

THE MARRIAGE, DIVORCE,

REMARRIAGE, AND

“HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE”

CONTROVERSY

BY

BROTHER CARL M. (MIKE) SUTHERLAND

**The Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, And “Husband Of One Wife” Controversy
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We want to start this series out by stating unequivocally that we believe that God's plan for marriage from the beginning has been one man with one woman for a lifetime. God specifically states that he hates putting away (divorce) in Malachi chapter 2. We also want to unequivocally state that because of the wickedness of man's heart that God makes provision for divorce and remarriage. While it is obvious that God allowed polygyny, or, the marrying of multiple wives, it is also obvious that that was not his original design. There is not one instance of polyandry recorded in the Scriptures. Polyandry is the practice of females having more husbands than one at the same time. We will deal with these issues as we move forward.

We are about to address several of the most controversial issues in the Scriptures when we deal with the subjects of marriage, divorce, remarriage, sexual sins, and the qualifications for men to hold positions in the ministry. In this study, we will attempt to answer many questions; some of which are identified in the next paragraph.

Many questions come to mind. What is the Scriptural definition of marriage? Is there an Old Testament or a New Testament Scripture that specifically prohibits a man or a woman from having two or more spouses? Are their Scriptural grounds for divorce? How are we to understand the phrase: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"? Can a married person be guilty of fornication? What is the Scriptural definition of adultery? What is an adulterer? What is an adulteress? What is the Scriptural definition for fornication? What is a fornicator? What is a harlot? What is a whore? What is a whoremonger? Can a single person be guilty of adultery? What is the Scriptural definition of unmarried? Are both parties to a divorce always guilty of sin? Is divorce one of the two unforgivable sins? Do the scriptures permit remarriage after divorce? According to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, what constitutes a church office? In what grammatical tense is the qualifications for pastors and deacons written in in First Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1? From the context of 1 Timothy chapter 1, what can be determined about what group of people Paul is instructing Timothy about? From the context of Titus chapter 1, what can be determined about what group of people Paul is instructing Titus about? The answers to both of those questions will give you some clues as to how to interpret and apply the instructions given to Timothy and Titus concerning the role of men in the church. In what other chapter of the New Testament are qualifications for deacons given? What, if any, church offices is a man not qualified to hold if he has been divorced? Is a single man who has never been married qualified to be a pastor, preacher, evangelist, or a deacon? Is a widower qualified to hold any church office?

We know that we will receive sharp criticism from many of the doctors that preach in the pulpits of many Independent Baptist churches. We will be called compromisers on the subjects of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and qualifications for men in the ministry of the church of the living God. While we do not seek confrontation, we know it will come from those who parrot and defend the tradition of the doctors of the law. There are many well-meaning men out there, who we respect, whose doctrine concerning these subjects does not line up with what the word of God teaches. There are also many well-meaning men out there, who we respect, who parrot the positions of their leaders and have not searched the Scriptures to see what thus saith the Lord. We know that some folks will read this material and the Scriptures that back it up and will reject it outright because it goes against what they have been taught by so and so even though they know that what they have been taught

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does not line up with the Scriptures. We also know that some people will not even bother reading this the rest of the way through simply because of some of the questions that were asked in the two opening paragraphs. We would to God that any and all would take the time to prove us wrong on what we say here. At least then, they will have studied the issue through for themselves. Please do not tell us what you have been taught by your preacher, pastor, evangelist, or teachers if you have not proved what they say against the Scriptures. We will not be men pleasers on this subject because the gross misinterpretation and misapplication of the Scriptures on these issues has destroyed the lives of many great men and women sitting in our pews and standing in our pulpits. Satan has used the misinterpretation of these issues to drive many good, Godly men from the pulpits of our churches and to deny entry into the ministry to many other Godly men. You can strut like a peacock if you want to when you proudly proclaim that you have never been divorced. How many times have you went a whoring around on your wife. Or, how many times, and with how many women, did you have premarital sex. When you get through cutting divorced people to the bone with your unforgiving tongue why don't you ask the Holy Ghost if it is okay for you to put down the salt shaker you used to pour salt into their wounds.

We are personally guilty of having battled with these issues for years while listening to what this man had to say and to what that man had to say without having done a complete study on the whole counsel of God concerning these issues. This has not been an easy road to walk. We have had to throw out some beliefs that we held to and adamantly defended for years. In other words, some of our conclusions from this study contradict doctrines we have been taught and have held to for years. The light of the Scriptures has lit up the dark corners where some of the doctrines we have held to rest. We are going to present our findings and conclusions in the pages to come and we welcome your comments and questions. Once again, we encourage you to prove us wrong because we have a genuine heart felt desire to rightly divide the Word Of Truth. If we are Scripturally wrong, we want to be proved wrong. If your standard of righteousness for marriage, divorce, remarriage, and qualifications exceeds that which is written in Scriptures, do not try to impose those standards on your fellow believers because it will subvert the forgiving grace of God in their lives and will cause them great harm and great pain. We need to be very careful about our doctrine. The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 15:9: “ But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”. Much of what we teach and preach concerning marriage and divorce is laced with the poison of the doctrines and commandments of men. If your standard of righteousness exceeds the standards of the Scriptures and you attempt to impose your standards upon others, then you are guilty of being a Pharisee. This study is our sincere attempt to instruct ourselves in, and yield to, the teachings of the word of God concerning marriage, divorce, remarriage, and God's requirements for church leaders. We hope that you will join us in this study where our objective is to determine what thus saith the Lord concerning the issues of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and qualifications for church offices.

In the course of this study, we have looked up, read, and studied in context every occurrence of the following words and phrases (the number of occurrences we looked at are in brackets):

adulterer [3], adulterers [9], adulteress [5], adulteresses [3], adulteries [5], adulterous

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[4], adultery [39], betroth [4], betrothed [9], bound [104], bride [14], bridegroom [24], concubine [22], concubines [17], divorce [1], divorced [4], divorcement [6], effeminate [1], espousals [2], espoused [5], fornication [36], fornications [3], fornicator [2], fornicators [3], harlot [42], harlot's [2], harlots [6], harlots' [1], husband [126], husband's [6], husbands [17], husband of one wife [3], in unto [76], lay with [13], lie with [28], lying with [7], loosed [32], marriage [18], marry [22], married [30], one flesh [10], put(ing) away [64], sodomite [1], sodomites [4], spouse [6], spouses [2], uncleanness [40], unmarried [4], virgin [34], virgins [22], virgin's [1], wedding [7], whore [15], whores [2], whoredom [21], whoredoms [32], whoremonger [1], whoremongers [4], whoring [19], wife [407], wife's [11], wives [131].

Though we read in context every occurrence of the words above we did not use every occurrence because many of the words were used generically such as husband, wife, and wives to name a few. Where a specific occurrence of a word gave a definition, description, or interpretation of what a wife, husband, and etc. were, we used that Scripture in this discussion. The reason we give the figures above is to show the reader and/or listener the massive amount of information that is available in the Scriptures concerning the issues that are before us.

We put a great deal of emphasis on sexual sins in our study because it is the violation of the marriage bed that leads to many divorces and open fornication by the married and unmarried. We have studied Jewish and Roman marriage and divorce customs and law. We have also looked at many Bible dictionaries and commentaries not to determine where we should stand on these issues, but to see where various "great men of God" stood on these issues. What we can tell you is that it is a mixed bag with many great men of God coming down on opposite sides of the issue. Two examples will briefly serve to illustrate this point. One of the great icons of the Independent Baptist movement, C. I. Scofield (a Congregationalist), was a divorced pastor. Scofield was Dwight L. Moody's pastor and Moody knew he was divorced. What that means is that both Scofield and Moody believed it was okay for a divorced man to hold a pastor's position. Many of the Independent Baptist preachers and pastors that harangue against "double married preachers" push the Scofield Study Bible and its King James Bible correcting notes to the hilt. Many of the same pastors and preachers set Moody up as the standard to "live and preach by". As much as we respect the ministry of Dwight L. Moody, he is not the standard that we hold our doctrine to and neither is any other pastor, preacher, or evangelist. Our standard for doctrine is the perfect 1611 Authorized King James Bible.

In the studies that follow we beg of you NOT to read into the Scriptures any of your preconceived notions and doctrine about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Read and interpret the Scriptures literally and diligently compare Scripture with Scripture. Be a Berean. We beg of you to set aside everything that you have been taught about marriage, divorce, and remarriage that does NOT line up with the literal facts and the literal interpretation of the scriptures. You will be shocked at what you will learn. We know that we were shocked. We had many preconceived ideas about marriage, divorce, and remarriage that did not line up with the Scriptures. We held to doctrines that exceeded the righteousness of the Scriptures. Regardless of how well intentioned our motivation might be, we become legalists and Pharisees when our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of

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the Scriptures and we attempt to impose that righteousness on a fellow believer. Matthew 23:4 declares:

Matthew 23:4

⁴ For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

We have discovered through this study that that is exactly what we have been guilty of in the past because we had never completely studied the whole counsel of God on the subjects before us. Many well intentioned men that we love have taught us some doctrines concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage that cannot be supported from the Scriptures. Consequently, the effect of that unscriptural teaching has been to punish and make guilty those that are innocent. There will be those who will accuse us of promoting Peter Ruckman’s views on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, but we totally reject that criticism because our views did not come from regurgitating Peter Ruckman’s views or that of any other author or commentary, but from an exhaustive and independent study of the Scriptures. While we have read Peter Ruckman’s “Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage” pamphlet of 39 pages (19 typewritten pages), we did not read that until most of the preparation for this work was completed.

What complicates the matter before us even more is the fact that many men of God whom we know are holy and separated, men whom we love, hold contrary views on the primary subject that is before us and that is marriage, divorce, remarriage, and qualifications for men in the ministry. It is not a denominational issue either. Many great men of God have strongly disagreed over these issues. I am not talking about the Roman Catholics either who have almost totally forsaken the Word of God in these matters. We have also seen great men of God just drop their heads and turn away when asked where they stand on these issues. Many times that is a reaction caused by not wanting to challenge that which we know to be wrong because we fear confrontation and losing friends. Regretably, most of the doctrine held by most men in the ministry is peer driven. The doctrines that they claim to believe in are those doctrines that they were taught in a seminary or Bible Institute; or are held to by those men they run with in their camp or association; or that are held by some great preacher, pastor, or evangelist; or that they were fed from some commentary or book that they read. Most preachers, pastors, and teachers today did not build their doctrine on independent, Berean style Bible study. The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe. Great men are not *always* wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. The Devil casteth a snare both when we do not meet the standard of the scriptures and when we exceed the standard of the scriptures. Both bring reproach upon the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church. Both are a product of fear and a lack of faith. When we do not meet the standard of the scriptures, we are rightfully called compromisers and soft on sin. When our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scriptures then we are rightfully called Pharisees, hypocrites, and legalists. We will document many of those differences between the great men of God as we move throughout this study.

CHAPTER 2: A SCRIPTURAL DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF MARRIAGE

We want to state before we go any further that while we believe that a sexual relationship between a man and a woman establishes a covenant relationship between them that binds upon them the scriptural obligation to live together before God as husband and wife, we do not believe that a marriage is nothing more than a sexual relationship. We will be accused by some of downgrading the Biblical institution of marriage. The problem is one of perception. Most people just do not see adultery and fornication as the vile and wicked acts that they are. Most people just do not understand the institution of marriage as it is presented in the Scriptures because they have not been taught properly. Another major part of the issue is that wicked men and women have made a mockery of fornication and adultery. Most men and women today cannot even blush because their conscience has been seared by the constant diet of sexual promiscuity and sexual perversion that they are fed through their televisions and movie theaters. The Devil has conned them into believing that fornication and adultery are casual sexual acts to be freely partook of. God does not view fornication and adultery as a mere sexual act. It is a very serious thing with God. God's perspective on adultery and fornication is that it is an attack upon the institution of marriage. That is why God established the death penalty for fornication and adultery under the Old Testament law. Adultery and fornication are also a picture of Satan's attack upon the Bride Of Christ. Fornication and adultery are Satan's counterpart to God's institution of marriage. The bride of Satan is a whore. The Bride Of Christ is a chaste virgin. If Christian men and women lived with the perception that sex is an equivalent act to marriage, we would have a whole lot less fornicating pastors and preachers in our pulpits.

You will hear this stated many times throughout this book. Scriptural marriage is intended to be one man with one woman for a lifetime. God hates divorce. The Bible says that a man and a woman marry when they become one flesh. The concept of one flesh can be summarized as follows: "No man or woman ever becomes separated from their own flesh until they die". That is why we can state that God intended that marriage be an "until death do is part" event. Put another way, when you become one flesh with the opposite sex God intends for that relationship to be permanent until it is put asunder by death. That is why fornication and adultery is so wicked in the eyes of God.

Contrary to what many fundamentalist and Baptist preachers and pastors preach and teach, God does not put most marriages together. For anyone to teach such a doctrine is a wicked slap in the face of God the Holy Ghost Who authored the Scriptures. When God sets forth the standards for two people being allowed to become one flesh and those standards are violated, then it is obvious that God did not put those marriages together. While God in his permissive will allows unscriptural marriages, he does not put them together. God does not put a believer and an unbeliever together. The scriptures do not say: "what therefore God has allowed to be joined together, let not man put asunder. The scripture is emphatic that God joined it together. The only marriages that can possibly be described as having been put together by God are those involving either two Jews or two Bible believing Christians. We believe that God intends marriage to be a high and holy picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Bride, The Church of the redeemed. For that reason, we are totally opposed to any form of polygamy because the Bride of Christ is one body both spiritually and physically with the Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! The Lord Jesus Christ has but one Bride and Wife in Revelation 19 and that is the church of the living God. By stating we are opposed to any form of polygamy we

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mean that we are opposed to any form of polygyny that puts one man with multiple wives at the same time, or any form of polyandry that puts one woman with multiple husbands at one time. We are opposed to a man keeping concubines for the same reason. Most of you are in for a real shock as we go forward in our discussion just as we have been in preparing this book! We better read and study our Bibles very carefully because if we do not, we will end up ignorantly hurting some of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have seen many divorced people abused from our pulpits over the years. We have seen many once married peacocks kick a divorced man when he is down. Many of the once married peacocks carry a razor and a shaker of salt around to keep those wannabe “double married” preachers in their proper place of pain and eternal punishment.

