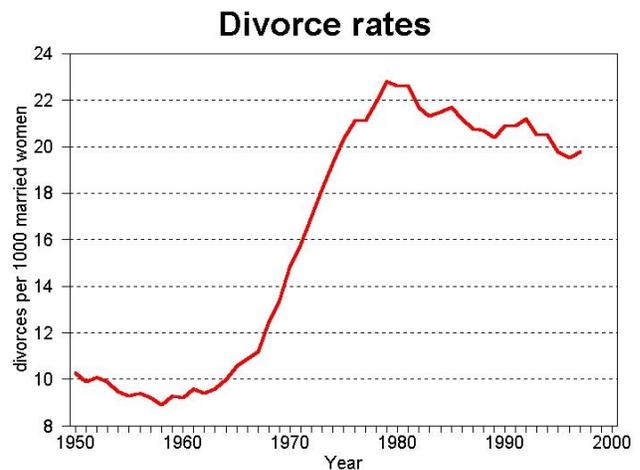


## Divorce

This lesson deals with:

- *An extremely painful and emotional subject:* In today's society, almost everyone has been touched in some way by marital divorce – either themselves, seeing close friends or relatives go through a divorce, or having a home broken by divorce. There is nothing clean or sweet about a divorce – there is nothing quite like the pain of a divorce.
- *A very controversial matter:* There is some differing opinions about divorce and (especially) remarriage among Bible-believing Baptists. [Applying sound Biblical teaching with godly compassion](#) to some of life's most tangled, sordid, and heart-wrenching situations will test anyone's resolve and it is never easy. There is little else that will cause one to hate sin more than divorce!
- *A very timely subject:* The breakdown of marriage is of epidemic proportions as the following statistics relate:
  - The USA leads the world in divorce. In 1994, nearly 1.2 American marriages were legally dissolved – a divorce rate of 4.6 per 1,000 population. These divorces involved about 1 million children under the age of 18.
  - The **divorce rate** in 2005 (per 1,000 people) was 3.6 -- the **lowest rate since 1970**, and down from 4.2 in 2000 and from 4.7 in 1990. (The peak was at 5.3 in 1981, according to the *Associated Press*.) The **marriage rate** in 2005 (per 1,000) was 7.5, down from 7.8 the previous year.
  - Statistics around the modern world are similarly dismal. And, these stats do not include unhappy marriages that stay together! The saddest thing about these stats is that they include real Christians.
  - Comment about divorce and children's education.



- *A very practical topic:* Is marriage important (YES!). How can divorce be prevented? How should a church deal with divorce? How should we treat divorced people? Is there any ministry for a divorced Christian in a Baptist church? etc.
- As always, the WORD OF GOD is our infallible guide. This lesson will be centered around our Lord's teaching on the subject of divorce found in Matthew 19:3-12

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; <sup>2</sup> And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. <sup>3</sup> The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? <sup>4</sup> And he answered and said unto them, **Have ye not read**, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup> And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? <sup>6</sup> Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. <sup>7</sup> They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? <sup>8</sup> He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. <sup>9</sup> And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. <sup>10</sup> His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. <sup>11</sup> But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. <sup>12</sup> For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

## I Have Ye Not Read?

The Pharisees of Jesus' day were split over the issue of divorce. Those belonging to the conservative rabbinical school of Shammai taught that divorce could only be granted on the grounds of adultery; those from the very liberal school of Rabbi Hillel believed a man could divorce his wife for "every cause" – i.e. anything that was displeasing to him (The Jewish Mishna speaks of divorce being permitted on

grounds such as a wife appearing in public with disheveled hair, speaking so loud that the neighbors can hear, or even spoiling a dish!) In Matthew 19:3 we see who these Pharisees attempted to draw the Lord Jesus Christ into their arguments. Our Lord, as always, pointed them to the scriptures – “Have ye not read?” (verse 4). He took them back to the beginning and the institution of marriage.

This is where we will begin. BEFORE we consider divorce, let’s study GOD’S Plan for Marriage.

#### A. **The Creation Of Man**

Read Genesis 1:26-28 <sup>26</sup> *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* <sup>27</sup> *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* <sup>28</sup> *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

1. Man was created by God (verse 27)
2. Man was made in the image and likeness of God (verses 26, 27)
3. Man was male and female (verse 27c)
4. Man was formed of the dust of the ground. Genesis 2:7 <sup>7</sup> *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*
5. The woman was made from a rib taken from the man’s side. Genesis 2:22 <sup>22</sup> *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*

## B. The Creation Of Marriage

Read Genesis 2:18-25 <sup>18</sup> And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. <sup>19</sup> And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. <sup>20</sup> And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; <sup>22</sup> And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. <sup>23</sup> And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. <sup>24</sup> Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

1. God said: "It is not good that man should be alone (verse 18b)
2. Can Animals meet man's need for companionship? NO. Read Genesis 2:20d: "...but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him."
3. God made for the man a help meet (verse 18c). Help meet means suited or appropriate or corresponding to and carries no implication of inferiority. It means the wife is the completer of man. Eve was Adam's other half.
4. God brought the woman to the man (verse 22d) [the first marriage?]  
*Thought: How much misery might be avoided if young people quit looking for a spouse and trusted and waited on the Lord to bring them their spouse.*

5. God's institution of marriage is given in Genesis 2:24. This verse is repeated 4 more times in the Bible:
- Matthew 19:5, 6 (Jesus speaking to the Pharisees) <sup>5</sup> *And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?* <sup>6</sup> *Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*
  - Mark 10:8 (Jesus again) <sup>6</sup> *But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.* <sup>7</sup> *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;* <sup>8</sup> *And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.*
  - I Corinthians 6:16 <sup>16</sup> *What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*
  - Ephesians 5:31 <sup>31</sup> *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

There are four (4) principles of divine intent given in Genesis 2: 24, 25:

- Leave. Requires a clear separation from the old family relationship (failure to do this is one of the top 10 reasons for divorce.)
- Cleave. It is the literal cementing of two people into one relationship – to become one persons with one mind, going in one direction.
- One flesh. The physical union or joining of a man or a woman. See I Corinthians 6:16 <sup>16</sup> *What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

- Not ashamed. Among other things, this speaks of God's intent that marriage is to be an open, transparent, vulnerable relationship.

