequently they say, that after the resurrection there will be marriages, and the begetting of children,... .”

Origen, De Principiis 2.11 (ANF 4:297).

# Augustine & Jerome

- This paradigm marched onward into the fourth century through the teaching of prominent ascetic theologians Augustine and Jerome. As an affirmed Platonist, Augustine held that **“Continence is preferred to wedded life, and pious virginity to marriage.”** Jerome, meanwhile, admitted that his view of marriage was influenced by Plato’s Phaedrus and ultimately disavowed the institution as nothing short of a “defilement.”
- Giles, p. 9

# Jerome

It is therefore unsurprising that Augustine took Jesus to mean resurrected females “shall then indeed be superior to carnal intercourse and child-bearing, or that Jerome used his reading of Jesus’ reply to promote celibacy in the present age:

“...after the resurrection there will be no wedlock.

**But if death be the end of marriage, why do we not voluntarily embrace the inevitable?”**

# The Kissinger Report (1974)

- <https://youtu.be/bx11uF9Tduk>
- National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM 200)

# Gile's Summary

- “...we have observed a remarkable absence of evidence for the “eternal celibacy” interpretation of Jesus’ remarks in the remainder of the NT and in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Nevertheless, **many prominent Christians in later centuries interpreted Jesus in precisely this way.** But their predominantly negative view of marriage and corresponding inclination to exalt celibacy reveals an interpretive bias that very likely hindered them from considering the scene in its original Hebraic context.
- Giles, p9

# Giles Rebuttal

- Giles argues the physical body is fearfully and wonderfully made, Ps. 139:14
- Says its value is made clear by the fact that it will be resurrected to continue life in a physically perfected state (e.g. Is. 26:19, Dan. 12:2)
- States God's original plan was for Adam and Eve as a sinless husband and wife unit, **to reign over the earth filling it with equally sinless unions through their offspring** (Gen. 1:26-28)
- Man's failure is depicted through the OT
- But the future of marriage is a topic of considerable attention.

# Maimonides

9. We have also explained that in the world to come there is no corporeal existence, as the Sages, of blessed memory, said: “There is no eating and no drinking and no sexual intercourse (in the world to come)”. It would be false, however, to assume that a person has these organs for no purpose; Heaven forbid, God would not create anything for naught. For if a person would have a mouth and a stomach and a liver and sex organs but not eat and not drink and not procreate, then his existence would be absolutely for naught. A person should not argue with these essentials concerning which there are logical proofs through simple expositions which are worthy of being said before women in the house of a mourner.”

- Maimonides, Treatise on the Resurrection, p. 25-26.

# Maimonides 2

10. There are some who contradict our opinion by saying: behold, Moses and Elijah lived for a time without eating or drinking although they had physical bodies; so will be people in the world to come. Let it not come unto you all ye that pass by; behold and see: the organs of Moses and Elijah, of blessed memory, were not for naught. Both were men from among the people of this world and ate and drank before and after the miracle (which) was wrought for them. Therefore, how can one compare their (temporary) situation to the enduring state which has no end? Rather, it is as our Sages, may their memory be blessed, said: “to a world which is wholly good, to a world which is wholly long; how could the body there have organs for naught? And it is known that the body as a whole is, indeed a vessel for the soul with which to perform all its activities. Not one of these activities exists for people in the world to come. These people are unaware of the enormity of the shame which devotes upon anyone who attributes to God an activity for naught and the creation of organs which have a purpose but for no purpose.

- Maimonides, Treatise on the Resurrection, p. 26.

# Maimonides 3

11. Indeed, all this came about because of the (false) notion in the minds of the multitude of people who do not believe that there is firm existence except for the physical body. They do, however, believe in that which is not corporeal but is within the body, that is to say, temperaments, but (they believe that) their existence is not as firm as the firmness of the body. Nevertheless, these fools say that that which is not part of the body nor a temperament of the body does not exist at all. Although they may be old they are undoubtedly not weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. For this reason, most of them believe that God is corporeal, **for if He were not corporeal, He would not exist to them.**

- Op cit.