Proverbs 30:12-14

¹² There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. ¹³ There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. ¹⁴ There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

Just because we quote an individual here and then document why we disagree with them doctrinally does not mean that we do not think they are a brother in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor does it mean that we think they are our enemies. Nor does it mean we would break fellowship with them because they disagree with us over the content of this book.

From the Scriptures we can state that God had at least a five-fold purpose in ordaining a husband and wife relationship: (1) To populate the earth; (2) To subdue the earth; (3) To have dominion over every living thing; (4) To provide Adam with companionship; (5) To provide Adam with an help meet. We can find this five-fold purpose stated in Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:18 where we see:

Genesis 1:27-28

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸ 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.

Genesis 2:18

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

The first three purposes are contained in Genesis 1:28 with Genesis 2:18 containing the last two purposes. God did not create woman that man might have an adversary or a robot (slave). That is the way the Devil would have it. Neither did God create a man that God might have an adversary or a robot. God intended that a man might be submitted to him in the same manner as a woman is to be

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submitted to her husband. It is a chain of command that was created in love. God created woman that the man might have companionship and a help meet for carrying out God's purpose. It is in fulfillment of three of those purposes that God created the institution we call marriage. Marriage was the first institution that God ordained followed by the family. God's first commandment to mankind was to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). That commandment was obeyed in the act of becoming one flesh and God producing the fruit thereof. The act of becoming one flesh established the husband and wife relationship according to Genesis 2:24:

Genesis 2:24

²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 is at least partially quoted five more times in the Bible with the scriptural definition of marriage as being "one flesh" never being changed. Genesis 2:24 is also partially quoted in Malachi 2:15 with the use of the phrase "And did he not make one?". Genesis 3:24 is quoted in the following passages:

Malachi 2:15

¹⁵ **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.

Matthew 19:4-6

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, 5 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**? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but **one flesh**. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mark 10:6-8

6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but **one flesh**.

1 Corinthians 6:16-17

16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be **one flesh**. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

Ephesians 5:31-32

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his

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wife, and they two shall be **one flesh**.³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

This particular passage is quoted in 1 Corinthians 6:16 in the context of the longest passage on marriage in the New Testament with that being 1 Corinthians chapter 7. The law of first mention defines a wife as woman who has become one flesh with a man in Genesis 2:24. The word “**marry**” sees its first mention in Genesis 38:8 where the word “**marry**” is defined as a man going in unto a woman for the purpose of producing seed. This verse states:

Genesis 38:8

⁸ And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother’s wife, and **marry** her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

Unmarried people become guilty of fornication when they come together sexually and then do not live together as husband and wife as commanded in the Scriptures. God considered the sexual relationship to be of such importance that the law required death for those who violated Biblical commandments concerning it. Married people who come together sexually with someone they are not married to commit fornication and adultery. Adultery comes under the broad umbrella of fornication in the New Testament. See the definitions section at the rear of the book. (We understand that adultery and fornication come from two different Greek words, but don’t pull out your Greek sword yet. You may give yourself a deadly wound). Now, Genesis 2:24 and Genesis 38:8 would normally be enough to convince most Bible students that a husband and wife relationship, or marriage, is established by the act of becoming one flesh, but that is not the case in the subject before us. Tragically, many men in our pulpits and men and women in our pews have been blinded by teaching and preaching that is more holy than the Scriptures. In fact, it is a teaching that exceeds the righteousness of the Scriptures.

The words marriage and wedding are used interchangeably in the New Testament. The word “marriage” is used 17 times in the New Testament while the word “wedding” is used 7 times. Most of the time the two terms are used to refer to the marriage supper and the wedding feasts that followed the man and woman becoming one flesh. That is true of the marriage (supper) in John 2:1-11 and of the marriage supper in Revelation 19:7-9.

Many Baptist and fundamentalist preachers, teachers, and pastors hold to a very Roman Catholic doctrine of what constitutes a scriptural marriage. Here is why we say that. The Roman Catholic Church holds that a marriage is a ceremony to be presided over by the church which is the same view held by many Baptists including many Independent Baptists. That doctrine will not stand the test of the Scriptures. Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. Because they unscripturally declare marriage to be a sacrament, they feel that they are the only earthly authority divinely authorized to dispense marriage. This makes the authority to contract a marriage to be vested in the Roman Catholic Church. The custom of having a ceremony with a priest, pastor, or preacher present came slithering up out of the crypts of Roman Catholic theology.

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Here is the proof:

Those who shall attempt to contract marriage otherwise than in the presence of the parish priest, or of some other priest by permission of the said parish priest, or of the Ordinary, and in the presence of two or three witnesses; the holy Synod renders such wholly incapable of thus contracting and declares such contracts invalid and null, as by the present decree It invalidates and annuls them. Moreover It enjoins, that the parish priest, or any other priest, who shall have been present at any such contract with a less number of witnesses (than as aforesaid); as also the witnesses who have been present thereat without the parish priest, or some other priest; and also the contracting parties themselves; shall be severely punished, at the discretion of the Ordinary. (Council Of Trent, Seventh Session, Decree On Reformation Chapter 1, July 15, 1563)

The authority to contract marriage is not Scripturally vested in any church including the Roman Catholic Church. Neither does the Roman Catholic Church have any scriptural authority to annul marriages. If you are a New Testament preacher or pastor, you do not have the scriptural power or authority to state: “By the power vested in me, I pronounce you husband and wife”. A church or state authority may have wrongfully granted you that authority, but it is not scriptural. The authority to contract marriage is scripturally vested in the family and its individuals. For those of you who will not marry divorced couples, you do not have the scriptural authority to “marry” anyone regardless of whether they have been divorced. Though civil authorities regulate marriage, they have no scriptural authority to contract marriages. In the Old Testament, it was generally the father of the Bridegroom that sought out a Bride for the Son. You never see an Old Testament priest in that role. Nor do you see an Old Testament priest officiating at any marriage ceremony, period. Nor is the king’s representative there officiating! The same pattern is repeated in the New Testament. We are not opposed to weddings and marriage ceremonies, but they are not required in the eyes of God for a marriage to be Scripturally valid and binding. It is the sexual act that makes a marriage scripturally binding. While we are not opposed to weddings, we have seen many so called Christian brides on their wedding days dressed in the most ungodly fashion that leaves little to the imagination. God’s standards for Christ honouring dress do not get thrown out of your bedroom into the public arena on your wedding day.

Throughout this book, we will continue to rebuke the idea that it is a ceremony that makes for a Biblical marriage. You will not find one commandment in the Old Testament to a priest or in the New Testament to a pastor or preacher that directs them to conduct marriage ceremonies. Neither will you find one example in either Testament of a religious or governmental official conducting a marriage ceremony or vows. What you will find in the Old Testament is that all instructions, commandments, and charges regarding marriage are given to the parents. There is no scriptural authority vested in the church or in the government to institute marriages. In Exodus 22:16, the father even had the right to refuse to allow a man to marry his daughter even when the man had taken her virginity away.

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We will start the next phase of our study with the dictionary definitions of the words betroth, espouse, bride, bridegroom, marry, husband, wife, and concubine. For a more in depth definition and description of these terms refer to the “Glossary Of Terms”. The Webster’s 1812 definition of espouse is:

To betroth; to promise or engage in marriage, by contract in writing, or by some pledge; as, the king espoused his daughter to a foreign prince. Usually and properly followed by to, rather than with. To marry; to wed.

The Webster’s 1812 definition of betroth is:

1. To contract to any one, in order to a future marriage; to promise or pledge one to be the future spouse of another; to affianced; used of either sex. “The father betroths his daughter”.
2. To contract with one for a future spouse; to espouse; as, a man betroths a lady.

So, we see that the definitions of betroth and espouse are essentially the same. The 1812 Webster’s Dictionary definition of bride is:

1. A woman newly married. But the name is applied to a woman at the marriage festival, before she is married, as well as after the ceremony.
2. A woman espoused, or contracted to be married.

The custom of continuing to call a woman a bride even after the wedding ceremony is thought to have originated in Deuteronomy 24:5 which states:

Deuteronomy 24:5

⁵ When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

The 1812 Webster’s Dictionary definition of bridegroom is:

A man newly married; or a man about to be married.

The 1812 Webster’s Dictionary definition of marry is:

To enter into the conjugal state; to unite as husband and wife; to take a husband or a wife. To take for husband or wife. We say, a man marries a woman; or a woman marries a man. The first was the original sense, but both are now well authorized.

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Notice that the definition of marry is focused upon becoming one flesh in this Webster's definition. The word conjugal means to come together physically.

The Webster's 1812 definition of husband is:

A man contracted or joined to a woman by marriage. A man to whom a woman is betrothed, as well as one actually united by marriage, is called a husband. Lev 19. Deu 22.

The Webster's 1812 definition of wife is:

The lawful consort of man; a woman who is united to man in the lawful bonds of wedlock; the correlative of husband.

The Webster's 1812 definition of concubine is:

1. A woman who cohabits with a man, without the authority of a legal marriage; a woman kept for lewd purposes; a kept mistress.
2. A wife of inferior condition; a lawful wife, but not united to the man by the usual ceremonies, and of inferior condition. Such were Hagar and Keturah, the concubines of Abraham; and such concubines were allowed by the Roman laws.

What we see in all these definitions above is a combination of scriptural descriptions and legal descriptions. The scriptural definition of a term may not be the same as the legal definition, but many times the legal definition of a term is the same as the scriptural definition. If the legal definition of term contradicts the scriptural definition of a term, we are bound to obey the scriptures. Such is the case in same sex "marriages" which are strictly forbidden by the Scriptures as being an abomination. The Webster's 1812 definition of unmarried is:

Not married; having no husband or no wife.

This is the case for Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:8. He states that he is unmarried. He does not state that he has never been married or that he is not divorced. We will discuss the implications of that later on in the chapter on "Standards For Church Service/Qualifications For Church Offices". The only place that the word "unmarried" is used in the Scriptures is in 1 Corinthians 7 where it is used four times. The word "unmarried" is used both of the divorced women in 1 Corinthians 7:11 and of a virgin in 1 Corinthians 7:34. What this means is that the scriptural definition of an unmarried person is both a virgin who has never been married and the individual who has been married, but is now divorced. We realize that by definition that a virgin is one who has never had sex (been married) to an individual of the opposite sex.

The first two questions we will ask is what is an espousal and what is an engagement? The

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third question we will ask is: “what constitutes a scriptural marriage?”. Here are some of the questions that follow from that first three questions. Does a scriptural marriage require a ceremony? Does a scriptural marriage require a marriage license or certificate? Does a scriptural marriage require the presence of a priest, pastor, preacher, or state official as an administrator?

What is the difference between an espousal and an engagement? In Matthew 1:18-19, we read:

Matthew 1:18-19

18 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. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

It is most important to note here that Joseph was espoused to Mary but they had not yet become husband and wife by becoming one flesh. In other words, they were not married. If the case was otherwise, there could have been no virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Note the following description:

“Betrothal with the ancient Hebrews was of a more formal and far more binding nature than the “engagement” is with us. Indeed, it was esteemed a part of the transaction of marriage, and that the most binding part.... Among the Jews the betrothal was so far regarded as binding that, if marriage should not take place, owing to the absconding of the bridegroom or the breach of contract on his part, the young woman could not be married to another man until she was liberated by a due process and a paper of divorce” [The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Copyright 1929, General Editor James Orr, page 1,997]. [Note from the author of this book: betrothal is the same as espousal]

We would note that this process is not contained in the Scriptures and that it was Jewish custom. Concerning this custom of betrothal, in the article titled “Betrothal And Nuptial Rites, the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia had this to say:

“The first step toward marriage was betrothal, involving the consent of the parent or guardian of the girl and the payment of a price. The act of betrothal is expressed by the Hebrew word “aras”; the price paid, by “mohar” (see Gen. xxxiv. 12; Ex. xxii. 16-17; Deut. xx. 7, xxii. 29; Hos. ii. 19-20). The mohar may be in the form of service in the field or in war (Gen. xxix.; I Sam. xviii. 25). Probably it was customary, even in early times, to give the bride some portion of the mohar, or at least to give her presents (Gen. xxiv. 53, xxxi. 15, xxxiv. 12). After betrothal the bride might be taken to her husband’s house and the nuptials celebrated either immediately or later (Gen. xxiv. 49-67; Judges xiv. 5 et seq.). The initial steps, it appears, were customarily taken by the parents of the suitor, who formally made the proposal (Gen.

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xxiv., xxxiv. 4-6; Judges xiv. 2, 10). Not infrequently, however, in the comparatively free social intercourse of those days, the young man and woman had met and formed a mutual attachment resulting in a love-match (Gen. xxix. 9-12, 18; I Sam. xviii. 20, 28).

The bride did not always go to her husband empty-handed. Sometimes she received gifts from her father, and a king's parting gift to his daughter was in one case a conquered city (Josh. xv. 16 et seq.; Judges I. 12 et seq.; I. Kings ix. 16). In post-exilic times mention is made of a wife's dowry and of a woman being able, by her own wealth, to support her husband (Tobit viii. 21; Ecclus [Sirach] xxv. 22). Mention is made also of a written marriage-contract (Tobit vii. 14).

After betrothal the bride was subject to the same restrictions as a wife (Deut. xxii. 23-24). Of the marriage ceremonial little is known; it is not mentioned at all in the story of Isaac, while in that of Jacob (Gen. xxix.) a marriage-feast and a nuptial week are spoken of. The central features in later times were the wedding-procession and the wedding-feast. The bridegroom in festive attire and accompanied by his friends went to the home of the bride, whence she, likewise in bridal garments, veiled, and accompanied by her companions, was led to the house of his parents (Isa. lxi. 10; Judges xiv. 10-11; Jer. ii. 32; Isa. xlix. 18; Ps. xlv. 8-15). The procession was enlivened with songs by, or in praise of, the bride and bridegroom, and was lighted, if in the evening, by torches or lamps (Jer. vii. 34, xvi. 9, xxv. 10; I Macc. ix. 37-39; Matt. xxv. 1-12; comp. Ps. xlv. and the Canticles, possibly representing such wedding-songs). There followed the nuptial feast in the house of the bridegroom, and the subsequent festivities sometimes continued for several days (Matt. ix. 15, xxii. 1-14; John ii. 1).” (Cited from

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/5941-exogamy> [The Internet Edition Of The 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia])

This Jewish custom of betrothal and/or espousal is much more binding than its Gentile counterpart of “engagement” which can be broken without a decree of any court system though it may sometimes have some civil consequences. An engagement is a commitment by two individuals of opposite sex to marry one another at some point in time. Typically, it is not a legally binding commitment and can be broken at will.