### C. The Creation Of Management

The entrance of sin into the world threw every part of God's creation into chaos and disorder – including marriage! (read Genesis 3:12 starting at verse 9 <sup>9</sup> *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?* <sup>10</sup> *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* <sup>11</sup> *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?* <sup>12</sup> *And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

To bring order in the home, God established new roles within the marriage partnership according to Genesis 3:16: <sup>16</sup> *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

1. The wife's desire shall be subject to her husband.
2. The husband shall rule over his wife.

**This does not mean the husband was made more important than his wife or that he was given dictatorial powers over her.** It was the establishment of order for the preservation of the home. Read:

- I Corinthians 7:4 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup> *Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.* <sup>2</sup> *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.* <sup>3</sup> *Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

<sup>4</sup> *The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.*

[MUCH MORE ABOUT MARRIAGE FOLLOWS]

- I Corinthians 11:3 <sup>3</sup> *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*

**God's Holy Plan: One Man, One Woman, One Lifetime.**

## II What Therefore God Hath Joined Together

In Matthew 19:6c, the Lord Jesus Christ affirms that marriage is something God did (and does)! [ <sup>6</sup> *... What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*]

It is not a man-made thing but a spiritual matter of great consequence. Since marriage was instituted by God, it follows all marriage choices, decisions, planning, counseling, guidance, and ceremonies should seek God's approval and be according to His Word!

This brings us to another question: "Exactly what constitutes a marriage?" Is it a ceremony? Is it signing a document? Is it the marriage bed? Is it living together?

The Bible teaches there are two elements which TOGETHER constitute a marriage:

A. **Marriage Is A Covenant** [an agreement, usually formal, between two or more persons to do or not do something specified]

1. A wife is a man's companion and wife of his covenant. Read Malachi 2:14  
<sup>14</sup> Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. <sup>15</sup>  
And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And

wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Also read verses 8-11 to see consequences of failing to follow God's law.

*<sup>8</sup> But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup>*

*Therefore have I also made you **contemptible and base before all the people**, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. <sup>10</sup>*

*Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? <sup>11</sup> Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.*

2. Read Proverbs 2:17 (from verse 12) <sup>12</sup> *To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;* <sup>13</sup> *Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;* <sup>14</sup> *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;* <sup>15</sup> *Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:* <sup>16</sup> *To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;* <sup>17</sup> *Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.* <sup>18</sup> *For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.* <sup>19</sup> *None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.*

The strange woman (verse 17) is one who has forgotten the covenant of her God.

3. A 'covenant' is a bond which unites people in mutual obligations.
4. According to Biblical custom, a marriage BEGAN with the engagement and CONSUMATED [to bring to a state of perfection; fulfill] when the couple came together. Because western marriage customs are somewhat different, three Biblical terms need to be considered:

- Betrothal – Engagement, often arranged by others. Read Exodus 21:8-11 (speaking about a master's maidservant) <sup>8</sup> *If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.* <sup>9</sup> *And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters.* <sup>10</sup> *If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.* <sup>11</sup> *And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.*
- Espousal – Engagement, demonstrated by expensive gifts and a dowry. Typically one year, during which time neither party saw each other. Though not consummated, espousal was as binding as marriage. Read Matthew 1: 18 <sup>18</sup> *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.* (Also, numerous examples are in the Old Testament)
- Marriage – the consummation, accompanied by long feasting (usually one week). Read Matthew 22:1-10 for the wedding feast parable.

**B. Marriage Is A Conjugation (the state of being joined together; union; conjunction)**

Marriage requires there be a physical union between husband and wife.

Why?

1. Marriage is designed to meet the physical needs of the couple – I Corinthians 7:9 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup> *Now concerning the things whereof ye*

wrote unto me: *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.* <sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. <sup>3</sup> Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. <sup>4</sup> The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. <sup>5</sup> Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. <sup>6</sup> But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. <sup>7</sup> For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. <sup>8</sup> I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. <sup>9</sup> **But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.**

2. Matthew 19:5, 6 speaks of the couple being one. <sup>5</sup> And said, *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?* <sup>6</sup> Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
  
3. I Corinthians 6:16 (and more) defines this term [marriage] as a physical conjugation. <sup>16</sup> What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. <sup>17</sup> But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. <sup>18</sup> Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. <sup>19</sup> What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Note: A formal (legal) covenant agreement by itself does not constitute a marriage. A physical relationship alone does not constitute a marriage. If that were so, there would be no such thing as adultery or fornication. Note Jesus' discussion with the woman at the well in John 4:17-18 – the man she was living with was NOT her husband. <sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: <sup>18</sup> For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

**Marriage is the physical union of a man and a woman within the bonds of a covenant of companionship.**

### III Let Not Man Put Asunder

In Matthew 19.6d we see that marriage is intended to be a permanent relationship. 6 *Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore **God** hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

#### A. What God Thinks About Marriage

1. Read Hebrews 13:4a <sup>4</sup> *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Marriage is honorable.
2. Proverbs 18:22a <sup>22</sup> *Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.*
3. Proverbs 19:14 <sup>14</sup> *House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.*
4. I Corinthians 7:2 <sup>2</sup> *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*