# Jonathan Huddleston

- The book of Genesis alone contains many post-fall promises about the **future fruitful marriages** of God's people (e.g. Gen. 17:5, 6, 26:4, 28:13, 14). This tells us something about God's ultimate plan for the institution.
- *“For Genesis’ audiences, all of this language of [future] multiplication and fruitfulness evokes...a creation blessing expressing the creator’s will for all life upon the earth...Genesis’ story of loss and of promise does not just describe the origins of the present imperfect world; it also evokes an eschatological hope for future Edenic fruitfulness.”*

# Multiplying Descendants

- No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. (Gen 17:5) I will make **you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you**, and kings shall come from you. (Gen 17:6)
- **And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven**; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; (Gen 26:4) because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Gen 26:5)
- Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder *was* set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. (Gen 28:12) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. (Gen 28:13)

# Marriage and Childbearing

- Huddleston has put his finger on a central theme of Old Testament eschatology: That God's original Edenic intentions for mankind will finally be realized in the eschaton. Thus marriage and childbearing are not merely esteemed in the present age but **are also anticipated as a central blessing in the future age**
- Psa. 69:35-36; Is. 54:3, 59:21, 60:21-22, 61:9, 65:23, Jer. 23:3-4, 30:19-20, 31:27, 33:10-11, 22; Zech. 8:3-5

# Marriage and Childbearing in the Age to Come 1

For God will save Zion And build the cities of Judah, That they may dwell there and possess it. (Psa 69:35)

Also, the descendants of His servants shall inherit it, And those who love His name shall dwell in it. (Psa 69:36)

For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited. (Isa 54:3)

"As for Me," says the LORD, "this *is* My covenant with them: My Spirit who *is* upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "**from this time and forevermore.**" (Isa 59:21)

Also your people *shall* all *be* righteous; They shall **inherit the land forever**, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified. (Isa 60:21)

**A little one shall become a thousand, And a small one a strong nation.** I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time." (Isa 60:22)

Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, And **their offspring among the people**. All who see them shall acknowledge them, That **they are the posterity whom the LORD has blessed.**" (Isa 61:9)

They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, **And their offspring with them.** (Isa 65:23)

# Marriage and Childbearing in the Age to Come 2

- "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their folds; and **they shall be fruitful and increase.** (Jer 23:3)
- I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD. (Jer 23:4)
- Then out of them shall proceed thanksgiving And the voice of those who make merry; **I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish;** I will also glorify them, and **they shall not be small.** (Jer 30:19)
- "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. (Jer 31:27)
- "Thus says the LORD: 'Again there shall be heard in this place—of which you say, "It is desolate, without man and without beast"—in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, (Jer 33:10)
- the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: "Praise the LORD of hosts, For the LORD *is* good, For His mercy *endures* forever"—*and* of those *who will* bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD. (Jer 33:11)
- As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.' " (Jer 33:22)

# Marriage and Childbearing in the Age to Come 3

- "Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.' (Zec 8:3)
- "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit In the streets of Jerusalem, Each one with his staff in his hand Because of great age. (Zec 8:4)
- The streets of the city Shall be **full of boys and girls** Playing in its streets.' (Zec 8:5)
- Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, **they, their children, and their children's children, forever**; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. (Eze 37:25)
- Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; **I will establish them and multiply them**, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. (Eze 37:26)

# Marriage and Childbearing in the Age to Come 4

- Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, And their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, That they *are* the posterity *whom* the LORD has blessed." (Isa 61:9)
- They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For **they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them.** (Isa 65:23)
- "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and **they shall be fruitful and increase.** (Jer 23:3)
- I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD. (Jer 23:4)

# Marriage and Childbearing in the Age to Come 5

- For God will save Zion And build the cities of Judah, That they may dwell there and possess it. (Psa 69:35)
- Also, the descendants of His servants shall inherit it, And those who love His name shall dwell in it. (Psa 69:36)
- **Isa 54:1** "Sing, O barren, You *who* have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You *who* have not labored with child! **For more are the children of the desolate** Than the children of the married woman," says the LORD.
- Isa 54:2 "**Enlarge the place of your tent**, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes.
- Isa 54:3 For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And **your descendants will inherit the nations**, And make the desolate cities inhabited.

# Ezekiel 37

- Whatever one makes of Ezekiel 37, this much is certain: the OT describes **resurrection into the future age and fruitful marriages during the future age**, without any hint that the former excludes one from the latter. This fact definitively shaped how Jews of the intertestamental period viewed the future age. Based on his exhaustive survey of marriage and sexuality in the Jewish pseudepigraphal literature (ca. 300 BC to 300CE), William Loader concludes:
- *The most common and widespread Jewish expectation was that the [eschatological] future....will be a time of abundance, including abundant offspring...**the assumption is that life will resemble its current forms, including, therefore, sexual relations and procreation, often in association with [Old Testament] promises that barrenness will cease and progeny be abundant.***

# Eternal Celibacy Virtually Unknown

The idea of an eternally celibate state was indeed virtually unknown to Jews at the time of Christ. This is why the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, still assumed marriage for the resurrected in their challenge. And while the scribes sought to “catch [Jesus] in what he said (Lk. 20:19-20), they didn’t question his reply, despite being fully aware of the many OT promises that marriage would persist into the future age.