Under Jewish law, a man and a woman can be considered to be husband and wife without having ever been married. It exists in a state of espousal or betrothal. That condition was legal under Jewish law and right and holy in God's eyes. However, the opposite condition also exists because of man's wickedness. What we mean is that a man and a woman could be married, but not be husband and wife in God's eyes or legally under man's laws. We will use a New Testament case of adultery and bigamy to prove this point. According to Mark 6:17-18 a man can be married to a woman and her not be his wife . These verses say:

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Mark 6:17-18

¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. ¹⁸ For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

What these verses indicate is that though Herod was married to Herodias through a sexual relationship, he could not scripturally be her husband because she was scripturally married to Herod's brother Philip. What we have here is a case of adultery and bigamy on the part of Herod and Herodias. Adultery and fornication are a violation of God's law and being married to another person while you are still legally married to yet another person is bigamy according to man's law in some nations. We have a similar situation with the woman at the well who the Lord Jesus Christ was dealing with in John 4:16-18 which says:

John 4:16-18

¹⁶ Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. ¹⁷ The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: ¹⁸ For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

In commenting on these verses, Pastor Robert Sargent had this to say:

“A formal (legal) covenanted agreement by *itself* does not constitute a marriage. (This is the Roman Catholic [sacramental] position, that a man and a woman are joined together by God at the altar with the priest.) A physical relationship *alone* does not constitute a marriage. If this were the case there would be no such thing as adultery or fornication! Note what Jesus said to the woman in *John 4:18* – the man she was ‘living with’ was not her husband. See also: *I Corinthians 7:2*.” (Page 49, *The ABCs Of Christian Maturity, Volume 1, Divorce*, by Pastor Robert Sargent)

We quoted Pastor Sargent here because his viewpoint agrees with that of many fundamentalists. We disagree with Pastor Sargent here when he states that “a physical relationship *alone* does not constitute a marriage”. While that may be legally and traditionally true, it is not scripturally true. A physical relationship places a scriptural obligation upon a male and female couple to live together as husband and wife regardless of whether any ceremony or legal documents are involved. While the legal authorities may bind upon a couple a legal marriage, that legal marriage is not a scriptural marriage until the two become one flesh. Furthermore, even under civil law, common law marriages become legally binding marriages after so many years even if no ceremony was performed and no marriage license was ever issued. We agree with Pastor Robert Sargent that a formal (legal) covenanted agreement does not constitute a scriptural marriage. That requirement is nowhere found in the Scriptures. The lack of physical consummation of marriage formed the basis for religious annulments in times past which were not generally honoured by civil authorities unless it was

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accompanied by a legal bill of divorce. This same annulment concept was recognized in the ancient pagan code of Hammurabi which stated that: “128. If a man take a woman to wife, but have no intercourse with her, this woman is no wife to him.” The same is true today also. If a “legal” husband and wife do not become married to one another an annulment can be sought in many states were the “legal” marriage is declared null and void. Many of those who state that a physical relationship alone does not constitute a marriage argue that there must be an intent to become husband and wife. That is not what the Bible says. The Biblical standard says that if you become one flesh with an individual, then your actions announce to God that it is your intent to be husband and wife. In the Scriptures, if you enter into a physical relationship, you have established a de facto covenant as husband and wife. Turn in your Bibles to Exodus 22:16 and Deuteronomy 22:28-29 where we read:

Exodus 22:16

¹⁶ And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.

Deuteronomy 22:28-29

²⁸ 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; ²⁹ 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.

There is no betrothal, no espousal, no altar, and no ceremony involved in Exodus 22:16 or Deuteronomy 22:28-29. According to Exodus 22:16, when a man lies carnally with a woman he must endow her to be his wife. Where no betrothal exists, Deuteronomy 22:29 says that if a man and a woman are found lying together, then the woman shall be the man’s wife and he can never divorce her. There is no intent to become husband and wife here because from the context it can be emphatically implied that they thought they were getting by with something. In other words, they were having “casual sex”. They may have thought it was “casual sex”, but God considers it to be a binding, lifetime marriage though there is no intent to become husband and wife. In western culture, our conscious has become so seared by a constant bombardment of in your face sex that we no longer look upon sexual intercourse as being the act of marriage that God says it is. Many so-called Christian leaders and pastors have become so spiritually blinded by a constant diet of sex from their televisions that they dismiss what God calls a marriage as being mere pre-marital sex.

Now, let’s go back to the woman at the well. The reason the man living with the women at the well was not called her husband is because he was married to another woman. This was the same type of situation that John the Baptist rebuked Herod for! The Lord Jesus Christ did not say that the woman at the well had not married the man she was with at this time. He said that the man she was with at this time was not her husband. It is obvious that she was having a sexual relationship with a man that was not her husband, but was instead the husband of another woman. The woman at the well was married to him, but she was not his wife. The woman at the well was guilty of fornication and adultery because she was having sex with another woman’s husband. She had married him in the

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same sense as Herod had married Philip’s wife Herodias, but she could not scripturally have him as her husband just as Herod could not scripturally have Herodias as his wife though they were married. Many preachers and teachers teach that a husband or wife cannot be guilty of fornication which is a contradiction of Matthew 19:8 where the Lord Jesus Christ said a wife can be guilty of fornication. Many Independent Baptist preachers, pastors, and teachers teach that fornication only applies to premarital sex. Again, that teaching contradicts Matthew 19:8 and for that reason we reject that teaching. The idea that a married person cannot be guilty of fornication also contradicts Ezekiel 16 where a case of adultery is referred to as fornication in three different verses. We believe one of the reasons the penalty for adultery and fornication in the Old Testament was death is because God did consider the consummation of a sexual relationship as establishing a marriage covenant. One of the scriptural proofs of that statement is located in Deuteronomy 22:28-29. We would also note that the Lord Jesus Christ said to the woman at the well: “thou hast had five husbands”. What we can gather from that is that she had five men who were no longer her husbands. Note that “HAST HAD” is in the past tense. Also note that she had remarried which means that all of the divorces she had were legal under the law – Deuteronomy 24:1-2 – else she would have been stoned to death under the Mosaic Law – Deuteronomy 22:22.). What that means is that she had a legal bill of divorce. When the Lord Jesus Christ stated “thou hast had five husbands”, it put to bed the doctrine that states that once you are married to someone that you can never divorce them. What that also means is that when someone divorces someone then that person is no longer considered to be their spouse (thou hast had). That means that they have zero husbands and zero wives until such time as they remarry. According to Matthew 19:9, if a person is scripturally divorced, then they are not guilty of adultery and therefore cannot be guilty of perpetual adultery.

We are not trying to degrade the scriptural husband and wife relationship to a mere act of sexual intercourse, but we are trying to impress upon our readers how seriously God views acts of sexual intercourse that have not the intent to become husband and wife. If you have an act of sexual intercourse with someone then you impose upon yourself the scriptural obligation to make them your spouse.

Again, in its first use in our Bibles the word marry occurs in Genesis 38:8 where its obvious definition is to go in unto for the purpose of producing seed. It is also clear from the context of Matthew 19:3-9 that the definition of marry is to become one flesh with someone of the opposite sex. Furthermore, it is clear from the context of 1 Corinthians 7:9 that a person was to marry rather than to continue to burn in lust for another person. It is obvious from the context of 1 Corinthians 7:9 that a ceremony is not being referred to, but the act of becoming one flesh. First Timothy 5:14 instructs the younger women to marry for the purpose of bearing and raising children.

Though the first marriage is unique in nature, it does provide us with some instruction as to what constitutes a scriptural marriage. Turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 2 where we see:

Genesis 2:20-25

20 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. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of

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his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 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. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

You never see anyone at a marriage altar in the Scriptures. Marriage is much more than a ceremony. A ceremony is nothing more than words. Marriage is a lifetime of walking what you talked at a ceremony. We do not see a formal wedding ceremony anywhere in the Scriptures. In fact, you can lie down without a ceremony and become one flesh and live happily ever after as husband and wife and it be perfectly pleasing unto God. You must be warned that if you lie down with a woman and become one flesh with her you are under an obligation to God to take her in as your wife. God does not take sexual relationships as lightly as men do and as lightly as many fundamentalist preachers do. The proof of that is that many fundamentalists will get livid when we say that having a sexual relationship is marriage in the eyes of God. Many see it as nothing more than an illicit sexual affair that is nothing more than a one-night stand. It is much more serious than a one-night stand. It is a marriage in God's eyes and in the eyes of the Scriptures. What many compromised and fornicating "fundamentalist" preachers of today call pre-marital sex, would have resulted in a public outcry over a hundred years ago and would have led to what we called a "shotgun wedding". Our "fundamentalist" preachers, teachers, and pastors need to get their heads out of the sewer of television, the cesspool of the internet, and the outhouses and toilets of their cell phones and start studying and boldly preaching the Word Of God. Many of our "fundamentalists" of today have become as the prophets of Judah in Jeremiah 8:10-12 which declares:

Jeremiah 8:10-12

¹⁰ Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. ¹¹ For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. ¹² Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

The reason our "fundamentalist" preachers and pastors can no longer blush is because the light of the Holy Ghost has become so darkened by the Satanic sewage that they feed themselves from their televisions, radios, computers, and cell phones. They can no longer preach the word of God with any conviction because the blackness of their hearts has grieved the Holy Ghost. Neither do they view the sin of fornication as seriously as God does. Would to God that our so-called fundamentalist preachers and pastors had the attitude of Ezra the priest when he said in Ezra 9:6-7:

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Ezra 9:6-7

⁶ And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. ⁷ Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day.

Fornication and adultery make a fundamentalist no less disqualified to be in the pulpit than a man who has had a divorce that he has caused. However, we do believe that the Devil has taken many innocent men from our pulpits whose divorces were no fault of their own. We also believe that the Devil has used many fundamentalist, self-righteous hypocrites to accomplish that which rightly dividing the Scriptures could not have done. Now, let's get back to the study at hand.

Adam is the only man to ever live that can literally say that his wife is literally bone of his bones and literally flesh of his flesh. Again applying the law of first mention, Genesis 2:20-25 gives God's definition of what constitutes a scriptural marriage, a husband, and a wife and in keeping with the law of first mention that definition remains the same throughout the Bible. God says that a man and a woman become husband and wife when they become one flesh. I know that does not sit very well with many Baptists and fundamentalists, but that is what the Bible teaches. Many will argue that that is not the whole counsel of God, but they will be pressed beyond measure if they try to prove that the Author of the Scriptures considered marriage to be anything but becoming one flesh. We understand that becoming husband and wife, or becoming one flesh, binds certain spiritual responsibilities upon both the husband and wife so that the marriage is not just a physical relationship. We will prove scripturally that when a man consummates a sexual relationship with a woman that he is scripturally bound to make that woman his wife! It is that sexual relationship that makes them **one flesh**. It is the sexual act that creates the obligation for the couple to become husband and wife. What you do not see in Genesis chapter 2 is a ceremony, an altar, a marriage license, a priest, a justice of the peace, or any formal covenant. Yet, God said that they were husband and wife. That pattern is repeated throughout the book of Genesis (and the Old Testament) and includes the marriages of Lamech, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and even Absalom when he went in unto his father David's ten concubines (!). Lamech was of the seed of Cain and was the first polygynist (polygamist) recorded in the Bible. That is instructive in itself. The only place where a covenant is mentioned in the context of marriage is in Malachi 2:11-16 where there is a reference to Genesis 2:24 in verse 15. These verses read:

Malachi 2:11-16

¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ And this have ye done again, covering

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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. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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.

While many believe that Proverbs 2:17 refers to a covenant of marriage for the woman also, we do not. We believe it refers to female prostitutes that hung out around the pagan temples just as the daughters of a strange god here in Malachi refer to the same type of female temple prostitutes. We believe that context in Proverbs 2:17 dictates a foreign woman who has broken her covenant of allegiance to God. Here in Malachi 2:11, the men of Judah were whoring around on their wives with temple prostitutes and marrying them. Let us continue with the covenant described in Malachi 2.

We would even go so far as to state that we believe that the Scriptures teach that it is the sexual act that establishes the covenant relationship between a man and a woman making them husband and wife. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF CALLED MARRIAGE THE PHYSICAL ACT IN MATTHEW 19:4-6. From the context it is clear from the statements of the Lord Jesus Christ that no ceremony was in view, but rather the act of fornication by the wife. That sexual act is quite different from a ceremony. It is not the performance of another ceremony that constitutes the act of adultery, but rather the sexual act. The word “covenant” occurs in the immediate context of becoming one flesh in Malachi 2:14-15. The only other place that a covenant is mentioned in the context of marriage and divorce is in Ezra 10:2-3 which states:

Ezra 10:2-3

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. 3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

Note that the covenant was a covenant of divorce between the priests and God to put away (divorce) the strange wives they had taken from outside the God ordained confines of the people of Israel.

Several passages of Scripture supporting the conclusion that it is the sexual act that establishes a covenant relationship are Genesis 38:8-9, Deuteronomy 21:13, Deuteronomy 22:28-29, Deuteronomy 25:5, Exodus 22:16, and 1 Chronicles 2:21. Genesis 38:8-9 says:

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Genesis 38:8-9

⁸ And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. ⁹ And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.

Note that Onan was instructed to marry his brother's wife for the purpose of producing seed. Note also that the sexual act was referred to as a **marriage**. There is no ceremony and no marriage license here. Deuteronomy 21:13 says:

¹³ And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.

The act of “*going in unto her*” is a sexual act that establishes the husband and wife relationship. There was no ceremony, priest, or marriage altar involved here. Deuteronomy 22:28-29 reads:

Deuteronomy 22:28-29

28 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; 29 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.