5. I Corinthians 7:28a <sup>28</sup> *But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*

Note: It is not necessarily ALWAYS God's will for a person to marry. Paul indicates that in the context of Christian service or in times of severe persecution, marriage may not be the option. Also read Matthew 19:12e about those who would intentionally choose celibacy for the "kingdom of heaven's sake." <sup>12</sup> *For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.*

## B. What God Thinks About Divorce

1. Let no man put asunder. Read Matthew 19:6d <sup>6</sup> *Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*
2. Malachi 2:16 (from verse 8) <sup>8</sup> But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup> Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. <sup>10</sup> Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? <sup>11</sup> Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. <sup>12</sup> The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. <sup>13</sup> And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he

regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. <sup>14</sup>Yet ye say, *Wherefore [for what cause or reason]? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.* <sup>15</sup>And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. <sup>16</sup>**For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away:** for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously. <sup>17</sup>Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, *Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?*

#### IV Why Did Moses Then Command?

In Matthew 19:7 the Pharisees drew Christ's attention to the old Testament teaching on divorce – In particular Deuteronomy 24:1-4 <sup>1</sup> *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.* <sup>2</sup> *And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.* <sup>3</sup> *And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;* <sup>4</sup> *Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

To understand this passage, it is essential to understand that there is a difference between a command of God and a concession by God! Hence, the Lord is not instituting divorce; rather, he is regulating it! Divorce is never a prescribed solution for marital problems.

## A. The Old Testament Premise For Divorce

1. The Act of the Wife – Some **uncleanness** (word means shame or disgrace)  
Deuteronomy 24:1 ... *because he hath found some uncleanness in her:*
2. The Attitude of the Husband – Hatred towards ones wife (presumably this would result from an inability to forgive or reconcile.)

The question then becomes: Exactly what is uncleanness? Unchastity, adultery, rape, incest, sodomy, bestiality? NO! these sins were ground for death, not divorce. Furthermore, the penalty for fornication was marriage without the possibility of divorce! Deuteronomy 22:28-29 <sup>28</sup> *If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found;* <sup>29</sup> *Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away **all his days.***

It was a long standing question in rabbinical schools as to what constitutes uncleanness. It seems this type of uncleanness is related somewhat to perception (“she find no favor in his eyes”), because in such cases the divorcee was permitted to remarry.

B. The Old Testament Procedure For Divorce (Deuteronomy 24 1-3 <sup>1</sup> *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. <sup>2</sup> And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. <sup>3</sup> And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;*

1. A written bill of divorce (to eliminate any hasty actions by the husband?)
2. The document was to be placed in his wife’s hands.
3. The wife was to be sent from the man’s house.

Note: Although the passage speaks only of a husband putting away his wife, by New Testament times, a divorce could originate with either party (read Mark 10:11-12 <sup>9</sup> *What therefore God hath joined together, let not*

man put asunder. <sup>10</sup> And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. <sup>11</sup> And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. <sup>12</sup> **And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.**

C. The Old Testament Prohibitions in Divorce

1. Remarriage was permitted Duet 24:2 <sup>2</sup> *And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.*
2. According to Deuteronomy 24:4, the divorced husband could not remarry his Ex-wife once she had remarried (prevent wife swapping?)
3. Priest could not marry divorced women since he was a chief man among his people according to Leviticus 21:1-7 <sup>1</sup> *And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto **the priests** the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people: <sup>2</sup> But for his kin, that is near unto him, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother. <sup>3</sup> And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband; for her may he be defiled. <sup>4</sup> But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself. <sup>5</sup> They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. <sup>6</sup> They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy. <sup>7</sup> **They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God.***

**This implies that character in an a nation's leaders matters!**

#### D. Two Unusual Old Testament Cases Of Divorce

1. Jeremiah 3 (passage below) – here the Lord uses marriage and divorce to illustrate His relationship with His people, Israel.

- Verse 14a - The Lord is married to Israel... this is not an espousal.
- Verse 8a - Israel was guilty of spiritual adultery.
- Verse 8a – The Lord put her away and gave her a bill of divorce.
- Verse 1h - The Lord begs His estranged wife to return to Him.
- Verses 16-18 - "When all Israel shall be saved" at the time of Christ's return to the Earth, the Lord's wife will have been restored to him.  
(also see Romans 11:26, Zechariah 12:7-10)

Jeremiah 3<sup>1</sup> They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. <sup>2</sup> Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. <sup>3</sup> Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. <sup>4</sup> Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? <sup>5</sup> Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest. <sup>6</sup> The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. <sup>7</sup> And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. <sup>8</sup> And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. <sup>9</sup> And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. <sup>10</sup> And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD. <sup>11</sup> And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. <sup>12</sup> Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger

for ever. <sup>13</sup> Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. <sup>14</sup> Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: <sup>15</sup> And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. <sup>16</sup> And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. <sup>17</sup> At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. <sup>18</sup> In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers. <sup>19</sup> But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me. <sup>20</sup> Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD. <sup>21</sup> A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God. <sup>22</sup> Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God. <sup>23</sup> Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel. <sup>24</sup> For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. <sup>25</sup> We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

2. Ezra 10 – This incident took place in Jerusalem among the post-exilic [pertaining to exile, especially that of the Jews in Babylon] Jews during the time of national repentance.
  - Many of the Jews confessed they had taken “strange wives”. Verse 2 ... *We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land...*
  - Verse 11 – Ezra commanded the people to separate from these wives. <sup>11</sup> *Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your*

*fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.*

- As difficult as this was, the people did it! Their collocation was “be of good courage, and do it!” (verse 4 <sup>4</sup> *Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.*)

Notes for Ezra passages:

- These divorces were accomplished according to the law and took considerable time. This indicates wives and children involved were provided for.
- The Bible does not say whether any of the offending Jews later remarried.
- This passage offers some guidance for those who labor in the Gospel among Mormons or in nations where polygamy is practiced (Islam).