# No Eternal Celibacy

- Moreover, to suppose that Jesus announced eternal celibacy for the resurrected is to say that he first appealed to the OT scriptures, and then proceeded to introduce a new doctrine that was totally foreign (and arguably contradictory) to those scriptures – yet his enemies accepted it without a trace of protest. Such a scenario defies credibility.
- The fact that the scripturally astute scribes were forced to admit Jesus had “spoken well” (Lk. 20:39) reveals that they believed his answer was supported by the Old Testament Scriptures. This in turn makes it highly unlikely that Jesus was announcing the cessation of human marriage.

# William Loader

- Loader finds only two pseudepigraphal texts suggesting an eternally celibate future, the Sibylline Oracles 1-2 and the Apocalypse of Moses. Significantly, he notes that both of these works also espouse negative views of sex within marriage in the present life, which runs counter to Biblical Judaism (Loader, *Sexuality and Eschatology*, 50). Loader thus considers “the belief that eternal life makes procreation and so marriage and sexual relations redundant” to be the *least* likely Jewish background for the scene with the Sadducees (Loader, *Sexuality and Eschatology*, 64)

# Berakhot 17a

- Faced with the complete absence of OT support for the eternal celibacy view, commentators often attempt to locate the background for Jesus' reply in a handful of extra-Biblical Jewish traditions. Three in particular are commonly cited: b. Berakhot 17a, 1 Enoch 15:6-7, and 2 Baruch 51:10. Berakhot 17a, found in the Babylonian Talmud, creatively interprets Exod. 24:11: "In the future world there is no eating nor drinking nor propagation nor business nor jealousy nor hatred nor competition, but the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads feasting on the brightness of the divine presence, as it (Exodus 24:11 says, 'And they beheld God, and did eat and drink.'" This interpretation of Ex. 24:11 imposes a preconceived view of the future onto a verse that has actually nothing to do with marriage or procreation in the future age. The idea Jesus was alluding to this obtuse reading of Ex. 24:11 from Jewish tradition is a highly implausible attempt to justify the presumption that he was announcing the future cessation of marriage.

# Enoch

- In 1 Enoch 15:6b-7 (ca. 200 BCE-100CE), Enoch rebukes the angelic Watchers who fell from heaven to beget children: **“...But you were formerly spiritual, living the eternal life, and immortal for all generations of the world. And therefore I have not appointed wives for you; for as the spiritual ones of the heaven, in heaven is their dwelling.”** However, this passage is addressing the angels and so says nothing about the key issue, which is the marital status of resurrected humans. Commentators who cite it typically neglect 1 Enoch 10:17, which says that in the future age righteous humans will marry: **“And then shall all the righteous escape, and shall live till they beget thousands of children, and all the days of their youth and their old age shall they complete in peace.”**

## 2 Baruch 51:10 (ca. 100-200 CE)

“For in the heights of that world shall they dwell, and they shall be made like unto the angels and be made equal to the stars, and they shall be changed into every form they desire, from beauty into loveliness, and from light into the splendor of glory.” But like 1 Enoch 15:6-7, the marital status of resurrected humanity is not mentioned here. Any such assumption is simply read into the text. And like 1 Enoch 10:17, 2 Baruch 70:7 explicitly affirms Isaiah’s prophecy of marriage and childbearing in the future age: “And women shall no longer then have pain when they bear, nor shall they suffer torment when they yield the fruit of the womb.”

# Did Jesus Teach The End of Marriage?

saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. (Mat 22:24)

Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. (Mat 22:25)

Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. (Mat 22:26)

Last of all the woman died also. (Mat 22:27)

Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her." (Mat 22:28)

Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. (Mat 22:29)

**For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. (Mat 22:30)**

But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, (Mat 22:31)

'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB' ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Mat 22:32)

# No Marriage in the Resurrection

1. The first thing to note is that this was a “hostile” attack, not a friendly one.
2. Their question was based on the Levirate marriage law, Deut. 25:5-10
3. The scenario proposed was a total violation of the law, history and culture, i.e. polyamory. I once adopted Sam Frost’s view that the subject was against polyamory since all had married the man under Moses’ law.
4. But the Sadducees did not affirm the woman would be married to all the husbands. Rather, they posed a question asking whose or which of them would be her husband since all had her?
5. The Sadducees did not believe that the resurrection would be the end of marriage, thus using the example of it to address Jesus’ teaching on the resurrection.
6. Jesus address them on two grounds, one, their lack of knowledge of the Scriptures and two, of the power of God.
7. The power of God was able to raise up children to Abraham from stones:, “and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. (Mat 3:9)
8. Thus, he destroyed any idea of the Pharisees and Sadducees that they would enter the kingdom based on their natural relationship to Abraham.
9. The second area addressed in the response is their lack of knowledge.

