

Jesus Christ as the unique God-man is the all-wise interpreter of the Bible, so learn from him that marriage is an institution in this age only, that resurrection is a reality in the age to come, and that every Bible passage contains important doctrinal and practical implications for life and godliness.

Introduction – Imagine you are in a room with Jesus. What would you say?

I. One Hypothetical Bible Question

A. Historical context: the Sadducees and Passion week (v. 27)

1. The Sadducees were a rationalistic priestly sect that formed the majority of the Jewish Ruling Council. Unlike the Pharisees, they rejected the Jewish oral tradition, revered the five books of Moses more than other books in the OT, and did not believe in the resurrection.
2. Jesus is at the temple in Jerusalem during the last week of his life when tension between him and the religious leaders is reaching its high point. Hence the question and answer dialogue meant to trap Jesus in his words. Jesus’ enemies are seeking a way to at least discredit him.

B. Whose wife will she be in the resurrection? (vv. 28-33)

1. Levirate marriage (*levir* is Latin for “a husband’s brother”) was a practice commanded in the Law of Moses. The first son from the levirate marriage would be reckoned legally as the heir of the deceased, and thus the dead brother’s “name” would be preserved (Dt 25:5-6).
2. The Sadducees attempt to trap Jesus with a hypothetical scenario meant to disprove the resurrection. Seven brothers all had the same woman as wife as they practiced levirate marriage, but none had children. When the woman, finally died, none of the brothers had a special claim to her as wife. If this is the case, who will have her as wife in the resurrection?

C. Jesus’ wise answer (vv. 34-40)

1. Jesus shows that the Sadducees’ question was irrelevant. Jesus says marriage laws do not apply because marriage is not an eternal institution.
2. He draws the fullest possible meaning from the burning bush passage to prove the resurrection (Ex 3:4-6). If the living God can have a living relationship with the patriarchs who have been physically dead for centuries, then they must in some sense still be alive.

II. One Paradoxical Bible Question

A. Historical context: ancestors and descendants

The Jews, as a traditional culture that honored its elders, generally believed that sons were not greater than their fathers.

B. If the Christ is David’s son, how is he also David’s Lord? (vv. 41-44)

1. With his magnificent answer Jesus permanently ended their malicious questioning. But to keep the dialogue going he asked them a question about the paradoxical notion that the Christ, acknowledged by all as the son of David, is also the Lord of David.

2. Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1 to show how David himself describes the Christ as his Lord. It is a foundational gospel verse, quoted or alluded to more than any other Psalm in the NT (cf. Acts 2:34-35; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; 1 Pet 3:22). Jesus' question leads them to consider his identity. The Lord left the question unanswered, because he meant for them to think it through and believe it to be true. The only logical answer is the son of David is also the divine Son of God.

III. Seven Important Implications

A. Answer to persuade in love rather than to just win an argument (vv. 37-38, 41-44)

Notice the method Jesus answers theological and biblical questions is aimed at persuasion, not rhetorical victory. He meets his questioners on their ground and according to their rules. Christians can do the same when making their case with theological opponents.

B. The Bible is completely consistent and absolutely trustworthy (vv. 37-38)

Jesus believed the Scripture cannot be broken (Jn 10:35), and that it is authoritative even to the tense of verbs! His argument is not sound if the text says, "God *was* (past tense; not *is*, present tense) the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The Bible is the inspired word of God, without error, without fail, and therefore trustworthy of deriving conclusions from the most minute detail (Mt 5:18).

C. Marriage has no more significance than God gives it (vv. 28-33, 40)

Worldviews and theologies that ask marriage to carry more purpose, value, and meaning than it was meant to bear turn it into an idol. Conversely, worldviews and theologies that don't recognize or affirm the God-given purpose, value, and meaning of marriage end up redefining it into something completely different than God intends and thus working at cross-purposes against God's good design.

D. Marriage has a specific, limited, and temporary purpose (vv. 28, 34)

Marriage has a functional purpose: the building of a godly society through the procreation of children. It is also relational in purpose. God gave us marriage for spiritual friendship, for playing a part in God's plan of sanctifying your spouse. Remember that something better awaits us!

E. Get your information about the resurrection from the Scriptures alone (vv. 37-39)

When building our understanding of the nature of resurrection life in the age to come, we must use only the Scriptures. But we must also be careful to not use biblical truths about *this life* and extrapolate them to *resurrection life*.

F. The resurrection in the age to come means everything in this age matters (vv. 35, 36, 43)

There will be no second chances, so pay careful attention to your life and doctrine in this life so you will be counted by God among those who attain to that age and the resurrection of the dead.

G. You must decide who Jesus is (v. 44)

The way we identify Jesus reveals our understanding of him. He is the son of David, but not only so. If we merely say he is the son of David, then Jew and secular historian will not object. He is also the Christ who is David's Lord because Jesus is God's anointed King and Son.

Conclusion – Identifying who Jesus is, and then believing and living accordingly, is the central question of life. Nothing else is more important than answering the question: how can Jesus Christ be David's son and also David's Lord? If Jesus is both, then that changes everything! What is your answer?