## V Because Of The Hardness Of Your Heart

In Matthew 19:8, the Lord Jesus Christ explained the concession of God through Moses permitting divorce. Here, and in Mark 10:5, the Bible teaches that the root cause of divorce is sin. Divorce is only sanctioned because of the hardness of man’s heart.

The corollary of this statement follows that when the heart of both husband and wife is tender toward god, there should be no need for divorce.

- Matthew 19:8 <sup>8</sup> *He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*
- Mark 10:5 <sup>5</sup> *And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.*

- A. Read: Hebrews 3:8-19 <sup>8</sup> *Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: <sup>9</sup> When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. <sup>10</sup> Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. <sup>11</sup> So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) <sup>12</sup> Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; <sup>15</sup> While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. <sup>16</sup> For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. <sup>17</sup> But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

The Lord uses Israel's wilderness wanderings as an example of hardness of heart. From this passage we see that hearts become hard:

1. When we do not know God's ways (i.e. Bible ignorance) – verse 10.
2. When we depart from the living God – verse 12.
3. Through the deceitfulness of sin – verse 13. Wow... this is powerful.
4. Through failure to heed God's voice – verses 15, 16a.
5. Because of unbelief – verse 19.

- B. Read: Mark 6:52 <sup>47</sup> *And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. <sup>48</sup> And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. <sup>49</sup> But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: <sup>50</sup> For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, **Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.** <sup>51</sup> And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond*

measure, and wondered. <sup>52</sup> **For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.**

The illustration of a ship in the midst of a storm is a fitting description of marriage, for no marriage is 'smooth sailing' and every marriage needs the peace of God upon it (verse 50). A hardened heart fails to consider what God can do! This is why most people think divorce is the only answer to serious marital problems.

Also read Mark Chapter 8 ... <sup>11</sup> *And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.* <sup>12</sup> *And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.* <sup>13</sup> *And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.* <sup>14</sup> *Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.* <sup>15</sup> *And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.* <sup>16</sup> *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.* <sup>17</sup> **And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? (don't worry about the things of this world... worry about the things God is concerned about.)**

- C. Read Proverbs 28:14 (from verse 1 since it's so powerful) <sup>1</sup> *The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.* <sup>2</sup> *For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.* <sup>3</sup> *A poor man that oppreseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.* <sup>4</sup> *They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.* <sup>5</sup> *Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.* <sup>6</sup> *Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.* <sup>7</sup> *Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.* <sup>8</sup> *He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.* <sup>9</sup> *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* <sup>10</sup> *Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.* <sup>11</sup> *The rich man is wise in his own*

*conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.* <sup>12</sup> *When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.* <sup>13</sup> *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* <sup>14</sup> **Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.**

1. Fearing God brings happiness.
2. A hardened heart brings mischief.

D. Read II Chronicles 36:13 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup> Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. <sup>4</sup> And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. <sup>6</sup> Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. <sup>7</sup> Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. <sup>8</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. <sup>9</sup> Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. <sup>10</sup> And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>11</sup> Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup> **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD.** <sup>13</sup> And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. <sup>14</sup> Moreover all the

chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup> And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: <sup>16</sup> **But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.** <sup>17</sup> Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. <sup>18</sup> And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. <sup>19</sup> And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. <sup>20</sup> And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

1. King Zedekiah hardened his heart by not humbling himself before the Word of God when it was preached to him (by Jeremiah).
2. Persistent hardness of the heart ultimately brings about a situation where there is no remedy.

**Hardness of heart: Marriage killer and divorce key!**

## VI Except It Be For Fornication

Jesus narrowed the grounds for divorce to only one issue – fornication! The Lord gives the famous exception clause in Matthew 19:9 (from verse 7) <sup>7</sup> *They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?* <sup>8</sup> *He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.* <sup>9</sup> *And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*

Adultery - voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her lawful spouse.

Fornication - voluntary sexual intercourse between two persons of the opposite sex, where one is or both are unmarried.

Since this is a very controversial point, there are four important questions which need to be answered:

### A. Does This “Exception Clause” Apply Today?

The corresponding passages in the Gospels of Mark (10:11) and Luke (16:18) do not mention any exception. For this reason some believe divorce is NOT permitted at all today under any circumstances.

Two arguments are commonly put forward to support this contention:

1. Textual Argument – This view contends the clause shouldn’t be in the text at all because it is not found in some ancient manuscripts of the New Testament (Sinaiticus, Ephraemi, Bezae, and most Syrian versions). We reject this argument because the clause is found in the pure Word of God (the Authorized King James version) as well as the underlying Textus Receptus – and the Codex Vaticanus.

2. The Ultra-Dispensational Argument – This view contends that since Moses' concession was given to Israel, and Matthew's gospel was written to Israel, the exception clause does not apply to Christians today.

It is this line of reasoning that:

- pushes John the Baptist back into the Old Testament
- Has the church beginning in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost
- Removes the four Gospels as the authoritative Scripture in Church matters

Conclusion: Yes, the exception clause does apply today.