# No Marriage in the Resurrection

The power of God was able to raise up children to Abraham from stones; “and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. (Mat 3:9)

- The Jews were replaceable even if God had to make children for the kingdom out of stones
- The kingdom is not dependent on flesh and blood descendants of Abraham
- The kingdom would have children, but not through natural procreation, but through faith, Jn. 1:12, 13
- This allowed Jesus to avoid the trap set by the Sadducees, thus totally eliminating natural procreation as the source and means of producing “kingdom kids.”
- His response also eliminated the basis for all the ascetic, celibacy, anti-marriage doctrines of the Jews, Platonism, the Rabbis and the Futurists.
- The new birth does not negate natural birth, but is a spiritual birth that co-exists alongside natural birth for those who choose the kingdom.
- The resurrection is a covenantal resurrection, i.e. the new birth, which exists along side with it, (Rom 6:4-5, 2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Col. 3:3-4)

# Luke 20

- Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. (Luk 20:34)
- But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; (Luk 20:35)
- nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. (Luk 20:36)

# Covenantal Inheritance

- The contrast is not between all marriages in the world specifically
- But those of which Moses discussed, i.e. Levirate marriage that belonged to Moses' age
- Hence, the children of this age
  - Jesus was not denying those before, during or after Moses did not marry
  - He is focusing on how Israel obtained their inheritance and how they avoided losing it.
  - That was the purpose of the Levirate marriage law—care for the widows through the eldest son's inheritance.
- In the “age to come” there is no natural land inheritance to pass down from one generation to the next.
- Therefore, no need for marriage/procreation for that purpose.
- Hence, in the age to come, the inheritance is “covenantal”, i.e. the kingdom that does not come with observation.
- The only way to obtain it, was through faith and the new birth, Jn. 1:12, 13, 3:3-5

# The Contrasting Sons

- The phrase “the sons of this age” (*hoi huioi tou aionos toutou*) is an **unusual expression that appears only twice in the Bible**. Significantly, both instances are found in Luke’s gospel. The first usage appears in the parable of the shrewd manager (Lk. 16:1-8), where Jesus specifically identifies the manager as “unrighteous” and puts him in the category of “the sons of this age.”
- These sons are connected with a generation previously characterized as **“faithless” (9:41) and “evil” (11:29)**, thereby reinforcing their morally bankrupt character. Jesus then contrasts them with the righteous “sons of light” who coexist alongside them. “Thus, the first time we encounter the phrase **“the sons of this age”** in Luke’s gospel, it is **applied to the wicked** in the context of a **moral contrast set in the present age.**

# Sons of This Age

- The distinctly Hebraic nature of this phrase further confirms its negative connotation. As I. Howard Marshall notes, “[using] hoi huioi (the sons) with a genitive is a common Semitic phrase to denote people belonging to a particular class.” E.W. Bullinger concurs that “[t]he word ‘son,’ when qualified by another noun, denotes the **nature and character** of the person or persons so named.
- Consequently, “the sons of disobedience” in Eph. 2:2 are the wicked, while “the sons of light” in Lk. 16:8 are the righteous. The expression “the sons of this age” similarly implies that these “sons” embody the character of “this age.” What then is the character of the “present age” in Jewish thought?

# Sons of Evil vs Sons of Light

- It turns out that Jews living in the Second Temple period widely considered the present age to be an evil age. For example, the **Dead Sea Scrolls Damascus Document** and **War Scroll** both frequently refer to the present “age of wickedness” in which “**the sons of darkness**” and “**the sons of light**” coexisted.
- This pattern continues into the New Testament, where Jesus identified the “end of the age” as a time when “**the sons of the evil one**” are judged after “**the sons of the kingdom**” are delivered (Matt. 13:37-43. The apostle Paul likewise portrayed this period as “**the present evil age**” (Gal. 1:4) to which **believers should not be conformed** (Rom. 12:2)

# Eph. 2:2

- Paul also associated “the age (aion) of this world with the “the sons of disobedience” in Eph. 2:2, prompting S.M. Baugh to point out that “the ‘age of this world’ clearly has a negative reference, as it is not only a time reference but refers to the fallen world system...the **sons of this age** (Lk. 16:8; cf. Lk. 20:34)...are accordingly called here the sons of disobedience.”
- The seemingly innocuous term “this age” was in fact loaded with negative connotation in first century Jewish thought. This further indicates that the phrase “the sons of this age” is not neutral but instead denotes the wicked....”