In verses 28 and 29, it is the act of “lying with her” that creates the scriptural requirement that they become husband and wife. This particular passage shows how serious God takes what man might call a casual sexual relationship. It is clear from the context that neither individual involved in this sexual act intended on becoming husband and wife. They just got caught and God commanded the man to take the woman for his wife with the additional condition that he could never divorce her (put her away). While many say that the sexual act is but a consummation of the marriage, this passage and many more before and after it see the sexual act as establishing the husband and wife relationship and not merely as the consummation of it. Deuteronomy 25:5 states:

Deuteronomy 25:5

⁵ If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.

This is the law of the kinsman redeemer that is sometimes referred to as the levirate marriage. Note that the living brother was to marry the dead brother's wife, and take her to him to wife for the purpose of producing children. It was the sexual relationship that established her as the living

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brother's wife. Deuteronomy 25:5 is quoted in Matthew 22:24 (also in Mark 12:19 and Luke 20:28) when the Lord Jesus Christ is dealing with the Sadducees about the resurrection. We would note that this commandment had to be obeyed regardless of whether the brother in the role of kinsman redeemer was already married. Note again that the purpose of the marriage was to produce seed. This same idea that is conveyed in Deuteronomy 22:28-29 is established in Exodus 22:16 where we see:

Exodus 22:16

16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.

The phrase "lie with her" means that he has had a sexual relationship with her. Clearly Exodus 22:16 states that because the man has had a sexual relationship with the maid he must take care of her as his wife [Implying that since he had already married her in the sexual relationship, he must take care of her as his wife]. Yet again we see this same principle illustrated in 1 Chronicles 2:21 which tells us:

1 Chronicles 2:21

²¹ And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he was threescore years old; and she bare him Segub.

Once again it was the sexual relationship that established the condition of the woman becoming a wife. We should not neglect to deal with the abomination wrought by Absalom before all of Israel when he went in unto David's concubines. According to Leviticus 20:11, Absalom had to be put to death for this vile act. Absalom's vile act is recorded in 2 Samuel 16:21-22 which reads:

2 Samuel 16:21-22

²¹ And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong. ²² So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

We know from the events in 2 Samuel Chapters 17 through 19 that Absalom was eventually slain with the destiny of the concubines being recorded in 2 Samuel 20:3 where it is stated:

2 Samuel 20:3

³ And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

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David’s concubines became Absalom’s wives when Absalom went in unto them in the sight of Israel. There was no ceremony performed. Neither was there any intent to conduct a ceremony. It was strictly multiple sexual acts. The proof that they became Absalom’s wives is contained in 2 Samuel 20:3 where the Bible says the concubines remained in **widowhood** until their deaths. Go read it yourself in context! There is but one reason that they lived in widowhood until their deaths and that is because they had become Absalom’s wives. Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 6:16-17, the Holy Ghost considers the sexual act of such critical importance that He warns that if you sexually join yourself with a harlot, that you become one flesh with her. In other words, you become married to an harlot. What these passages prove is that it is the sexual union that creates the marriage! In 1 Corinthians 6, the Holy Ghost considered the sexual relationship with an harlot to be a whole lot more serious than just the one night stand (fornication) that most once married fundamentalist preachers hold to. It was not just fornication. It was a marriage. Why do most fundamentalist preachers go up in arms when we declare a one night stand or a premarital or post marital affair to be a marriage?? We can tell you why. Many, if not most, of these “fundamentalist” preachers have been guilty of the very acts that the Holy Ghost describes here. Many “once married” preachers are counting on a piece of paper from man to clear themselves to be able to pastor and preach. That piece of paper is worthless before God because many “once married” preachers and pastors have had sex with women before they had a wedding ceremony, some even being guilty of fornication and adultery after their wedding ceremony, and they wickedly consider themselves to have had but one wife in a lifetime because they have only had one wedding ceremony. God does not see it that way. You are just as guilty as any divorced man ever was. If you have sex with any woman, you are under the scriptural obligation to take care of her as your wife. Jack Hyles and Jack Schaap were guilty of the very acts described here, but at least they were not divorced! I believe the Bible term for them is whoremongers, but at least they were not “double married”. Many godly divorced men are much more qualified to be in pulpits than those two whore hopping preachers were. Need we mention the abominable conduct of Bob Grey at Trinity Baptist of Jacksonville, Florida. Yet, he remained in the ministry with the leadership in his church being aware of his conduct, but at least he was not divorced or double married! We can even prove that it is not a sin to have, or to have had, more than one wife if the man was divorced according to the Scriptures. We are not talking about living with multiple wives at the same time.

If you have had multiple sexual relationships with different women and if you preach that a man who has multiple wives at the same time and a divorced man that has had more than one wife in a lifetime are disqualified, then you need to sit down because your sexual conduct has disqualified you permanently since you believe that there is no forgiveness for a man who has had multiple wives in his lifetime. Do you think for a minute that if David and Solomon had sex with a woman that they did not make them their wife?? Why do you think Solomon and so many of the other kings of Judah and Israel had so many wives? It is because they had sex with those women and according to Exodus 22:16 and Deuteronomy 22:28-29 any man that had sex with an unmarried woman was required to make them their wife! If you are an adulterous and fornicating preacher, pastor, evangelist, or deacon, do not think that the same standards do not apply to you. Contrary to what most fundamentalists, including this author, have been taught, there was no specific commandment that said a man could not have more than one wife. In fact, the Bible says in 2 Samuel 12:8 that God gave Saul’s wives into

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David's bosom. Saul's wives would have included Ahinoam and his concubine Rizpah which probably created some confusion in David's household because he already had a wife named Ahinoam. We now turn to the marriages of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We are first introduced to Abram (Abraham) in Genesis 11:27. Then we are introduced to Abraham's wife Sarai (Sarah) in Genesis 11:29. The first mention of Abraham was in his begetting. The first mention of Sarah was in her marriage to Abraham. It says in Genesis 11:29 that Abraham took his wife Sarah. We learn in verse 30 that she was barren. We see very few details in the marriage of Abraham and Sarah. Genesis 11:27-30 tells us:

Genesis 11:27-30

²⁷ Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. ²⁸ And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. ²⁹ And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. ³⁰ But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

The only details that we are offered of Abraham's and Sarah's marriage is that Abraham took her. There is no mention of any ceremony or any wedding. There was no priest there and no civil authority. It is obvious that they had become one flesh because verse 30 says that Sarah was barren. then again in Genesis 16:1-4 which states:

Genesis 16:1-4

¹ Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. ² And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. ³ And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. ⁴ And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

Lamech, of the seed of Cain, was the first polygamist recorded in the Bible in Genesis. Abraham was the first polygamist recorded in the Bible following the flood and it lead to immediate problems because it was contrary to the will of God. We will deal with polygamy later in this chapter. Note that Sarah gave her Egyptian maid unto Abraham to be his wife. The law of the land, the Code of Hammurabi Number 146: states:

If a man take a wife and she give this man a maid-servant as wife and she bear him children, and then this maid assume equality with the wife: because she has borne him children her master shall not sell her for money, but he may keep her as a slave,

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reckoning her among the maid-servants.

While what Sarah and Abraham done here was strictly in accordance with the law of the land, it was a violation of the express will of God from Genesis 2:24 and it showed a lapse of faith in the promise of God given to Abraham in Genesis 15:4. Again and again, we come back to one of the themes of this chapter and that is that there was no ceremony involved in the marriage of Abraham and Hagar. Hagar became Abraham’s wife when he “went in unto” her. The act of going “in unto” her was the marriage. We see this pattern repeated in the case of Isaac and Rebekah in Genesis 24:61-67:

Genesis 24:61-67

⁶¹ And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. ⁶² And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. ⁶³ And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. ⁶⁴ And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. ⁶⁵ For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. ⁶⁷ And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

We are provided with many more details of the events leading up to the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah than we are with any other marriage recorded in the Scriptures. The case of Isaac and Rebekah provided the seed bed for many of the Jewish customs surrounding marriages even unto this day. We do not see similar details leading up to a marriage recorded for any other marriage in the Scriptures. Furthermore, in the case of Isaac and Rebekah, we do not see a betrothal or espousal recorded. In fact, Isaac had no clue who was going to be his wife! Neither was a ceremony performed. Rebekah became Isaac’s wife when he “took” her. As far as we can tell, Abraham was not even around. The events surrounding the four marriages of Jacob are quite a bit different than those for his father Isaac. These events are recorded in Genesis chapters 29 and 30 where we read:

Genesis 29:20-30

20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him *but* a few days, for the love he had to her. 21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give *me* my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. 22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. 23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. 24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid *for* an handmaid. 25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it *was* Leah: and he said to Laban, What *is* this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? ²⁶ And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give

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the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷ Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. ²⁸ And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. ²⁹ And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. ³⁰ And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

Genesis 30:1-10

¹ And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. ² And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? ³ And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. ⁴ And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. ⁵ And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. ⁶ And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. ⁷ And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. ⁸ And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali. ⁹ When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. ¹⁰ And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son.

It is interesting to note here that a feast was made to celebrate the event that was about to take place. It is quite possible that this event is the root source of the lavish marriage suppers and wedding feasts that have characterize all Jewish weddings down through the ages. If you argue for a covenant here, and there was not, it is obvious that Jacob expected that he would be going in unto Rachel and she would become his wife. The act of "going in unto" was the act of becoming one flesh. It is clear that there was no espousal, covenant, or ceremony here that involved Leah. If you argue for a covenant here, then you have to believe that the covenant was created and made binding by Leah and Jacob becoming one flesh. There was obviously no verbal agreement between the two of them. Neither was there any intent here on Jacob's part to marry Leah. Yet, it is undeniable here that when Jacob went in unto Leah and they became one flesh that Leah was Jacob's wife regardless of his understanding that his marriage was to be to Rachel. There may have been an agreement here between Jacob and Laban concerning Rachel, but it was not a covenant between Rachel and Jacob and neither did it involve Leah. It is clear from verse 28 that Leah and Rachel became Jacob's wives. Though Jacob took Rachel to wife, later on this practice was outlawed in Leviticus 18:18 which says:

Leviticus 18:18

¹⁸ Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.

We also see in the cases of Leah's handmaid Zilpah and Rachel's handmaid Bilhah that they

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became Jacob’s wives when he “went in unto” them. To be sure, there was no ceremony and no fanfare that involved these two handmaids that Jacob married. Given the circumstances, can you imagine the ruckus that would have ensued had a ceremony or wedding feast taken place? There was already much tension and contention in Jacob’s home because of his multiple wives. Now, let’s look at Ruth and Boaz in Ruth 4:13

Ruth 4:13

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

Ruth became Boaz’s wife when he took her meaning that she became his wife when they became one flesh. That is the meaning of “he went in unto her”. Boaz became the kinsman redeemer of a Gentile Bride. Hallelujah! In the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ that is me! The Lord Jesus Christ is the kinsman Redeemer for all those who receive him as Saviour.

We do not see a ceremony in any of the Biblical marriages that we have looked at thus far. You do not see an Old Testament or New Testament example where any man made requirement such as a ceremony, an altar, a marriage license, or a formal covenant constituted a scriptural marriage. Neither do you see the presence of any religious or government official. As detailed as the instructions were for the duties of the priest in the Old Testament none of them included any requirement to officiate at a marriage ceremony. There were detailed requirements in the New Testament for pastors and none of them required that pastors officiate at marriages. Marriages officiated by priests is a very Roman Catholic idea and did not come forth until the Council of Trent in 1563. To the Roman Catholic Church, marriage was a sacrament that only a Roman Catholic priest could administer. However, marriage in the Bible has never been a function of the state, or, a function of a priest, pastor, or preacher. It has always been a family affair that required the permission of the bride’s father unless the woman getting married had already been married before. We have for many years extended that Old Testament custom into American culture where in years gone by the man had to go to the father and request the hand of his daughter in marriage. What we call a marriage today is not the scriptural presentation of what marriage is. In today’s world, we interpret marriage to be a ceremony because all western societies are in open fornication. In most Biblical marriages, there is a marked absence of a ceremony. What we see in the Old Testament and the New Testament are celebrations of the accomplished fact of the marriage. The wedding celebrations and marriage feasts in the Bible do not inaugurate the marriage. They celebrate it. Even in the marriage at Cana of Galilee where the water was turned into wine, it is obvious that what was taking place was the celebration of the marriage that had already taken place because they were already out of wine. In other words, what we have in John 2 is the marriage feast. The marriage feast and the marriage supper always followed the husband and wife becoming one flesh just as it does with the Marriage Supper Of The Lamb in Revelation chapter 19. In Jewish custom, it was the displaying of the tokens of virginity that set in motion the lavish celebration and marriage suppers which followed.

The whole point of the previous discussion has been to prove that scripturally a marriage takes place without a ceremony and without a celebration having taken place. That is the whole point of

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legally recognizing what is called Common Law marriages. Common Law marriages are as legally and scripturally binding as any marriage though no ceremony was ever performed that had the sanction of the state or the church. In early American history, Common Law marriages were quite common. Furthermore, we have documented case after case where no ceremony or celebration is recorded in the Scriptures and yet the women involved are said to be wives.

CONCUBINES

Let's establish the fact that a concubine is a wife that comes without a dowry to her husband and without a payment required to the father of the concubine. The concubine was equal in rights to the woman who was called a wife. The concubines sons were on equal footing with the sons of the wife. Many times the terms concubine and wife are used interchangeably when applied to the same individual. In Genesis 16:3 Hagar is called a wife of Abraham and concubine of Abraham in Genesis 25:6. These verses state:

Genesis 16:3

³ And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

Genesis 25:6

⁶ But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.

Keturah is called a wife in Genesis 25:1 and a concubine in Genesis 25:6 and 1 Chronicles 1:32. These verses say:

Genesis 25:1

¹ Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.

1 Chronicles 1:32

³² Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan.

Bilhah and Zilpah are called Jacob's wives in Genesis 37:2 while Bilhah is called Jacob's concubine in Genesis 35:22 with these verses reading as follows:

Genesis 35:22

²² And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

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Genesis 37:2

² These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

The events recorded concerning the Levite’s concubine in Judges 19 are among the most sordid and tragic in the Scriptures. The King James Bible’s marginal note on Judges 19:1 reads: “a woman a concubine, or, a wife a concubine”. The Levite of Judges 19 is referred to as the husband of the concubine that was slain. These verses are written in Judges 19:3 and Judges 20:4-5:

Judges 19:3

³ And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father’s house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.