#### B. Exactly What Is Fornication?

1. Compare Matthew 15:19 with Galatians 5:19. Would you conclude fornication is the same as, or distinct from, adultery?

- Matthew 15:19 (from verse 10) <sup>10</sup> *And he called the multitude, and said unto them, **Hear, and understand:** <sup>11</sup> **Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.** <sup>12</sup> *Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?* <sup>13</sup> *But he answered and said, **Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.** <sup>14</sup> **Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.** <sup>15</sup> *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.* <sup>16</sup> *And Jesus said, **Are ye also yet without understanding?** <sup>17</sup> **Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?** <sup>18</sup> **But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. <sup>19</sup> **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:** <sup>20</sup> **These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*******

- Galatians 5:19 (from verse 16) <sup>16</sup> *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* <sup>17</sup> *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* <sup>18</sup> *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.* <sup>19</sup> *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **Adultery, fornication**, uncleanness, lasciviousness,* <sup>20</sup> *Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,* <sup>21</sup> *Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*
- 2. What kind of wickedness is called fornication in I Corinthians 5:1 <sup>1</sup> *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should **have his father's wife**.*
- 3. What kind of behavior is called fornication in I Corinthians 6:13b – 18 <sup>13</sup> *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.* <sup>14</sup> *And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.* <sup>15</sup> *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.* <sup>16</sup> *What? know ye not that he which is joined to an **harlot** is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.* <sup>17</sup> *But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.* <sup>18</sup> *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*
- 4. How is the term fornication applied in I Corinthians 7:1-9 <sup>1</sup> *Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.* <sup>2</sup> *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.* <sup>3</sup> *Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.* <sup>4</sup> *The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not*

power of his own body, but the wife. <sup>5</sup> Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. <sup>6</sup> But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. <sup>7</sup> For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. <sup>8</sup> I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. <sup>9</sup> But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

5. Fornication implies illegitimacy. Read John 8:41 (from verse 34) <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. <sup>35</sup> And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. <sup>36</sup> If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. <sup>39</sup> They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. <sup>40</sup> But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. <sup>41</sup> Ye do the deeds of your father [Satan]. Then said they to him, **We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.** <sup>42</sup> Jesus said unto them, *If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. <sup>44</sup> Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. <sup>45</sup> And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. <sup>46</sup> Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? <sup>47</sup> He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.***

C. Under What Conditions is Divorce Permissible? – Bible believing Baptists generally hold one of two views on divorce:

1. **NO Divorce after marriage** – the example of Joseph and Mary in Matthew 1:18-19 is the basis for this position. <sup>18</sup> *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.* <sup>19</sup> *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.* Note:

- Mary was espoused to Joseph
- Before they had come together as one flesh
- Joseph was called Mary's husband
- Joseph planned to put Mary "away" (divorce)
- After Joseph understood what God was doing, he took Mary unto his wife

On this basis, it is contended that divorce is only allowable if one party is unfaithful during the engagement period before the wedding. After that, there can be on fornication – the only thing to break a marriage is death.

Read

- Romans 7:2 <sup>2</sup> *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.*
- I Corinthians 7:39 <sup>39</sup> *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.*

Some of the problems facing this position are:

- The context of Matthew 19 (<sup>9</sup> *And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another,*

*committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*) is marriage, betrothal or espousal.

- The standard is difficult to apply to Western culture since Bible-style betrothal and espousal are not commonly practiced.
2. Divorce Permissible on the Limited Grounds of Immorality. This view holds that the only Scriptural ground for divorce today is sexual immorality OF ANY KIND – adultery, incest, whore mongering, etc. Those who believe this do not advocate divorce in such cases. *It is considered only as a last result – initiated when all other means of restoring the one broken one-flesh relationship are exhausted. Love, forgiveness, and the all sufficient grace of God are able to restore any marriage marred by sexual sin.*

D. Does I Corinthians 7 Give Another Exception?

Chapter 7 of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians (below) covers the subject of marriage and is written directly to believers. Like Matthew 19, its interpretation has proven to be controversial. It addresses single Christians, married Christians, and Christians in mixed marriages (where the partner is not saved).

1. Pauls' Opinion or God's Truth? The apostle's words in verses 6, 10, and 12 have been taken to infer this chapter is not entirely inspired Scripture but contains a man's (non-binding) opinion as well. **This is not the case.**
  - *I command, yet not I but the Lord* (verse 10) refers to previously given revelation. Paul is re-teaching what other Scriptures already teach.
  - *To the rest speak I, not the Lord* (verse 12) means this is new inspired revelation, given through Paul (verse 6) by the Spirit of God (verse 40c).
2. Instruction For Married Believers – verses 10 – 11
  - Let not the wife depart from her husband. (verse 10d)

- Let not the husband put away his wife. (verse 11d)
- The word depart here cannot mean separation because in such a case the wife is said to be UNMARRIED. (verse 11b)

Conclusion: Christians should not divorce. If they do, their only option is to remain unmarried or reconciled. (verse 11)

3. **Instruction For Those In Mixed Marriages** – Ancient Corinth was a cosmopolitan city given over to much lewdness, idolatry, and perversion. It was the center of the Greek mystery religion, the worship of Aphrodite (goddess of beauty and sex). One feature of this was its 1,200 priestesses – temple prostitutes. Many believers in the church there had been caught up in the city’s sensualities, as evidenced by I Corinthians.

I Corinthians 5:

- Verses 1-2 <sup>1</sup> *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.* <sup>2</sup> *And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.*
- Verses 10-11 <sup>10</sup> *Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.* <sup>11</sup> *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

I Corinthians 6: 9-11 <sup>9</sup> *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,* <sup>10</sup> *Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* <sup>11</sup> *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

In the verses of I Corinthians 7, Paul gives new (“speak I, not the Lord”) inspired relation concerning those in mixed marriage situations:

- A saved man with an unsaved wife should not put her away. <sup>12</sup> *But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.*
- A saved woman should not leave her unbelieving husband. <sup>13</sup> *And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.*
- An unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believing partner. (verse 14). NOTE: The word sanctification means “set apart”. This scripture does NOT teach proxy salvation where an unsaved husband is somehow made saved because of his wife’s behavior. It means God recognizes this marriage arrangement as legitimate: <sup>14</sup> *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*
- Christians who find themselves in this situation should do all they can to save their partner. <sup>16</sup> *For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? **Also, read I Peter 3:1** <sup>1</sup> *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation **[behavior or manner of living]** of the wives;**
- Christians finding themselves in these circumstances should NOT seek to change them. Read verse 17: <sup>17</sup> *But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. God put you in a position with an unbeliever for a purpose!*
- If the unsaved spouse departs, let him depart. Read verse 15: <sup>15</sup> *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.*

4. Two Opinions Regarding I Corinthians 7:15 <sup>15</sup> *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.* Bible believing Baptists generally hold one of two views about this scripture:

- **This verse does NOT refer to divorce.** Those taking this position believe the words:
  - “depart” means desertion, i.e.; a separation.
  - “not under bondage” means they are under no further conjugal obligation.