# Sons of This Age Marry

- Just as he did in Lk. 16:8, Jesus contrasts “the sons of this age” with a righteous group of sons **using the present tense**. The “Sons of this age” **are marrying** (**gamousin [pres. Ind. Act.]**), while the “sons of God” **are not marrying** (**oute gamousin, [pres. Ind. Act.]**). The ones who are not marrying are not said to be living in the future age; they are only considered worthy to attain to the *future* age.
- As New Testament scholar Crispin Fletcher-Louis and others have noted, the present tense verbs indicate that **both groups of sons are living in the present age**, with the sons worthy of resurrection being identified by their **marital restraint**. Fletcher-Louis sums it up well: “[the activities in] **the present tense** in [Luke] 20:35b-6 should be attributed to the **present life**.” But this was no call to a life of celibacy. As we have seen, “the sons of this age” identifies the group of sons who **marry as wicked sons**, signaling that **a particular sort of marriage is in view** – **Jesus was by implication referring to forbidden marriage.**

# Wicked Marriage

- The expression “marrying and giving in marriage” (gamousin kai ekgamiskontai) is another rare phrase found in only two New Testament scenes. Jesus used it in his reply to the Sadducees, and then again in the **Olivet discourse** just a few hours later. In the latter case, he was describing **the marrying and giving in marriage that would occur before his return.**
- Matthew 24:37-39 – For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were **eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage** until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

# Eating and Drinking and Marrying

- What kind of eating and drinking?
- What kind of marrying and being given in marriage?
- The verbs sound neutral but the association with the flood story shows that **they connote moral corruption.**

# Context of Eating & Drinking

## Olivet Discourse: The Warning

- For as in the days before the flood, they were **eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage**, until the day that Noah entered the ark, (Mat 24:38)
- and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Mat 24:39)
- Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. (Mat 24:42)

## Olivet Discourse: Explanation

- But if that **evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'** (Mat 24:48)
- and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and **to eat and drink with the drunkards,** (Mat 24:49)
- the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, (Mat 24:50)
- and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Mat 24:51)
- "But take heed to yourselves, **lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness,** and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. (Luk 21:34)
- For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. (Luk 21:35)
- Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luk 21:36)

# Eating Drinking & Playing

## Idolatry

- And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!" (Exo 32:4)
- **So when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it.** And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "**Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.**" (Exo 32:5)
- Then they rose early on the next day, **offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings;** and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. (Exo 32:6)

## Sensuality

- they sung and danced: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret it of idolatry; some understand this of their lewdness and uncleanness, committing fornication as in the worship of Peor, taking the word in the same sense as used by Potiphar's wife, Gen 39:14. John Gill
- **And rose up to play.** This "play" was scarcely of a harmless kind. The sensualism of idol-worship constantly led on to sensuality; and the feasts upon idol-sacrifices terminated in profligate orgies of a nature which cannot be described. See the application of the passage by St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (10:7), and compare Exo 18:25 Pulpit Comm.
- **sat down:** No doubt at this feast they sacrificed after the manner of the Egyptians. Num 25:2; Jdg 16:23-25; Amo 2:8, Amo 8:10; Act 7:41-42; 1Co 10:7; Rev 11:10

# Israel At Moab

## Idolatry – Eating Drinking, Marrying

- Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. (Num 25:1)
- They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. (Num 25:2)
- So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. (Num 25:3)
- Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which *had been* in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. (Dan 5:3)
- They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. (Dan 5:4)

## Eating Sacrifices To Idols

- **sat down.** Note: It is highly probable that at this feast they sacrificed after the manner of the Egyptians and indulged themselves in every species of excess and wantonness. Herodotus, giving an account of a solemn feast, which the people of Egypt celebrated at Bubastis in honor of the goddess Diana, says, "To her they offer many sacrifices, and while the victim is burning, they dance and play a thousand tricks, and drink more wine than in the whole year besides. For they assemble to the number of about seven hundred thousand men and women besides children." Aaron's feast of the golden calf seems to have been an imitation of this (See Burder's *Oriental Customs*, vol. ii. p. 50 and Harmer's *Observations*, vol. ii. p. 491). Num 25:2, Jdg 16:23-25, Amo 2:8; Amo 8:10, Act 7:41-42, 1Co 10:7, Rev 11:10.