Judges 20:4-5

⁴ And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. ⁵ And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead.

Then we have the brief history concerning David’s ten concubines that is written in 2 Samuel 12:11, 2 Samuel 15:16, and 2 Samuel 20:3 which is written thus:

2 Samuel 12:11

¹¹ Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

2 Samuel 15:16

¹⁶ And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house.

2 Samuel 16:21-22

²¹ And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father’s concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong. ²² So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel.

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2 Samuel 20:3

³ And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

Second Samuel 12:11 contains Nathan's prophecy concerning David's concubines. Nathan told David that a neighbor would lie with his wives "in the sight of this sun". That neighbor was his very own son, Absalom, as we saw in 2 Samuel 16:21-22 where Absalom went in unto David's ten concubines in the sight of all Israel in broad open daylight. From 2 Samuel 15:16, we know that David took all of his wives with him when he left Jerusalem. In 2 Samuel 20:3 David put what had been his ten concubines in ward and they lived in widowhood for the rest of their lives. Only wives could live in widowhood as those ten concubines did. They were called widows because Absalom made them his wives when he went in unto them and he is now dead.

Rizpah, who is called Saul's concubine in 2 Samuel 3:7, is also called a wife in 2 Samuel 12:8. It is interesting to note that God said he gave Saul's wives (PLURAL) into David's bosom and yet we can only document one wife and one concubine, Rizpah (2 Samuel 3:7), from the scriptures. Ahinoam, Saul's wife, is identified in 1 Samuel 14:50. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that concubine Rizpah was also considered to be a wife. When we look at these verses we see:

1 Samuel 14:50

⁵⁰ And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

2 Samuel 3:7

⁷ And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ishbosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

2 Samuel 12:8

⁸ And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

Here is what the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia had to say concerning concubines:

"A concubine is recognized among the ancient Hebrews. She enjoyed the same rights in the house as the legitimate wife. Since it was regarded as the highest blessing to have many children, while the greatest curse was childlessness, legitimate wives themselves gave their maids to their husbands to atone, at least in part, for their own barrenness, as in the cases of Sarah and Hagar, Leah and Zilpah, Rachel and Bilhah. The concubine commanded the same respect and inviolability as the wife; and it was

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regarded as the deepest dishonor for the man to whom she belonged if hands were laid upon her. Thus Jacob never forgave his eldest son for violating Bilhah (Gen. xxxv. 22, xlix. 4). According to the story of Gibeah, related in Judges xix., 25,000 warriors of the tribe of Benjamin lost their lives on account of the maltreatment and death of a concubine. Abner, Saul's first general, deserted Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, who had reproached his leader with having had intercourse with Rizpah, the daughter of his royal father's concubine, Aiah (II Sam. iii. 7); and Absalom brought the greatest dishonor upon David by open intercourse with his father's concubines (ib. xvi. 21 et seq.).

The children of the concubine had equal rights with those of the legitimate wife. Abraham dismissed his natural sons with gifts (Gen. xxv. 6), and Jacob's sons by Bilhah and Zilpah were equal with his sons by Leah and Rachel; while Abimelech, who subsequently became king over a part of Israel, was the son of Gideon-gerubbaal and his Shechemite concubine (Judges viii. 31). In the time of the Kings the practise of taking concubines was no longer due to childlessness but to luxury. David had ten concubines (II Sam. xv. 16), who, however, also did housework; Solomon had 300 (I Kings xi. 30); and his son Rehoboam had sixty (II Chron. xi. 21)". (Cited from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia article on Concubinage Internet Edition at:

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4585-concubinage>)

The conclusion that we can draw from the scriptural references to concubines that we have quoted and this quote from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia is that a concubine and a wife are on equal footing in the home.

MULTIPLE WIVES

A question often arises as to why many of the Old Testament patriarchs and kings had multiple wives and concubines. To many Christians and unbelievers this is puzzling since in American culture we have been rightfully taught that a marriage is made up of only two people; one of which must be a man and the other a woman. Polygamy is illegal in the United States. Though God allowed multiple wives, it was not his original intent. The scriptural definition of marriage requires that two are to become one and not that three or more are to become one. In our previous discussions leading up to this section, we have destroyed the wicked idea of polygamist marriages and same sex unions that God calls abominations. The purpose of this section is to further document the scriptural record concerning multiple wives.

For purposes of this discussion on multiple wives, we are going to consider concubines as meeting the definition for a wife.

We have heard it stated that God always condemns polygamy in the Bible. Then, why did God give David multiple wives in 2 Samuel 12:8?? That does not sound to much like condemnation to us. Merab, Saul's daughter, was promised to be David's wife by Saul, but she was given to Adriel. Saul also promised to David his daughter Michal to be a wife and David took her to be his wife, but Saul

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later wickedly gave her unto Phaltiel (See 1 Samuel 18:17-27 and 1 Samuel 25:44). See also Abigail and Ahinoam (1 Samuel 25:39-44); Maacah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah (all four in 2 Samuel 3:1-5); Michal (2 Samuel 3:13-16); Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:27). From Scripture, we know that David had eight wives and ten concubines. However, God warned against a king multiplying wives and horses to himself. Deuteronomy 17:14-17 and 2 Samuel 12:7-8 state:

Deuteronomy 17:14-17

14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; 15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

2 Samuel 12:7-8

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

Comparing 2 Samuel 12:7-8 with Deuteronomy 17:14-17 we have ourselves a problem to deal with. If the commandment in Deuteronomy 17:17 is that "Neither shall he [speaking of the king] multiply wives to himself", then what do you do with the fact that God said in 2 Samuel 12:8 that he gave "thy master's wives into thy bosom" [referring to King David]? If God's command in Deuteronomy 17:17 to the kings was that the kings were not to multiply unto themselves wives and God gave Saul's wives into David's bosom then we would have to conclude that having multiple wives was not a sin. Otherwise the action of God in 2 Samuel 12:7-8 could be interpreted as sin and that would be impossible because God cannot sin. The other point that could be made here is that it was God who done the multiplying and not David though David had already violated this charge to the king. It was David's desire to have multiple sexual partners (wives) that led to much tragedy in his family. We would again make the point here that the only difference between a wife and a concubine is that a wife came with a dowry and a concubine did not.

We want to warn our readers that we are not advocating an individual having multiple spouses because we do not believe that is the ideal that God established in Genesis 2:24. Nor is a marriage involving multiple spouses the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and His church as is plainly presented in the New Testament. There is one New Testament Bride and the one man and one woman husband and wife relationship is declared to be a type of that Bride. We also believe that the requirement that

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the Old Testament High Priest take a virgin as his wife was a type of what was supposed to have been the relationship between Israel and Jehovah God. God had ONE chosen nation to be his bride and wife and that nation was Israel. She was to be a virgin unto Jehovah God. That type has its perfect fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest, who has that chaste Virgin, the Church, as His Bride. While we know and understand that it has always been God’s intent that there be one man and one woman for a lifetime, we also cannot deny the fact that many men of God in the Old Testament had multiple wives. That would include that man David that was after God’s own heart. There are no verses in either the Old Testament or the New Testament that specifically state that a man cannot have more than one wife. God gave David multiple wives. There is no specific limitations on the number of wives a man may have under the Old Testament law. As a matter of fact, God regulated the treatment of multiple wives under the Old Testament law. Two examples of this law are written in Exodus 21:10 and Deuteronomy 21:15-16 which state:

Exodus 21:10

10 If he take him another *wife*; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.

Deuteronomy 21:15-16

15 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: 16 Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn:

There were five generations born in the line of Cain before the first incident of polygamy involving Lamech is recorded in the Bible in Genesis 4:19 which reads:

Genesis 4:19

¹⁹And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

What this means is that the seed of Cain was the first to introduce polygamy into the world. That should be very revealing and instructive to us. What Genesis 4:19 and Genesis 5:1-22 tells us is that polygamy did not enter into the world until the fifth generation following Cain and that that period of time had to be at least 700 years. We get that seven hundred year figure by inferring that the five generations of Cain plus Adams age when he beget Seth must be roughly equal to the same figures for the generations of Seth which are recorded in Genesis chapter 5. Those figures total 687 years. The seed of Cain was destroyed in the flood and God restored the ideal of “one man with one woman for a lifetime” when he brought Noah and his three sons and their four wives from the Ark. It was not until 375 years after the flood that we see the next incident of polygamy recorded in the Bible and that involved Abraham in Genesis 16:3-4 and his brother Nahor in Genesis 22:24 where we are told:

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Genesis 16:3-4

³ And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. ⁴ And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

Genesis 22:23-24

²³ And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. ²⁴ And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

So, both Abraham and Nahor had two wives at the same time. This is not to say that there were no more polygamous marriages in the world because if Abraham was guilty, then it only makes sense that many more men in the world were also guilty. One thing should be noted in the case of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar is that the polygamous arrangement resulted in instant strife in the home between all three that were involved. What also ensued from this was the birth of the wild man Ishmael whose seed has been a source of never ending strife in the Middle East. The Ishmaelites have been and continue to be the perpetual enemies of the Jewish people. Esau is the next polygamist we will consider. He took three wives none of whom were from among the people of Isaac and the Bible says it was a grief unto Isaac and Rebekah. These are identified in Genesis chapters 26:34 and Genesis 28:6-9 with the concise list showing up in Genesis 36:1-3 which states:

Genesis 36:1-3

¹ Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. ² Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; ³ And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.

The reason these wives were a grief unto Isaac and Rebekah is given in Genesis 28:8 where it says that Esau took his wives from among the daughters of Canaan because he knew it displeased his father Isaac.

The next case of polygamous marriage we run into is that of Jacob in Genesis 30:3-9 where it is written:

Genesis 30:3-9

³ And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. ⁴ And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. ⁵ And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. ⁶ And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. ⁷ And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived

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again, and bare Jacob a second son. ⁸ And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali. ⁹ When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife.

From these verses we see that Jacob had four wives. Many believe that Moses had two wives based upon Exodus 2:21 and Numbers 12:1 which say:

Exodus 2:21

²¹ And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.

Numbers 12:1

¹ And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

One thing that is clear from these two verses is that Moses had at least one wife who was black. It is debatable in the eyes of some as to whether Moses had two wives. You will have to draw your own conclusions, but according to Exodus 3:1, Jethro, Zipporah's father, was a Midian and not an Ethiopian. The wife referred to in Numbers 12:1 is stated to be an Ethiopian. The next case of polygamy we find is in the case of Gideon. Judges 8:30 reads:

Judges 8:30

³⁰ And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives.

Judges 8:31 also says that Gideon had at least one concubine. Our next case of polygamy involved Elkanah which is recorded in 1 Samuel 1:2:

1 Samuel 1:1-2

¹ Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite: ² And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Elkanah was the father of the prophet Samuel. We also see the strife in this home caused by a man having more than one wife. Peninnah and Hannah struggled with one another unto the point that Hannah referred to Peninnah as being an adversary that severely provoked her by mocking her because she was barren (See 1 Samuel 1:4-7). The next case of polygamy is that of Saul where we read in 1 Samuel 14:50 and 2 Samuel 3:7:

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1 Samuel 14:50

⁵⁰ And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

2 Samuel 3:7

⁷ And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ishbosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

We have already documented the multiple wives of David, but that in no way approached unto that of his son Solomon who we read about in 1 Kings 11:3 which says:

1 Kings 11:3

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

Can you imagine the tension, strife, and confusion which must have existed in Solomon's home? Through these multiple marriages, Solomon introduced idolatry and child sacrifice into Israel from which she never recovered until all the twelve tribes were sent into captivity. Our next polygamous incidents involved Jerahmeel and Caleb in 1 Chronicles chapter 2 where we see the following:

1 Chronicles 2:25-26

²⁵ And the sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron were, Ram the firstborn, and Bunah, and Oren, and Ozem, and Ahijah. ²⁶ Jerahmeel had also another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam.

1 Chronicles 2:46-48

⁴⁶ And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bare Haran, and Moza, and Gazez: and Haran begat Gazez. ⁴⁷ And the sons of Jahdai; Regem, and Jotham, and Geshan, and Pelet, and Ephah, and Shaaph. ⁴⁸ Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bare Sheber, and Tirhanah.

This is all we know of Jerahmeel and this particular Caleb. No further mention is made of them in the Scriptures. This is not the Caleb from the book of Joshua because they have different fathers. Two other men of whom we know little who had two wives each were Ashur and Shaharaim. Their marriages are recorded in 1 Chronicles 4:5 and 1 Chronicles 8:8 where it is written:

1 Chronicles 4:5

⁵ And Ashur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah.

1 Chronicles 8:8

⁸ And Shaharaim begat children in the country of Moab, after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara were his wives.

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Our next polygamist is the first Judean king Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Quoting from 2 Chronicles 11:21 we read:

2 Chronicles 11:21

²¹ And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)

Rehoboam nowhere near approached unto his father Solomon. We do not have a clue how many children Solomon had, but Rehoboam only averaged about one child per wife/concubine having a total of 88 children. We know from 2 Chronicles 13:21 that the Judean king Abijah had fourteen wives:

2 Chronicles 13:21

²¹ But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters.

From 2 Chronicles 21:17 we know that the Judean king Jehoram had at least two wives because that verse says:

2 Chronicles 21:17

¹⁷ And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

Our next man having multiple wives is the Judean king Joash in 2 Chronicles 24:2-3 which states:

2 Chronicles 24:2-3

2 And Joash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. 3 And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.

Chronologically, our last case of polygamy recorded by name in the Old Testament is that of the Judean king Jehoiachin. This is recorded in 2 Kings 24:15 and says:

2 Kings 24:15

¹⁵ And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

While Jehoiachin's case was the last incident of polygamy recorded in the Old Testament by

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name, it is quite likely there was a huge case of polygamy involving all the people of Israel and all their priests upon their return from their Babylonian captivity because God required all of them including the priests to put away their strange wives in Ezra chapter 10. These strange wives were the pagans that God had commanded them not to marry. What we have seen on our excursion through the Old Testament halls of polygamy is that there was a total of twenty (20) polygamous marriages mentioned by name. Those mentioned by name were Lamech, Abraham, Nahor, Jacob, Esau, Moses(?), Gideon, Elkanah, Saul, David, Solomon, Jerahmeel, Caleb, Ashur, Shahraraim, Rehoboam, Abijah, Jehoram, Joash, and Jehoiahin.