The question which must be considered here is whether the depart of verse 15 is the same kind of ‘depart’ in verses 10-11: <sup>10</sup> *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: <sup>11</sup> But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*

- **This verse PERMITS divorce. Those taking this position believe the Bible grants another limited permission for divorce.**
  - Only as a last resort
  - Only when initiated by an unbelieving partner on the basis of his/her spouse’s faith in Jesus Christ.

Those who hold this interpretation only advocate divorce as a last resort option, stressing the importance of the believing partner not to make life miserable or unbearable for the unbelieving spouse.

**This (b) seems the stronger interpretation.**

I Corinthians 7 in its entirety below:

I Corinthians 7: <sup>1</sup> *Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. <sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. <sup>3</sup> Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. <sup>4</sup> The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. <sup>5</sup> Defraud ye not one the other, except it be*

with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. <sup>6</sup> But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. <sup>7</sup> For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. <sup>8</sup> I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. <sup>9</sup> But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. <sup>10</sup> And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: <sup>11</sup> But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. <sup>12</sup> But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. <sup>13</sup> And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. <sup>14</sup> For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. <sup>15</sup> But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. <sup>16</sup> For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? <sup>17</sup> But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. <sup>18</sup> Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. <sup>19</sup> Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. <sup>20</sup> Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. <sup>21</sup> Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. <sup>22</sup> For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. <sup>23</sup> Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. <sup>24</sup> Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. <sup>25</sup> Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. <sup>26</sup> I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. <sup>27</sup> Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. <sup>28</sup> But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. <sup>29</sup> But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; <sup>30</sup> And they that

*weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;*<sup>31</sup> *And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.*<sup>32</sup> *But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:*<sup>33</sup> *But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.*<sup>34</sup> *There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: **but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.***<sup>35</sup> *And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.*<sup>36</sup> *But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely **[unattractive or improper]** toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.*<sup>37</sup> *Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.*<sup>38</sup> *So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.*<sup>39</sup> *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.*<sup>40</sup> *But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*

## VII Shall Marry Another

In Matthew 19, the Lord Jesus Christ not only dealt with the subject of divorce but also with that of remarriage. His words in Matthew 19:9 are repeated in:

- Matthew 5:32<sup>31</sup> It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:<sup>32</sup> But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.<sup>33</sup>
- Mark 10:11-12<sup>11</sup> And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.<sup>12</sup> And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

- Luke 16:18 <sup>18</sup> Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

This raises the thorny question of remarriage. Is remarriage after divorce forbidden or permitted? If remarriage is permitted, on what grounds?

Remarriage IS taught is the Bible.

- The law permitted remarriage after a divorce. Deuteronomy 24:2 <sup>1</sup> When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. <sup>2</sup> And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. <sup>3</sup> And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;
- It is better for widows to remarry than to burn. I Corinthians 7:8-9 <sup>8</sup> *I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I.* <sup>9</sup> *But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.*
- According to I Timothy 5: 11-14, young widows should not be cared for by their church (read verse 13), but should remarry. (From verse 3) <sup>3</sup> Honour widows that are widows indeed. <sup>4</sup> But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. <sup>5</sup> Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. <sup>6</sup> But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. <sup>7</sup> And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. <sup>8</sup> But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. <sup>9</sup> Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore **[60]** years old, having been the wife of one man. <sup>10</sup> Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. <sup>11</sup> *But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;* <sup>12</sup> *Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.* <sup>13</sup> *And withal they*

*learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. <sup>14</sup> I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. <sup>15</sup> For some are already turned aside after Satan. <sup>16</sup> If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.*

**BUT, what about remarriage for Christians who have been divorced?**

**Among Bible-believing Baptists, three basic convictions exist on this issue:**

- A. One: **No Divorce, Therefore No Remarriage** – Those who see no New Testament grounds for divorce. The responses below support this position :
- Matthew 19:10 (from verse for context) <sup>8</sup> *He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. <sup>9</sup> And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. <sup>10</sup> His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.*
  - Matthew 19:11-12 <sup>11</sup> *But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. <sup>12</sup> For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.*
- B. Two: **Limited Divorce, No Remarriage**. There are those who would concede divorce permissible on the narrow grounds of fornication or in the case where it is initiated by an unbelieving spouse. But, they would deny any possibility of remarriage while the divorced partner is still living.

- C. Three: **Limited Divorce, Limited Remarriage**. There are those who would concede divorce permissible on these same narrow grounds, and also hold that in such cases the New Testament permits remarriage.
- D. Remarriage And The Teaching Of Christ.