# Eating & Drinking

## Jeremiah & Isaiah

- Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? (Jer 7:17)
- The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and *they* pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. (Jer 7:18)
- But instead, joy and gladness, Slaying oxen and killing sheep, Eating meat and drinking wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" (Isa 22:13)
- Then it was revealed in my hearing by the LORD of hosts, "Surely for this iniquity there will be no atonement for you, Even to your death," says the Lord GOD of hosts. (Isa 22:14)

## Hosea

- For they shall eat, but not have enough; They shall commit harlotry, but not increase; Because they have ceased obeying the LORD. (Hos 4:10)
- "Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart. (Hos 4:11)
- My people ask counsel from their wooden *idols*, And their staff informs them. For the spirit of harlotry has caused *them* to stray, And they have played the harlot against their God. (Hos 4:12)
- They offer sacrifices on the mountaintops, And burn incense on the hills, Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths, Because their shade *is* good. Therefore your daughters commit harlotry, And your brides commit adultery. (Hos 4:13)

# Eating Drinking & Idolatry

## Acts 15

- but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. (Act 15:20)
- that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. (Act 15:29)

## 1 Corinthians 10

- And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND ROSE UP TO PLAY." (1Co 10:7)
- Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; (1Co 10:8)
- Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. (1Co 10:20)
- You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. (1Co 10:21)
- Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? (1Co 10:22)

# Eating & Drinking & Idolatry

## 1 Cor. 15

- If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage *is it* to me? If *the* dead do not rise, "LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE!" (1Co 15:32)
- Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." (1Co 15:33)
- For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; (1Th 4:3)
- that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, (1Th 4:4)
- not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; (1Th 4:5)
- that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. (1Th 4:6)
- For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. (1Th 4:7)

## 1 Peter & Revelation

- that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. (1Pe 4:2)
- For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. (1Pe 4:3)
- But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. (Rev 2:14)
- with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." (Rev 17:2)

# Assumption of Moses

- The Assumption of Moses, a Jewish work dated by R. H. Charles and others to around the first century CE, reveals the similar expectation of immoral eating and drinking in an eschatological context:
- And, in the time of these destructive and impious men shall rule....[they will be] filled with lawlessness and iniquity from sunrise to sunset: saying: 'We shall have feastings

# Marrying and the Flood

- Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, (Gen 6:1)
- that the **sons of God** saw the **daughters of men**, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. (Gen 6:2)
- And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (Gen 6:3)
- Noah...exhorted his sons to...guard their souls from fornication and uncleanness and all iniquity. For owing to these three things came the flood upon the earth, namely, owing to the fornication wherein **the Watchers against the law of their ordinances went a whoring after the daughters of men, and took themselves wives of all which they chose and they made the beginning of uncleanness.**  
*Jubilees, 150 BCE*

# Cause of the Flood

Both the Old Testament and most other Second Temple Jewish texts regard illicit marriages as the primary cause of the flood. Jesus' disciples therefore would have instantly recognized his reference to "marrying and giving in marriage" in the days of Noah as a warning against becoming entangled in sexual immorality harlotry.

See also the link between 1 Pet. 3:20, 21 and 4:3

- And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. (Rom 13:11)
- The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. (Rom 13:12)
- Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. (Rom 13:13)
- But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts. (Rom 13:14)

**That this is primarily addressed to the priesthood can be seen by the phrase "equal to the angels". The "sons of this age" led by the priests were guilty of these vices.**

# Illegitimate Marriages

- Beware of all whoredom, my son, and chiefly take a wife of the seed of thy fathers, and take not a strange woman to wife, which is not of thy father's tribe: for we are the children of the prophets, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: remember, my son, that our fathers from the beginning, even that they all married wives of their own kindred, and were blessed in their children, and their seed shall inherit the land. (Tob 4:12)
- For the mighty one did not fall by the young men, neither did the sons of the Titans smite him, nor high giants set upon him: but Judith the daughter of Merari weakened him with the beauty of her countenance. (Jdt 16:7)

# Illegitimate Marriages of Priests Mal 2

- Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another By profaning the covenant of the fathers? (Mal 2:10)
- Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The LORD's holy *institution* which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god. (Mal 2:11)
- May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob The man who does this, being awake and aware, Yet who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts! (Mal 2:12)
- And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands. (Mal 2:13)
- Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. (Mal 2:14)
- But did He not make *them* one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. (Mal 2:15)
- "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously." (Mal 2:16)

# The Priests & Marriage

- "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, (Deu 7:1)
- and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. (Deu 7:2)
- Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. (Deu 7:3)
- For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. (Deu 7:4)

# Herod

- In the NT, Herod, an Edomite who had 10 wives, [Jos. 17.1.3] two of which were woven into the genealogical history of the Sadducean priests.
- He banished his first wife Doris from Jerusalem in order to wed the descendant of a long line of Sadducean priest-kings named Mariamne who descended from the Hasmonean high priest John Hyrcanus, whom Josephus identified as a Sadducee (A.J. 10:6). Many subsequent priest-kings from the Hasmonean Dynasty were also Sadducees. For a full genealogy of Mariamne's descent, see Josephus, B.J.1.
- The Sadducean priest Simon Boethus was more than willing to oblige. In exchange for an appointment as High Priest, Boethus gave his daughter Mariamne II in marriage to the Edomite king who had illegitimately separated from his first wife and executed his second.
- Marriage to an Edomite was forbidden, (1 Ki. 11:1-2)