There are no New Testament examples of a man having more than one wife at a time, but we know that it was a problem both from the Bible and secular history. We know that it was Biblically the case because the Holy Ghost prohibited polygamous marriages in 1 Timothy 3:2 for bishops, in 1 Timothy 3:12 for deacons, and again for bishops in Titus 1:6 when he said that bishops and deacons must be “the husband of one wife”. We also know that it was a problem in secular society from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia and the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus which we now quote:

Josephus and the Talmud.

That polygamy survived into the Christian era is, however, asserted by Josephus (“Ant.” xvii. 1, § 2); and he himself (“Vita,” § 75) seems to have had one wife in Palestine and another in Egypt (comp. Löw, “Gesammelte Schriften,” iii. 47). Such a practise is forbidden by a baraita in Yeb. 37a; and this prohibition is (with certain limitations) introduced into the Shulh.an ‘Aruk (Eben ha-‘Ezer, ii. 11). The Talmud certainly does not enact monogamy (see Bigamy); and as far as the Law is, concerned, Justin Martyr (“Dial. cum Tryph.” § 134) is not wrong in asserting that in his time (2d cent. C.E.) Jews were permitted to have four or five wives. (Cited from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia article on Monogamy: Internet Edition located at:

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10949-monogamy>)

Nevertheless, having the advantage of precedent, it was long before polygamy fell into disuse in Hebrew society. Herod had nine wives at one time (Josephus, Ant, XVII, I, 2). Justin Martyr (Dial., 134, 141) reproaches Jews of his day with having “four or even five wives,” and for “marrying as many as they wish” (compare Talm). It was not definitely and formally forbidden among Jews until circa 1000 AD. It exists still among Jews in Moslem lands. [Cited from page 634 of the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE) from the article “Marriage”; James Orr, General Editor]

He also allotted one of Aristobulus’s daughters to Antipater’s son, and Aristobulus’s other daughter to Herod, a son of his own, who was born to him by the high priest’s daughter; for it is the ancient practice among us to have many wives at the same time. [The Works Of Flavius Josephus, Book 17, Chapter 1, Section 2 (14)]

Now Herod the king had at this time nine wives; one of them, Antipater’s mother, and

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another the high priest's daughter, by whom he had a son of his own name. He had also one who was his brother's daughter, and another his sister's daughter; which two had no children. [The Works Of Flavius Josephus, Book 17, chapter 1, section 3(19), page 452]

She also frequently reproached Herod's sister and wives with the ignobility of their descent; and that they were every one chosen by him for their beauty, but not for their family. Now those wives of his were not a few; it being of old permitted to the Jews to marry many wives, — and this king delighting in many; all whom hated Alexander, on account of Glaphyria's boasting and reproaches. [The Works Of Flavius Josephus, War Of The Jews, Chapter 24, page 1351]

The reason we presented the information above is that many commentaries state that the practice of polygamy had ceased among the Jews at the time of the Lord Jesus Christ. That that statement is untrue can be documented from the five quotes just cited. Flavius Josephus was born in 37 A. D. Justin Martyr died in 165 A. D. The article on marriage from the ISBE plainly states that polygamy was not out formally forbidden among the Jewish people until 1,000 A. D. and that the practice still continued in Moslem lands at least until 1929 which was the original copyright year for the ISBE.

We have used a lot of time and gone into a great deal of detail to document the prevalence of polygamy among the Jewish people for several reasons. We will use this information in our chapter dealing with “Standards For Church Service” because it drives to the issue of the proper interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:2 and 1 Timothy 3:12. We also wanted to document the misery that polygamy caused in the nation of Israel because it departed from God's ideal for marriage given in Genesis 2:24. We also wanted to use it as the springboard to present the purity and absolute oneness of the Bride of Christ and the Lord Jesus Christ as it is illustrated in type by the perfect unity of the “one flesh” relationship of husband and wife established by God in Genesis 2. In that perfect unity with the Lord Jesus Christ we exist in an eternal state of innocence that cannot be corrupted by sin. The oneness of the Bride of Christ and the Lord Jesus Christ totally destroys the myth that polygamy was instituted by God.

According to Ephesians 5:30-32, the marriage between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bride of Christ has already taken place. These verses read:

Ephesians 5:30-32

³⁰For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³²This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The coming Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19 is but the celebration of an accomplished fact. The Bible teaches that the church and its members have become one flesh with the Lord Jesus

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Christ! Not only are believers one flesh with the Lord Jesus Christ, but they are one spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ. We can prove this from 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 which states:

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. ¹⁷ But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. ¹⁸ Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. ¹⁹ 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? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

This idea of oneness in Christ is pictured in the Old Testament in Malachi 2:14-16 which tells us:

Malachi 2:14-16

14 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. 15 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. 16 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.

Malachi 2:14-16 does not say wives. It says wife (singular). The Lord Jesus Christ in rebuking the Pharisees for their licentious interpretation and application of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, cites Genesis 2:24 when he had this to say in Matthew 19:

Matthew 19:4-6

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 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? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Genesis 2:24

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

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This statement of the Lord Jesus Christ would also rule out polygamous, polygynous, and polyandrous marriages because it states that TWO would become ONE flesh. It does not say that two or more became one flesh. It also rules out the abomination of same sex unions because the scriptural qualifications are MALE AND FEMALE. It is obvious from Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:4-6 that God’s original intent from the beginning was one man and one woman for a lifetime. God hates putting away. In 2 Corinthians 11:2, Paul stated that the espousal of the Church was to ONE husband. The Church is not many brides, but one bride. The oneness of that relationship is emphasized very strongly in Ephesians 4:2-6. These verses state:

Ephesians 4:2-6

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

In Ephesians 5:22-33, the husband and wife relationship of Genesis 2:24 is presented as a type of the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Bride, the church. These verses read:

Ephesians 5:22-33

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 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. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

The oneness of this relationship is emphasized over and over again by the apostle Paul in Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 10:17, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 1 Corinthians 12:20, Ephesians 2:16, Ephesians 4:4, and Colossians 3:15. These verses read:

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Romans 12:4-5

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

1 Corinthians 10:17

17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:20

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

Ephesians 2:16

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Ephesians 4:4

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Colossians 3:15

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

That one body that is called out over and over in these Scriptures is the Bride Of Christ. This emphasis over and over upon one body finds it culmination in Revelation 19:6-8 where a single Bride is presented to the Lord Jesus Christ in all of her glory. Since this single Bride and single Bridegroom represents the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church we can emphatically state that God never intended for us to have multiple spouses, but that he allowed it because of the lack of faith of men and women and because of the hardness of their hearts.

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SEPARATION IN CHOOSING A SPOUSE

Next to salvation, one of the most important decisions a Christian will ever make is the one that leads to their marriage to their spouse. Who will your spouse be?? It has always been God’s command to his people that they would not marry pagans. In God’s plan, Jews were to marry Jews and after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Christians were to marry Christians. Put simply, this means that a believer cannot marry an unbeliever. In the Old Testament, it was a lot easier to keep this commandment because all you had to do was marry someone who was physically born an Israelite. In the New Testament, the decision becomes much more complex because you have to make a spiritually discerned judgment as to whether a person is born again spiritually. That is, are they a born again Christian? That decision is very difficult to make on short notice most of the time unless there is direct intervention from the Holy Ghost of God. Whether to marry someone should be a spiritually discerned decision making process. Unless you have known and experienced someone’s spiritual testimony for a long time before you think you have fallen in love with them, you had better take much time in trying to spiritually discern whether they know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. You need to question your potential spouse about when and how they received the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have any reservation about doing this, you had better heed the red flag the Holy Ghost has run up for you and run from that individual. You need to observe their lifestyle. Is their everyday decision making process one that seeks to honor the Lord Jesus Christ? What is their manner of speech and dress when they are away from the house of God? Do they feed you a constant diet of anything but Jesus? Is their focus upon worldly entertainment? What do they believe about holiness and biblical separation? What do they believe about the Bible and Bible doctrines? Most of the time the rush to marry is the rush to fulfill lust. Before you have a physical relationship with someone, you had better establish a spiritual relationship with them. Before you have a physical relationship with someone, you had better establish a Holy Ghost informed emotional relationship with them. God absolutely forbids pre marital sexual relationships. Have a sexual relationship with someone makes you married to them in the eyes of God. People who get married following extended sexual relationships experience the highest rates of divorce in the United States. If someone wants to try you out before they marry you, it means that they do not love you after a Godly fashion. If someone keeps pushing you about a sexual relationship, it is a very strong indication that they are in open rebellion to God. A person that is in open rebellion to God may not be saved. If you are considering marrying someone, ask God over and over again to direct your paths in a direction that would not be displeasing to Him.

We are going to quote several passages of Scripture governing God’s commands in choosing a spouse and make a few brief comments. Turn in your Bibles to Genesis 24:3-4:

Genesis 24:3-4

³ And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: ⁴ But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

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Abraham here is beseeching his servant to search out a wife for his son. In this passage of Scripture Abraham's servant is a type of the Holy Ghost. We are to beseech the Holy Ghost to direct us in our search for a mate. Abraham's charge to his servant here is that he not bring a daughter of the Canaanites; in other words a pagan. Now turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 28 where we read:

Genesis 28:1

1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

Genesis 28:6-9

⁶ When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; ⁷ And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram; ⁸ And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; ⁹ Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

In this passage of Scripture, we see Isaac's charge to his son Jacob that he not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. It is the identical charge that was given to Abraham's elder servant concerning Isaac's future wife. She was not to be a pagan unbeliever. We cannot emphasize strongly enough the need for parents to properly train up their children in all Biblical precepts including those on how to evaluate whether a particular individual is the choice God would have them to make. Train them to seek God's will in this matter of marriage. Charge them not to marry and unbeliever. Turn now in your Bibles to Exodus 34:12-16 and let us begin reading:

Exodus 34:12-16

¹² Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: ¹³ But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: ¹⁴ For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: ¹⁵ Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; ¹⁶ And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.

God's charge to the nation of Israel, their fathers and their mothers, and their sons and daughters was not to make a covenant with the wicked, pagan inhabitants of Canaan land which they were about to enter. Their altars, their images, and their groves were instruments that they used to worship their pagan gods. God will not allow his people to worship other gods and be in fellowship with Him. God's warning was that if their sons and daughters married into pagan families, that they

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would fall into idolatry and go a whoring after their gods. You cannot marry a known unbeliever and expect to change them after you marry them. That is not God’s way and is the surest way to be deceived by Satan. They will corrupt you. It only takes a little bit of dirt to be dirty and if you ignore it long enough, you will be filthy after a while and vex your righteous soul with the works of the wicked. Now let’s go to Deuteronomy 7 verses 2 and 3 where it is written:

Deuteronomy 7:2-3

² And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: ³ Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

Here is yet another admonishment from God that the sons and daughters of Israel were not to make marriages with the pagans that lived in the Promised Land. How often this admonishment was ignored by the children of Israel and ultimately it was their pagan marriages that lead to their being exiled from the Promised Land for almost 1,900 years not to count the numerous holocausts and pogroms that they suffered at the hands of the pagans that they had intermarried with. There is a terrible cost to be paid if you disobey God’s command not to marry unbelievers. A further illustration of the pain caused by the violation of this precept is contained in Ezra chapter 9 verses 1 and 2 and Ezra chapter 10 verses 2 and 3. These verses state:

Ezra 9:1-2

¹ Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. ² For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

Ezra 10:2-3

² And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. ³ Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

Here in Ezra 10, God has commanded them to put away all their pagan wives and all their children born of those pagan wives. What a painful experience that was for them. Note also from Ezra 9:1-2 that it was not just the people that had been guilty of intermarrying with pagans, but the priests

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were also guilty of intermarrying with pagans. Can you imagine the weeping and wailing that was going on here. The priests had to give a trespass offering before they could continue to offer the sacrifices. Note that the separation ordered here had nothing to do with race. The separation was a separation from those who believed in pagan gods. It was a separation based upon things spiritual and not upon physical characteristics. Following this cleansing of the people and the priesthood the people and the priesthood entered into an oath to keep themselves clear from the pagans. This oath is recorded in Nehemiah 10:29-30 and states:

Nehemiah 10:29-30

²⁹ They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; ³⁰ And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:

These commandments to be a separate people and not to intermarry with pagans were not isolated to the Old Testament. The Holy Ghost's command to Christian widows that are seeking to remarry is that they seek out a fellow believer. We see this in 1 Corinthians 7:39 which says:

1 Corinthians 7:39

³⁹ 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.

That is what the meaning of "only in the Lord" is. It means that a Christian must seek out a Christian mate. We see further New Testament guidance for this precept in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 where the Holy Ghost says:

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

What this passage in 2 Corinthians 6 means is that we are not to hook up, or become yoked, with unbelievers in any area of life and that includes marriage. The Lord Jesus Christ does not fellowship with Belial. If you enter into a marriage with an unbeliever you are entering into fellowship with the

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Devil (here called Belial). Christians are light and the unbelievers are darkness. The body of the believer is the temple of the living God while the body of the unbeliever is the temple of Satan who is the god of this world. We are not to join in any relationships with those that are unsaved.

CHAPTER 3: MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, AND WIVES IN ISRAEL

BY ALFRED EDERSHEIM

Note From Brother Mike Sutherland: What follows is the entire Chapter 9 of Alfred Edersheim's book "**Sketches of Jewish Social Life**". The title of this chapter is: "Mothers, Daughters, and Wives In Israel". It is taken from pages 129-147 of the updated printed edition.