**The issue boils down to the question whether the so called exception clause refers ONLY to divorce – or, to both divorce and remarriage. (If it refers to both and limited divorce is permitted, then limited remarriage is also permitted).**

Those who believe the exception clause covers divorce and remarriage point out the following:

1. The context of Mark 10, 11, 12 and Luke 16:18 (<sup>18</sup> *Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.*) is divorce and remarriage.
2. The Pharisees were well aware of the Law (which permitted remarriage after divorce).
3. If the Lord Jesus Christ intended to absolutely forbid remarriage, would He have not said so?
4. Read Matthew 19:9 <sup>9</sup> *And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*

**It is obvious that the exception clause applies to both the question of divorce as well marriage. Therefore, if it permits divorce, then it must also permit remarriage.**

- E. Remarriage and I Corinthians 7
1. We have already seen that Christians who divorce should remain unmarried or seek to be reconciled. <sup>11</sup> *But and if she depart, let her remain*

*unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*

2. The issue of remarriage once again revolves around the question as to whether divorce is permitted under special circumstance by verse 15 (<sup>15</sup> *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.*) If the meaning of the word “bondage” in verse 15 refers to the bonds of marriage, do the words bond and loosed in verse 27 (<sup>27</sup> *Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.*) likewise refer to marriage and divorce, respectively? Those who believe they do, argue as follows:
  - Art thou bound (married) unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed (divorced). This is what verse 27a teaches <sup>27</sup> *Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.*
  - Art thou loosed (divorced) from a wife, seek not a wife. This is what verse 27b teaches. <sup>27</sup> *Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.*
3. I Corinthians 7:28a <sup>28</sup> *But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned...* Those who believe there can be limited remarriage in the case of permissible divorce see this verse as following on from verse 27 – “Art thou loosed (divorced) from a wife [on the grounds of verse 15 – “unbelieving departed”]? Seek not a wife. But if thou marry, thou hast not sinned.
4. Marriage in I Corinthians 7:28a cannot refer to marriage between two single people because the verse goes on to say “AND if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.”

## F. What About Romans 7:2?

<sup>1</sup> Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? <sup>2</sup> For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

This Scripture is quoted by Bible-believing Baptists on both sides of the issue of possible remarriage after divorce.

Those who do not believe the New Testament makes any allowance for marriage ask, "Does not this verse speak of the permanency of marriage?" Yes, indeed – just as our Lord spoke of it in the Gospels.

Those who believe the New Testament allows for limited divorce point to the expression "bound by the law" and then ask the question, "What Law?"

1. In verse 1 the Bible says, "I speak to them that know the law..."
2. Compare this verse with:
  - Romans 2:14 <sup>14</sup> For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:
  - Romans 7:12 <sup>12</sup> Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Does Romans 7:2 refer to the law of Moses?

3. Does the Law of Moses permit divorce? YES

Their argument is that a wife is bound by the Law (of Moses) to her husband, but that same law permits divorce and subsequent remarriage.

Their argument is that a wife is bound by the Law (of Moses) to her husband but that that same law permits divorce (and subsequent remarriage).

## G. Real Problems With Remarriage

These are indeed thorny issues – matters over which many Bible-believing Baptist churches and pastors literally agonize. Sometimes it results in strife

between brethren, but righteous anger should surely be focused upon the hardness of hearts of men and women. Anytime we move away from God's perfect will (in this case "one man and one woman, one lifetime) we create seemingly unsolvable solutions.

Often when remarriage appears to be the best solution it only brings a new set of problems - especially when children are involved. When sin that was the root of the cause of a previous marriage's failure is not Scripturally dealt with, it will usually resurface in the second marriage. Expectations of a new start in life can be unrealistic, thus leading to a new round of disappointment. When someone has been hurt in their first marriage (e.g., by an unfaithful partner), they find it difficult to enter into an unreserved relationship.

On the other hand, when remarriage is forbidden to those who have been divorced within the allowances of EITHER:

- the exception clause (immorality) OR
- I Corinthians 7 – having been divorced by an unbelieving partner

a new set of questions is raised.

For example, consider this typical scenario of a 28 year old Christian mother of 2 who, despite her best efforts and unwillingness to forgive, and refusal to initiate divorce proceedings, was divorced by her unfaithful (and since remarriage) husband. Her pastor lovingly counsels her that she cannot remarry until her former husband is dead. This raises the tough question: "Does one commandment of God ever cause us to disobey another command of God? Without a husband, this poor woman cannot:

- Work and let others raise her small children – Titus 2:4c, 5c.<sup>4</sup> That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,<sup>5</sup> To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

- Be sustained by her church – I Timothy 5:9,10. 9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man. 10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.
- Live off government welfare.
- Be reconciled to her ex-husband.

Beside all this, her children have to father-figure to lead them in the ways of the Lord.

Of course there are other options (her family, James 1:27, work from home, alimony, and child support, etc.). The point is that while an absolutely “no remarriage” position may be cut and dried for the pastor, it is never so simple for those involve!

Oh the hardness of the heart of man! What a tangled imbroglio [im-brohl-yoh] [a misunderstanding, disagreement, etc., of a complicated or bitter nature, as between persons or nations. Or, an intricate and perplexing state of affairs; a complicated or difficult situation. Or a confused heap] divorce creates!

## VIII Doth Commit Adultery

According to Mark 10, 11, 12; Luke 16:18; and Romans 7:3, when someone who has divorced their partner remarries, or when someone marries their divorced partner – they commit adultery (apart from the exception clause.)

### A. Is This Adultery “one Time” Or “Perpetual?”

1. Those who believe this is a ‘one time’ act often counsel the innocent party to remain unmarried until such a time as their ex-partner commits adultery by remarrying, thereby providing Scriptural grounds for remarriage.
2. Those who believe it is a perpetual sin usually recommend the adulterous (remarried) couple separate (not divorce) at least until any and all first marriages are Scripturally dissolved by death. This counsel is offered regardless of how long a second marriage may have existed, and regardless of any children born from the second marriage.