# Corrupt Priesthood

- Following Herod's line into the next generation, we encounter the most prominent forbidden marriage among Israel's leaders at the time of Christ – that of Herod Antipas and Herodias. Herodias was the granddaughter of Mariamne I and thus also a descendant of multiple Sadducean priest-kings
- She was originally married to Herod Philip, but when Philip's half-brother Herod Antipas fell in love with her, she and Antipas deserted their spouses to marry each other. John the Baptist therefore rebuked Antipas for violating the Mosaic Law that forbade a man from marrying his brother's wife (Lev. 18:16, 20:21).  
**It was the real-life antithesis of the Sadducees' levirate marriage scenario, for it involved a man marrying his brother's wife illicitly**

# Rebuking The Priests

- Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, (Luk 19:45)
- saying to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE IS A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a 'DEN OF THIEVES.' " (Luk 19:46)
- And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, (Luk 19:47)
- and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him. (Luk 19:48)

# John The Baptist

- They questioned Jesus' authority.
- He offers them John the Baptist & Malachi
- Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted *Him* (Luk 20:1)
- and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?" (Luk 20:2)
- But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: (Luk 20:3)
- The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?" (Luk 20:4)
- And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' (Luk 20:5)
- But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." (Luk 20:6)
- So they answered that they did not know where *it was* from. (Luk 20:7)
- And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." (Luk 20:8)

# Malachi, John & Jesus

**"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight.** Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts. (Mal 3:1)

"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He *is* like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap. (Mal 3:2)

He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; **He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness.** (Mal 3:3)

"Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem Will be pleasant to the LORD, As in the days of old, As in former years. (Mal 3:4)

And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien—Because they do not fear Me," Says the LORD of hosts. (Mal 3:5)

# Paying Taxes To Caesar

- They ask if paying taxes to Caesar will violate the law?
  - If no, he commits sedition against Rome
  - If it was compatible with the law, he would anger the Jews who resented Rome's tyranny.

# Render To Caesar & to God

- And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people—for they knew He had spoken this parable against them. (Luk 20:19)
- So they watched *Him*, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. (Luk 20:20)
- Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: (Luk 20:21)
- Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" (Luk 20:22)
- But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me? (Luk 20:23)
- Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "Caesar's." (Luk 20:24)
- And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Luk 20:25)
- But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent. (Luk 20:26)

# The Priests Were Abusing The Money

- In considering his reply, we must account for the fact that the challenge 1) regards Mosaic Law, and 2) was issued by a group of hypocritical priests whom Jesus had come to Jerusalem to indict. These things indicate that Jesus' answer was designed to expose their mistreatment of God's financial laws as outline in the Torah.
- The chief priests certainly rendered unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's. As members of the Sanhedrin, they were responsible for collecting the very tribute tax at issue. They administered this task faithfully, for they knew it was only at Rome's good pleasure that they maintained power over the people.
- But did they "render to God the things that are God's"? According to Jewish historian Josephus, the ruling first century priests instead took by force the portion of the tithes designated by law for the lower-tier priests and Levites. **Rabbinic tradition (70-200CE) also reports that the Sadducean high priestly family of Annas refused to tithe their produce as obligated by Jewish Law.** Giles, p. 25

# Profits

- “...The family of Annas profited handsomely from the money changers that Jesus drove out of the temple for making God’s house a “den of robbers” (Lk. 19:45). It is therefore unsurprising that later Jewish tradition remembered the first century priesthood as those who “robbed the sacrifices of the Lord.”
- A similar situation is recorded in Malachi 3:8. Here the prophet charges the entire nation of Judah – and particularly the ruling priests – **with “robbing God”** of his “tithes and contributions” required by law to support the lower-tier priest and Levites.
- The priests [of Malachi’s day]...**appropriate all the tithes, robbing the Levites of their due nine-tenths; as [the first century priests] did also, according to Josephus, before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.** [They were ]...**robbing God of the services of the Levites, who were driven away by destitution.**
- Malachi 3:3-5 prophesied that a corrupt priesthood, **with sins that specifically included financial abuse**, would continue to be a problem until the arrival of the Messiah. It is in this context that Jesus instructed his hypocritical antagonists to **“render unto God the things that are God’s.”**
- Jesus charged this would-be trap into an opportunity to rebuke the priests for robbing God of the tithes and offerings, just as their forebears had done in Malachi’s day.

