Matthew 22 Quotations from the Hebrew Bible

2021-12-05

1. Matthew 22: 23-34: The same day Sad'ducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother must marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.
2. Deuteronomy 25: 5-6: "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married outside the family to a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his brother who is dead, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.
3. This is “levirate” marriage. The term comes from levir, the Latin word for husband’s brother.
4. Two of the women named in Jesus’ genealogy in Matthew 1: 1-17, Tamar and Ruth, were involved in levirate marriages.
5. For Tamar, see Genesis 38: 1-26. Despite engaging in prostitution, Tamar is the only woman in the Hebrew scriptures who is called righteous.
6. For Ruth, see Ruth 3-4. Apparently by Ruth’s time, the custom had extended from brothers-in-law to distant cousins.
7. There is a conflict with Leviticus 18: 16: You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; she is your brother's nakedness.
8. This led to the death of John the Baptist: For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison, for the sake of Hero'di-as, his brother Philip's wife; because John said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." (Matthew 14: 3-4)
9. In the modern State of Israel, a ruling has set aside the requirement of levirate marriage; however, a widow may be considered unmarriageable unless her brother-in-law formally releases her.
10. From The Torah: A Modern Commentary: Reform Judaism “…views levirate marriage as an undesirable norm for modern society and therefore considers chalitzah [a formal release] no longer necessary.”
11. The Sadducees’ question seems preposterous, but see Tobit: 3: 7-8, 6: 13: On the same day, at Ecbat′ana in Media, it also happened that Sarah, the daughter of Rag′uel, was reproached by her father’s maids, because she had been given to seven husbands, and the evil demon Asmode′us had slain each of them before he had been with her as his wife. So the maids[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Tobit%203&version=RSV#fen-RSV-31123a)] said to her, “Do you not know that you strangle your husbands? You already have had seven and have had no benefit from[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Tobit%203&version=RSV#fen-RSV-31123b)] any of them….Then the young man said to the angel, “Brother Azari′as, I have heard that the girl has been given to seven husbands and that each died in the bridal chamber.
12. Matthew 22: 31-32: And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living."
13. Exodus 3: 6: And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.
14. Exodus 3: 15-16: God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt;
15. The scriptures don’t speak clearly about life after death, for example:
16. Psalm 30: 8-9: To thee, O LORD, I cried; and to the LORD I made supplication: "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise thee? Will it tell of thy faithfulness?
17. Romans 14: 8-9: If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.
18. Matthew 22: 35-40: And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."
19. Deuteronomy 6: 5: and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.
20. This verse follows shortly after the Ten Commandments, and immediately after the statement of monotheism in Deuteronomy 6: 4: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD;
21. Leviticus 19: 18: You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.
22. This is from the Holiness Code, which begins in Leviticus 19: 2: “… You shall be holy; for I the LORD your God am holy.
23. The Hebrew word translated as neighbor, rei-a (רֵעַ), may mean a fellow Israelite, rather than someone living in proximity, who may or may not be an Israelite.
24. The idea is expanded beyond Israel a few verses later in Leviticus 19: 34: The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.
25. The same identification of the greatest commandment occurs with slight variations in Mark 12:31 and Luke 10: 27. Other candidates for the greatest commandment that were circulating at the time of the Gospels:
26. Hillel, Jesus’ older contemporary, was challenged to recite the Torah while standing on one foot. He responded, “That which is hateful to you, do not do to another. That is the whole Law. The rest is commentary. Now go and learn.”
27. From Menahem M. Kasher, quoted in The Torah: A Modern Commentary: [Two 2nd-century scholars, Rabbi Akiba and Ben Azzai, debated which was the most important principal in the Torah.] Rabbi Akiba said: “Love your fellow [Israelite] as yourself” (Lev 19: 18) is the greatest. Ben Azzai said: The greatest principle is Gen. 5:1: “This is the written record of the human line from the day God created human beings, making [them] in the likeness of God.” (Talmud [141]) Ben Azzai laid down a fundamental teaching of Judaism. For in the verse quoted, the scholar saw the basic declaration of human brotherhood: By tracing back the whole of the human race to one single ancestor, created by one God, the Bible taught that all humans have one Creator and one ancestor – the first human.
28. Matthew 22: 41-45: Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet'? If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son?"
29. Psalm 110: 1: A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."
30. The Hebrew text uses two different words for “LORD” and “my lord.” The first, spelled יְהוָה and pronounced Adonai, is the four-letter name for God. The second, adoni (אדֹנִי), means “my master.”
31. There is a difference of scholarly opinion about who is meant by “my lord.” Possible meanings: the king, the Messiah (Jesus’ view), or David himself (even though this is a psalm of David).
32. After verse 1, the Hebrew text of psalm 110 is difficult and obscure.
33. The Greek text, both Matthew and the Septuagint, repeat the word kyrios (κύριος), translated lord.
34. Septuagint: …εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ…
35. Matthew 22: 44: …εἶπεν κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ…

Sources:

* Barbara E. Reid, O.P., The Gospel According to Matthew, 2005
* The Torah: A Modern Commentary, 2005
* Robert Alter, The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary, 2019
* www.blueletterbible.org

Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV) except where noted.