IN order accurately to understand the position of woman in Israel, it is only necessary carefully to peruse the New Testament. The picture of social life there presented gives a full view of the place which she held in private and in public life. Here we do not find that separation, so common among Orientals at all times, but woman mingles freely with others both at home and abroad. So far from suffering under social inferiority, she takes influential and often leading part in all movements, specially those of a religious character. Above all, we are wholly spared those sickening details of private and public immorality with which contemporary classical literature abounds. Among Israel woman was pure, the home happy, and the family hallowed by a religion which consisted not only in public services, but entered into daily life, and embraced in its observances every member of the household. It was so not only in New Testament times but always in Israel. St. Peter's reference to "the holy women" "in the old time" (1 Peter 3:5) is thoroughly in accordance with Talmudical views. Indeed, his quotation of Genesis 18:12, and its application: "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord," occur in precisely the same manner in Rabbinical writings (*Tanch.* 28, 6), where her respect and obedience are likewise set forth as a pattern to her daughters.¹

Some further details may illustrate the matter better than arguments. The creation of woman from the rib of Adam is thus commented on: "It is as if Adam had exchanged a pot of earth for a precious jewel." This, although Jewish wit caustically had it: "God has cursed woman, yet all the world runs after her; He has cursed the ground, yet all the world lives of it." In what reverence "the four mothers," as the Rabbis designate Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel, were held, and what influence they exercised in patriarchal history, no attentive reader of Scripture can fail to notice. And as we follow on the sacred story, Miriam, who had originally saved Moses, leads the song of deliverance on the other side of the flood, and her influence, though not always for good, continued till her death (compare Micah 6:4). Then "the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom" contribute to the rearing of the Tabernacle;² Deborah works deliverance, and judgeth in Israel; and the piety of Manoah's wife is at least as conspicuous, and more intelligent, than her husband's (Judges

1

The following illustration also occurs: A certain wise woman said to her daughter before her marriage: "My child, stand before thy husband and minister to him. If thou wilt act as his maiden he will be thy slave, and honor thee as his mistress; but if thou exalt thyself against him, he will be thy master, and thou shalt become vile in his eyes, like one of the maidservants."

2

There is a Jewish tradition that the women had contributed of their substance to the Tabernacle, but refused to do so for making the golden calf, which is deduced from the account in Exodus 32:2 compared with verse 3.

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13:23). So also is that of the mother of Samuel. In the times of the kings the praises of Israel's maidens stir the jealousy of Saul; Abigail knows how to avert the danger of her husband's folly; the wise woman of Tekoah is sent for to induce the king to fetch his banished home; and the conduct of a woman “in her wisdom” puts an end to the rebellion of Sheba. Later on, the constant mention of queen mothers, and their frequent interference in the government, shows their position. Such names as that of Huldah the prophetess, and the idyllic narrative of the Shunammite, will readily occur to the memory. The story of a woman's devotion forms the subject of the Book of Ruth; that of her pure and faithful love, the theme or the imagery of the Song of Songs; that of her courage and devotion the groundwork of the Book of Esther: while her worth and virtues are enumerated in the closing chapter of the Book of Proverbs. Again, in the language of the prophets the people of God are called “the daughter,” “the virgin daughter of Zion,” “the daughter of Jerusalem,” “the daughter of Judah,” etc.; and their relationship to God is constantly compared to that of the married state. The very terms by which woman is named in the Old Testament are significant. If the man is *Ish*, his wife is *Ishah*, simply his equal; if the husband is *Gever*, the ruler, the woman is, in her own domain, *Gevirah* and *Gevereth*, the mistress (as frequently in the history of Sarah and in other passages), or else *the dweller at home* (*Nevath bayith*, Psalm 68:12).³ Nor is it otherwise in New Testament times. The ministry of woman to our blessed Lord, and in the Church, has almost become proverbial. Her position there marks really not a progress upon, but the full carrying out of, the Old Testament idea; or, to put the matter in another light, we ask no better than that any one who is acquainted with classical antiquity should compare what he reads of a Dorcas, of the mother of Mark, of Lydia, Priscilla, Phoebe, Lois, or Eunice, with what he knows of the noble women of Greece and Rome at that period.

Of course, against all this may be seen the permission of *polygamy*, which undoubtedly was in force at the time of our Lord, and the ease with which *divorce* might be obtained. In reference to both these, however, it must be remembered that they were temporary concessions to “the hardness” of the people's heart. For, not only must the circumstances of the times and the moral state of the Jewish and of neighboring nations be taken into account, but there were progressive stages of spiritual development. If these had not been taken into account, the religion of the Old Testament would have been unnatural and an impossibility. Suffice it, that “from the beginning it was not so,” nor yet intended to be so in the end — the intermediate period thus marking the gradual progress from the perfectness of the idea to the perfectness of its realization. Moreover, it is impossible to read the Old, and still more the New Testament without gathering from it the conviction, that polygamy was not the rule but the rare exception, so far as the people generally were concerned. Although the practice

3

Similar expressions are *Sarah* and *Shiddah*, both from roots meaning *to rule*. Nor is this inconsistent with the use of the word *Baal*, to marry, and *Beulah*, the married one, from *Baal*, a lord — even as Sarah “called Abraham lord” (1 Peter 3:6, the expression used of her to Abimelech, Genesis 20:3, being *Beulah*). Of course it is not meant that these are the only words for females. But the others, such as *Bath* and *Naarah*, are either simply feminine terminations, or else, as *Bethulah*, *Levush*, *Nekevah*, *Almah*, *Rachem*, descriptive of their physical state.

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in reference to divorce was certainly more lax, even the Rabbis surrounded it with so many safeguards that, in point of fact, it must in many cases have been difficult of accomplishment. In general, the whole tendency of the Mosaic legislation, and even more explicitly that of later Rabbinical ordinances, was in the direction of recognizing the rights of woman, with a scrupulousness which reached down even to the Jewish slave, and a delicacy that guarded her most sensitive feelings. Indeed, we feel warranted in saying, that in cases of dispute the law generally leant to her side. Of *divorce* we shall have to speak in the sequel. But what the religious views and feelings both about it and monogamy were at the time of Malachi, appears from the pathetic description of the altar of God as covered with the tears of “the wife of youth,” “the wife of thy covenant,” “thy companion,” who had been “put away” or “treacherously dealt” with (Malachi 2:13 to end). The whole is so beautifully paraphrased by the Rabbis that we subjoin it:⁴

*“If death hath snatched from thee the wife of youth,
It is as if the sacred city were,
And e’en the Temple, in thy pilgrim days,
Defiled, laid low, and levelled with the dust.
The man who harshly sends from him
His first-woo’d wife, the loving wife of youth,
For him the very altar of the Lord
Sheds forth its tears of bitter agony.”*

Where the social intercourse between the sexes was nearly as unrestricted as among ourselves, so far as consistent with Eastern manners, it would, of course, be natural for a young man to make personal choice of his bride. Of this Scripture affords abundant evidence. But, at any rate, the woman had, in case of betrothal or marriage, to give her own free and expressed consent, without which a union was invalid. *Minors* — in the case of girls up to twelve years and one day — might be betrothed or given away by their father. In that case, however, they had afterwards the right of insisting upon divorce. Of course, it is not intended to convey that woman attained her full position till under the New Testament. But this is only to repeat what may be said of almost every social state and relationship. Yet it is most marked how deeply the spirit of the Old Testament, which is essentially that of the New also, had in this respect also penetrated the life of Israel. St. Paul’s warning (2 Corinthians 6:14) against being “unequally yoked together,” which is an allegorical application of Leviticus 19:19; Deuteronomy 22:10, finds to some extent a counterpart in mystical Rabbinical

4

After the elegant poetical version of Dr. Sachs (*Stimmen vom Jordan u. Euphrat*, p. 347). We select this one poetic description of Jewish wedded love and respect for woman from among many that might be given

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writings,⁵ where the last-mentioned passage is expressly applied to spiritually unequal marriages. The admonition of 1 Corinthians 7:39 to marry “only in the Lord,” recalls many similar Rabbinical warnings, from which we select the most striking. Men, we are told,⁶ are wont to marry for one of four reasons — for passion, wealth, honor, or the glory of God. As for the first-named class of marriages, their issue must be expected to be “stubborn and rebellious” sons, as we may gather from the section referring to such following upon that in Deuteronomy 21:11. In regard to marriages for wealth, we are to learn a lesson from the sons of Eli, who sought to enrich themselves in such manner, but of whose posterity it was said (1 Samuel 2:36) that they should “crouch for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread.” Of marriages for the sake of connection, honor, and influence, King Jehoram offered a warning, who became King Ahab’s son-in-law, because that monarch had seventy sons, whereas upon his death his widow Athaliah “arose and destroyed all the seed royal” (2 Kings 11:1). But far otherwise is it in case of marriage “in the name of heaven.” The issue of such will be children who “preserve Israel.” In fact, the Rabbinical references to marrying “in the name of heaven,” or “for the name of God,” — in God and for God — are so frequent and so emphatic, that the expressions used by St. Paul must have come familiarly to him. Again, much that is said in 1 Corinthians 7 about the married estate, finds striking parallels in Talmudical writings. One may here be mentioned, as explaining the expression (ver. 14): “Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” Precisely the same distinction was made by the Rabbis in regard to proselytes, whose children, if begotten before their conversion to Judaism, were said to be “unclean;” if after that event to have been born “in holiness,” only that, among the Jews, *both* parents required to profess Judaism, while St. Paul argues in the contrary direction, and concerning a far different holiness than that which could be obtained through any mere outward ceremony.

Some further details, gathered almost at random, will give glimpses of Jewish home life and of current views. It was by a not uncommon, though irreverent, mode of witticism, that two forms of the same verb, sounding almost alike, were made to express opposite experiences of marriage. It was common to ask a newly-married husband: “*Maza* or *Mose?*” — “findeth” or “found;” the first expression occurring in Proverbs 18:22, the second in Ecclesiastes 7:26. A different sentiment is the following from the Talmud (*Yeb. 62 b; Sanh. 76 b*), the similarity of which to Ephesians 5:28 will be immediately recognized: “He that loveth his wife as his own body, honoreth her more than his own body, brings up his children in the right way, and leads them in it to full age — of him the Scripture saith: Ò Thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace” (Job 5:24) Of all qualities those most desired in woman were meekness, modesty, and shamefacedness. Indeed, brawling, gossip in the streets, and immodest behavior in public were sufficient grounds for divorce. Of course, Jewish women would never have attempted “teaching” in the synagogue, where they occupied a place

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The somewhat similar reference to Leviticus 19:19 in *Philo. de Creat. Princ.* (ed Francof.) pp. 730, 731, mentioned in Wetstein, *Nov. Test.* ii. p. 193, does not seem sufficiently parallel for quotation.

⁶Yalkut on Deuteronomy 21:15.

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separate from the men — for Rabbinical study, however valued for the male sex, was disapproved of in the case of women. Yet this direction of St. Paul (1 Timothy 2:12): “I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man” findeth some kind of parallel in the Rabbinical saying: “Whoever allows himself to be ruled by his wife, shall call out, and no one will make answer to him.”

It is on similar grounds that the Rabbis argue, that man must seek after woman, and not a woman after a man; only the reason which they assign for it sounds strange. Man, they say, was formed from the ground — woman from man’s rib; hence, in trying to find a wife man only looks after what he had lost! This formation of man from soft clay, and of woman from a hard bone, also illustrated why man was so much more easily reconcilable than woman. Similarly, it was observed, that God had not formed woman out of the head, lest she should become proud; nor out of the eye, lest she should lust; nor out of the ear, lest she should be curious; nor out of the mouth, lest she should be talkative; nor out of the heart, lest she should be jealous; nor out of the hand; lest she should be covetous; nor out of the foot, lest she be a busybody; but out of the rib, which was always covered. Modesty was, therefore, a prime quality. It was no doubt chiefly in jealous regard for this, that women were interdicted engaging in Rabbinical studies; and a story is related to show how even the wisest of women, Beruria, was thereby brought to the brink of extreme danger. It is not so easy to explain why women were dispensed from all positive obligations (commands, but not prohibitions) that were not general in their bearing (*Kidd.* 1. 7, 8), but fixed to certain periods of time (such as wearing the phylacteries, etc.), and from that of certain prayers, unless it be that woman was considered not her own mistress but subject to others, or else that husband and wife were regarded as one, so that his merits and prayers applied to her as well. Indeed, this view, at least so far as the meritorious nature of a man’s engagement with the law is concerned, is expressly brought forward, and women are accordingly admonished to encourage their husbands in all such studies.

We can understand how, before the coming of the Messiah, marriage should have been looked upon as of religious obligation. Many passages of Scripture were at least *quoted* in support of this idea. Ordinarily, a young man was expected to enter the wedded state (according to Maimonides) at the age of sixteen or seventeen, while the age of twenty may be regarded as the utmost limit conceded, unless study so absorbed time and attention as to leave no leisure for the duties of married life. Still it was thought better even to neglect study than to remain single. Yet money cares on account of wife and children were dreaded. The same comparison is used in reference to them, which our Lord applies to quite a different “offense,” that against the “little ones” (Luke 17:2). Such cares are called by the Rabbis, “a millstone round the neck” (*Kidd.* 29 *b*). In fact, the expression seems to have become proverbial, like so many others which are employed in the New Testament.

We read in the Gospel that, when the Virgin-mother “was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily” (Matthew 1:18, 19). The narrative implies a distinction between *betrothal* and *marriage* — Joseph being at the time betrothed, but not actually married to the Virgin mother. Even in the Old Testament a distinction is made between *betrothal* and *marriage*. The former was marked by a bridal present (or *Mohar*, Genesis 34:12; Exodus 22:17; 1 Samuel 18:25), with which the father, however, would in certain circumstances dispense. From the moment of her betrothal a woman was treated as if she were

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actually married. The union could not be dissolved, except by regular divorce; breach of faithfulness was regarded as adultery; and the property of the woman became virtually that of her betrothed, unless he had expressly renounced it (*Kidd.* 9. 1). But even in that case he was her natural heir. It is impossible here to enter into the various legal details, as, for example, about property or money which might come to a woman after betrothal or marriage. The law adjudicated this to the husband, yet with many restrictions, and with infinite delicacy towards the woman, as if reluctant to put in force the rights of the stronger (*Kidd.* 8. 1, etc.). From the Mishnah (*Bab. B.* 10. 4) we also learn that there were regular *Shitre Erusin*, or writings of betrothal, drawn up by the authorities (the costs being paid by the bridegroom). These stipulated the mutual obligations, the dowry, and all other points on which the parties had agreed. The *Shitre Erusin* were different from the regular *Chethubah* (literally, *writing*), or marriage contract, without which the Rabbis regarded a marriage as merely legalized concubinage (*Cheth.* 5. 1). The *Chethubah* provided a settlement of at least two hundred denars for a maiden, and one hundred denars for a widow, while the priestly council at Jerusalem fixed four hundred denars for a priest's daughter. Of course these sums indicate only the legal *minimum*, and might be increased indefinitely at pleasure, though opinions differ whether any larger sums might be legally exacted, if matters did not go beyond betrothal. The form at present in use among the Jews sets forth, that the bridegroom weds his bride “according to the law of Moses and of Israel;” that he promises “to please, to honor, to nourish, and to care for her, as is the manner of the men of Israel,” adding thereto the woman's consent, the document being signed by two witnesses. In all probability this was substantially the form in olden times. In Jerusalem and in Galilee — where it was said that men in their choice had regard to “a fair degree,” while in the rest of Judaea they looked a good deal after money — widows had the right of residence in their husband's house secured to them.