# The Resurrection Violates the Law?

- They pretend to uphold Moses' law.
- Their true aim is to deny the resurrection
- They were also unfaithful to God's marriage laws.
- In this regard they mirrored the priests of Malachi's day, who also taught false doctrine (Mal 2:8) and led the nation into **forbidden marriages** (Mal. 2:11, cp. Neh. 13:25-29). This is significant because Malachi 3 anticipates such sexual immorality among the priests at the time of the Messiah. The close parallel between Jesus' reply and the situation described in Malachi 1-3.

# Sons of This Age

## Luke 20

- The sons of this age
- Marry and are given in marriage
- But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection of the dead

## Malachi

- "A son honors *his* father, And a servant *his* master. If then I am the Father, Where *is* My honor? And if I *am* a Master, Where *is* My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' (Mal 1:6)
- Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The LORD's holy *institution* which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god. (Mal 2:11)
- Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard *them*; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. (Mal 3:16)

# Sons of God/Angels

## Luke 20

- Neither marry nor are given in marriage
- For they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to the angels
- And are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection

## Malachi

- But did He not make *them* one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. (Mal 2:15)
- "My covenant was with him, *one* of life and peace, And I gave them to him *that he might fear Me*; So he feared Me And was reverent before My name. (Mal 2:5)
- "For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And *people* should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. (Mal 2:7)
- "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." (Mal 3:17)
- Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him. (Mal 3:18)

# Like Angels

- Interpreters often fail to notice that the status of being “equal to angels” is also in the present tense. New Testament scholar David Aune confirms that “there is no manuscript or lectionary evidence known to me that replaces the present tense verb found in Luke 20:36 and its Synoptic parallels... ‘they are like angels’ with the future verb... ‘they *shall be* like angels.’”

# Men Like Angels

- The idea of men being like the angels was a familiar concept to the priests whom Jesus addressed. In the Hebrew OT, the phrase “angels of the LORD” (ma’lak Yehovah) usually refers to heavenly beings, but in two key instances it refers to God’s divinely appointed human agents –the prophet (Hag 1:14) and the priest (Mal. 2:7)
- See also Keil and Delitzsch wjp confirm that in Malachi 2:7, “the standing epithet for the angels as the heavenly messengers of God is here applied to the priests.”

# Priests and Pagan Wives

- And among the sons of the priests who had taken pagan wives *the following* were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. (Ezr 10:18)
- And they gave their promise that they would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, *they presented* a ram of the flock as their trespass offering. (Ezr 10:19)

# The Present Evil Age

- The present age was under the will of Belial and was called an age of wickedness. The people were charged with fornication, uncles marrying their nieces, defiling the sanctuary, having sex with a menstruating woman.

# Eternal Survivors

He has arranged that there should be for Himself people called by name, so that there would always be survivors on the earth, replenishing the surface of the earth with their descendants....”DSS 4Q268, p. 53

# Jerusalem Rebuilt

2. ...imagining to themselves that the earthly city of Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, its foundations laid in precious stones, and its walls constructed of jasper, and its battlements of crystal; that it is to have a wall composed of many precious stones, as jasper, and sapphire, and chalcedony, and emerald, and sardonyx, and onyx, and chrysolite, and chrysoprase, and jacinth, and amethyst. **Moreover**, they think that the natives of other countries are to be given them as the ministers of their pleasures, whom they are to employ either as tillers of the field or builders of walls, and by whom their ruined and fallen city is again to be raised up; and they think that they are to receive the wealth of the nations to live on, and that they will have control over their riches; that even the camels of Midian and Kedar will come, and bring to them gold, and incense, and precious stones. And these views they think to establish on the authority of the prophets by those promises which are written regarding Jerusalem; and by those passages also where it is said, that they who serve the Lord shall eat and drink, but that sinners shall hunger and thirst; that the righteous shall be joyful, but that sorrow shall possess the wicked. And from the New Testament also they quote the saying of the Saviour, in which He makes a promise to His disciples concerning the joy of wine, saying "Henceforth I shall not drink of this cup, until I drink it with you new in My Father's kingdom."

# Summary

1. Rabbinic influences for asceticism, Gnosticism and eternal celibacy, (limited population)
2. Church fathers influenced by rabbinic Judaism and Platonic ideas of disdain for the body and marriage.
3. Pro marriage and procreation passages of the Old Covenant
4. Revisited the Sadducean confrontation with Christ
5. The discussion focused on the evil age, evil sons, unlawful marriages, idolatrous eating and drinking
6. The present tense demonstrates Jesus focus on the conduct of the priests and unlawful marriage.
7. Affirmed the non-participation of the disciples in that present age and the age to come.
8. Affirms lawful marriage and abundant procreation.



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# Thank You!

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May the truth of God's Word continue to enlighten  
and strengthen you.

## Questions?

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