### B. Can This Kind Of Adultery Be Forgiven?

1. Is adultery a forgivable sin?

Read John 8:2-11 <sup>2</sup> *And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.* <sup>3</sup> *And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,* <sup>4</sup> *They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.* <sup>5</sup> *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?* <sup>6</sup> *This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.* <sup>7</sup> *So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* <sup>8</sup> *And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.* <sup>9</sup> *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.* <sup>10</sup> *When Jesus*

*had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? <sup>11</sup> She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

2. According to I Corinthians 6:9,10 <sup>9</sup> *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, <sup>10</sup> Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

Consider the scenario of a seemingly Christ-loving middle-aged couple, strong members of a church, doing God's work, etc. Before both were saved, their marriages ended in divorce. As single divorcees they were saved, later met and were married, and have been happily married ever since. Those who hold to the idea of perpetual adultery would logically have to say either they were never truly saved (because they evidence no fruit of repentance, living in continual disobedience of God's clear teaching against remarriage) – or they were saved, but lost their salvation once they remarried!

3. If a Christian committed adultery through remarriage before they were saved, then according to I Corinthians 6:11 (<sup>11</sup> *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*), they ARE WASHED, SANCTIFIED, and JUSTIFIED.

### C. The Old Testament Solution

1. The Law's penalty for adultery was death. Leviticus 20:10 <sup>10</sup> *And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*
2. This would surely solve a multitude of practical problems!

#### D. The New Testament Way

1. According to Leviticus 20:11, a man who lies with his father's wife was to be put to death. <sup>11</sup> *And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*
2. According to I Corinthians 5:1 and 5:13, a church member who lay with his father's wife was to be put away (i.e., church discipline was to be effected).
  - I Corinthians 5:1 <sup>1</sup> *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.*
  - I Corinthians 5:13 <sup>13</sup> *But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*
3. This demonstrates a basic shift in penalty between the Old Testament (nation) and New Testament (church). Baptist churches do not execute those of their members who violate God's holy precepts – but they still have an obligation to deal with such sins.

If a believer is guilty of adultery through remarriage, he or she should confess it as sin and receive God's and the church's forgiveness.

Church members who have experienced divorce and remarriage in the past should be careful not to give others the impression that theirs was desirable course of action. (There are enough people about who will give the advice that divorce as a viable solution to marital problems.)

Matthew 19:8 <sup>8</sup> *He saith unto them, **Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.***

**INSTRUCTION IN THIS LESSON TERMINATED AT THIS POINT**

### **IX The Causes Of Divorce**

- A. Lack Of Godly Leadership
- B. Lack Of Motherly Presence
- C. Lack Of The Word: Love Of The World
- D. Other Causes

### **X Consequences Of Divorce**

- A. Divorce Violates
- B. Divorce Has Emotional Consequences
- C. Divorce Has Financial Consequences
- D. Divorce Has Social Consequences
- E. Divorce Has Spiritual Consequences

### **XI The Church And Divorce**

- A. Three (3) Basic Church Attitudes Towards Divorce and Divorced Persons
- B. Three (3) Basic Church Actions Relating to Divorce and Divorced Persons

**“Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife: to live together in the holy estate of matrimony. To love her, cherish her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health: and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as you both shall live?”**

**“Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband: to live together in the holy estate of matrimony, to reverence him, obey him, comfort him, and honor and keep him, in sickness and in health: and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as you both shall live? I Do!**

## **Lesson Outline**

### **I Have Ye Not Read?**

- A. The Creation Of Man**
- B. The Creation Of Marriage**
- C. The Creation Of Management**

### **II What Therefore God Hath Joined Together**

- A. Marriage Is A Covenant**
- B. Marriage Is A Conjugation**

### **III Let Not Man Put Asunder**

- A. What God Thinks About Marriage**
- B. What God Thinks About Divorce**

### **IV Why Did Moses Then Command?**

- A. The Old Testament Premise For Divorce**
- B. The Old Testament Procedure For Divorce**
- C. The Old Testament Prohibitions in Divorce**
- D. Two Old Testament Cases Of Divorce**

### **V Because Of The Hardness Of Your Heart**

- A. Read: Hebrews 3:8-19**
- B. Read: Mark 6:52**
- C. Read Proverbs 28:14**
- D. Read II Chronicles 36:13**

### **VI Except It Be For Fornication**

- A. Does This "Exception Clause" Apply Today?**
- B. Exactly What Is Fornication?**
- C. Under What Conditions is Divorce Permissible?**
- D. Does I Corinthians 7 Give Another Exception?**

### **VII Shall Marry Another**

- A. One: No Divorce, Therefore No Remarriage**
- B. Two: Limited Divorce, No Remarriage**
- C. Three: Limited Divorce, Limited Remarriage**
- D. Remarriage And The Teaching Of Christ**

- E. Remarriage and I Corinthians 7
- F. What About Romans 7:2?
- G. Real Problems With Remarriage

#### VIII Doth Commit Adultery

- A. Is This Adultery “one Time” Or “Perpetual?”
- B. Can This Kind Of Adultery Be Forgiven?
- C. The Old Testament Solution.
- D. The New Testament Way

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- A. Lack Of Godly Leadership
- B. Lack Of Motherly Presence
- C. Lack Of The Word: Love Of The World
- D. Other Causes

#### X Consequences Of Divorce

- A. Divorce Violates
- B. Divorce Has Emotional Consequences
- C. Divorce Has Financial Consequences
- D. Divorce Has Social Consequences
- E. Divorce Has Spiritual Consequences

#### XI The Church And Divorce

- A. Three (3) Basic Church Attitudes Towards Divorce and Divorced Persons
- B. Three (3) Basic Church Actions Relating to Divorce and Divorced Persons

**“Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife: to live together in the holy estate of matrimony. To love her, cherish her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health: and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as you both shall live?”**

**“Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband: to live together in the holy estate of matrimony, to reverence him, obey him, comfort him, and honor and keep him, in sickness and in health: and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as you both shall live? I Do!**