On the other hand, a father was bound to provide a dowry (*nedan, nedanjah*) for his daughter conformable to her station in life; and a second daughter could claim a portion equal to that of her elder sister, or else one tenth of all immovable property. In case of the father's death, the sons, who, according to Jewish law, were his sole heirs, were bound to maintain their sisters, even though this would have thrown them upon public charity, and to endow each with a tenth part of what had been left. The dowry, whether in money, property, or jewelry, was entered into the marriage contract, and really belonged to the wife, the husband being obliged to add to it one-half more, if it consisted of money or money's value; and if of jewelry, etc., to assign to her four-fifths of its value. In case of separation (not divorce) he was bound to allow her a proper aliment, and to re-admit her to his table and house on the Sabbath-eve. A wife was entitled to one-tenth of her dowry for pin-money. If a father gave away his daughter without any distinct statement about her dowry, he was bound to allow her at least fifty *sus*; and if it had been expressly stipulated that she was to have no dowry at all, it was delicately enjoined that the bridegroom should, *before marriage*, give her sufficient for the necessary outfit. An orphan was to receive a dowry of at least fifty *sus* from the parochial authorities. A husband could not oblige his wife to leave the Holy Land nor the city of Jerusalem, nor yet to change a town for a country residence, or *vice versa*, nor a good for a bad house. These are only a few of the provisions which show how carefully the law protected the interests of women. To enter into farther details would lead beyond our present object. All this was substantially settled at the betrothal, which, in Judaea at least, seems to have been celebrated by a feast. Only a *bona fide* breach of these

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arrangements, or willful fraud, was deemed valid ground for dissolving the bond once formed. Otherwise, as already noted, a regular divorce was necessary.

According to Rabbinical law certain formalities were requisite to make a betrothal legally valid. These consisted either in handing to a woman, directly or through messengers, a piece of money, however small, or else a letter,⁷ provided it were in each case expressly stated before witnesses, that the man thereby intended to espouse the woman as his wife. The marriage followed after a longer or shorter interval, the limits of which, however, were fixed by law. The ceremony itself consisted in leading the bride into the house of the bridegroom, with certain formalities, mostly dating from very ancient times. Marriage with a maiden was commonly celebrated on a Wednesday afternoon, which allowed the first days of the week for preparation, and enabled the husband, if he had a charge to prefer against the previous chastity of his bride, to make immediate complaint before the local Sanhedrim, which sat every Thursday. On the other hand, the marriage of a widow was celebrated on Thursday afternoon, which left three days of the week for “rejoicing with her.” This circumstance enables us, with some certainty, to arrange the date of the events which preceded the marriage in Cana. Inferring from the accompanying festivities that it was the marriage of a maiden, and therefore took place on a Wednesday, we have the following succession of events: — On *Thursday* (beginning as every Jewish day with the previous evening), testimony of the Baptist to the Sanhedrim-deputation from Jerusalem. On *Friday* (John 1:29), “John seeth Jesus coming unto him,” and significantly preacheth the first sermon about “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” On *Saturday* (ver. 35), John’s second sermon on the same text; the consequent conversion of St. John and St. Andrew, and the calling of St. Peter. On *Sunday* (ver. 43), our Lord Himself preacheth His first Messianic sermon, and calls Philip and Nathanael. On “the third day” after it, that is, on *Wednesday*, was the marriage in Cana of Galilee. The significance of these dates, when compared with those in the week of our Lord’s Passion, will be sufficiently evident.

But this is not all that may be learned from the account of the marriage in Cana. Of course, there was a “marriage-feast,” as on all these occasions. For this reason, marriages were not celebrated either on the Sabbath, or on the day before or after it, lest the Sabbath-rest should be endangered. Nor was it lawful to wed on any of the three annual festivals, in order, as the Rabbis put it, “not to mingle one joy (that of the marriage) with another (that of the festival).” As it was deemed a religious duty to give pleasure to the newly-married couple, the merriment at times became greater than the more strict Rabbis approved. Accordingly, it is said of one, that to produce gravity he broke a vase worth about £25; of another, that at his son’s wedding he broke a costly glass; and of a third, that being asked to sing, he exclaimed, Woe to us, for we must all die! For, as it is added (*Ber. 31 a*): “It is forbidden to man, that his mouth be filled with laughter in this world (dispensation), as it is written, ‘Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.’ When is that to be? At the time when ‘they shall sing among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.’”

7

There was also a third mode of espousal — simply by cohabitation, but this was very strongly disapproved by the Rabbis.

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It deserves notice, that at the marriage in Cana there is no mention of “the friends of the bridegroom,” or, as we would call them, the groomsmen. This was in strict accordance with Jewish custom, for groomsmen were customary in *Judaea*, but not in Galilee (*Cheth. 25 a*). This also casts light upon the locality where John 3:29 was spoken, in which “the friend of the bridegroom” is mentioned. But this expression is quite different from that of “children of the bridechamber,” which occurs in Matthew 9:15, where the scene is once more laid in Galilee. The term “children of the bridechamber” is simply a translation of the Rabbinical “*bene Chuppah*,” and means the guests invited to the bridal. In *Judaea* there were at every marriage *two* groomsmen or “friends of the bridegroom” — one for the bridegroom, the other for his bride. Before marriage, they acted as a kind of intermediaries between the couple; at the wedding they offered gifts, waited upon the bride and bridegroom, and attended them to the bridal chamber, being also, as it were, the guarantors of the bride’s virgin chastity. Hence, when St. Paul tells the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 11:2): “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; or I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ,” he speaks, as it were, in the character of groomsmen or “bridegroom’s friend,” who had acted as such at the spiritual union of Christ with the Corinthian Church. And we know that it was specially the duty of the “friend of the bridegroom” so to present to him his bride. Similarly it was his also, after marriage, to maintain proper terms between the couple, and more particularly to defend the good fame of the bride against all imputations. It may interest some to know that this custom also was traced up to highest authority. Thus, in the spiritual union of Israel with their God, Moses is spoken of as “the friend of the bridegroom” who leads out the bride (Exodus 19:17); while Jehovah, as the bridegroom, meets His Church at Sinai (Psalm 68:7; *Pirke di R. El. 41*). Nay, in some mystic writings God is described as acting “the friend of the bridegroom,” when our first parents met in Eden. There is a touch of poetry in the application of Ezekiel 28:13 to that scene, when angels led the choir, and decked and watched the bridal-bed (*Ab. de R. Nathan 4. and 12.*). According to another ancient Rabbinical commentary (*Ber. R. 8.*), God Almighty Himself took the cup of blessing and spoke the benediction, while Michael and Gabriel acted the “bridegroom’s friends” to our first parents when they wedded in Paradise.

With such a “benediction,” preceded by a brief formula, with which the bride was handed over to her husband (Tobit 7:13), the wedding festivities commenced.⁸ And so the pair were led towards the bridal chamber (*Cheder*) and the bridal bed (*Chuppah*).⁹ The bride went with her hair unloosed. Ordinarily, it was most strictly enjoined upon women to have their head and hair carefully covered. This may throw some light upon the difficult passage, 1 Corinthians 11:1-10. We must bear in mind that the apostle there argues with Jews, and that on *their own ground*, convincing them by a reference to their own views, customs, and legends of the propriety of the practice which he enjoins. From that point of view the propriety of a woman having her head “covered” could not be called in question.

⁸It is, to say the least, doubtful whether the Rabbinical form of this benediction and of that at betrothal dates from earliest times. However beautiful, seems far too elaborate for that.

⁹The distinction is marked in Joel 2:16; the *Chuppah* is also mentioned in Psalm 19:5.

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The opposite would, to a Jew, have indicated immodesty. Indeed, it was the custom in the case of a woman accused of adultery to have her hair “shorn or shaven,” at the same time using this formula: “Because thou hast departed from the manner of the daughters of Israel, who go with their head covered;... therefore that has befallen thee which thou hast chosen.” This so far explains verses 5 and 6. The expression “power,” as applied in verse 10 to the head of woman, seems to refer to this covering, indicating, as it did, that she was under the power of her husband, while the very difficult addition, “because of the angels,” may either allude to the presence of the angels and to the well-known Jewish view (based, no doubt, on truth) that those angels may be grieved or offended by our conduct, and bear the sad tidings before the throne of God, or it may possibly refer to the very ancient Jewish belief, that the evil spirits gained power over a woman who went with her head bare.

The custom of a bridal veil — either for the bride alone, or spread over the couple — was of ancient date. It was interdicted for a time by the Rabbis after the destruction of Jerusalem. Still more ancient was the wearing of crowns (Cant. 3:11; Isaiah 61:10; Ezekiel 16:12), which was also prohibited after the last Jewish war. Palm and myrtle branches were borne before the couple, grain or money was thrown about, and music preceded the procession, in which all who met it were, as a religious duty, expected to join.¹⁰ The Parable of the Ten Virgins, who, with their lamps, were in expectancy of the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1), is founded on Jewish custom. For, according to Rabbinical authority, such lamps carried on the top of staves were frequently used, while *ten* is the number always mentioned in connection with public solemnities.¹¹ The marriage festivities generally lasted a week, but the bridal days extended over a full month.¹²

Having entered thus fully on the subject of marriage, a few further particulars may be of interest. The bars to marriage mentioned in the Bible are sufficiently known. To these the Rabbis added others, which have been arranged under two heads — as farther extending the laws of kindred (to their *secondary* degrees), and as intended to guard morality. The former were extended over the whole line of forbidden kindred, where that line was direct, and to one link farther where the line became indirect — as, for example, to the wife of a maternal uncle, or to the step-mother of a wife. In the category of guards to morality we include such prohibitions as that a divorced woman might not marry her seducer, nor a man the woman to whom he had brought her letter of divorce, or in whose case he had borne testimony; or of marriage with those not in their right senses, or in a state of drunkenness; or of the marriage of minors, or under fraud, etc. A widower had to wait over three festivals, a widow three months, before remarrying, or if she was with child or gave suck, for two years. A woman might not be married a third time; no marriage could take place within thirty days

¹⁰See my article on “Marriage” in Cassell's *Bible Educator*, vol. iv. pp. 267-270.

¹¹According to R. Simon {on *Chel.* ii. 8) it was an Eastern custom that, when the bride was led to her future home, “they carried before the party about ten” such lamps.

¹²The practice of calling a wife a bride during the first year of her marriage is probably based on Deuteronomy 24:5.

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of the death of a near relative, nor yet on the Sabbath, nor on a feast-day, etc. Of the marriage to a deceased husband's brother (or the next of kin), in case of childlessness, it is unnecessary here to speak, since although the Mishnah devotes a whole tractate to it (*Yebamoth*), and it was evidently customary at the time of Christ (Mark 12:19, etc.), the practice was considered as connected with the territorial possession of Palestine, and ceased with the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth (*Bechar.* 1. 7). A priest was to inquire into the legal descent of his wife (up to four degrees if the daughter of a priest, otherwise up to five degrees), except where the bride's father was a priest in actual service, or a member of the Sanhedrim. The high-priest's bride was to be a maid not older than six months beyond her puberty.

The fatal ease with which divorce could be obtained, and its frequency, appear from the question addressed to Christ by the Pharisees: “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” (Matthew 19:3), and still more from the astonishment with which the disciples had listened to the reply of the Savior (ver. 10). That answer was much wider in its range than our Lord's initial teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:32).¹³ To the latter no Jew could have had any objection, even though its morality would have seemed elevated beyond their highest standard, represented in this case by the school of Shammai, while that of Hillel, and still more Rabbi Akiba, presented the lowest opposite extreme. But in reply to the Pharisees, our Lord placed the whole question on grounds which even the strictest Shammaite would have refused to adopt. For the farthest limit to which he would have gone would have been to restrict the cause of divorce to “a matter of uncleanness” (Deuteronomy 24:1), by which he would probably have understood not only a breach of the marriage vow, but of the laws and customs of the land. In fact, we know that it included every kind of impropriety, such as going about with loose hair, spinning in the street, familiarly talking with men, ill-treating her husband's parents in his presence, brawling, that is, “speaking to her husband so loudly that the neighbors could hear her in the adjoining house” (*Chethub.* 7. 6), a general bad reputation, or the discovery of fraud before marriage. On the other hand, the wife could insist on being divorced if her husband were a leper, or affected with polypus, or engaged in a disagreeable or dirty trade, such as that of a tanner or coppersmith. One of the cases in which divorce was obligatory was, if either party had become heretical, or ceased to profess Judaism. But even so, there were at least checks to the danger of general lawlessness, such as the obligation of paying to a wife her portion, and a number of minute ordinances about formal *letters of divorce*, without which no divorce was legal¹⁴ and which had to be couched in explicit terms, handed to the woman herself, and that in presence of two witnesses, etc.

According to Jewish law there were four obligations incumbent on a wife towards her

¹³Rabbinical ordinances so limited the Mosaic law in regard to an adulteress, that the trial and punishment could only have been of the very rarest occurrence. Into these laws and distinctions we cannot, however, at present enter.

¹⁴The Jews have it that a woman "is loosed from the law of her husband" by only one of two things: death or a letter of divorce; hence Romans 7:2, 3.

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husband, and ten by which he was bound. Of the latter, three are referred to in Exodus 21:9, 10; the other seven include her settlement, medical treatment in case of sickness, redemption from captivity, a respectable funeral, provision in his house so long as she remained a widow and had not been paid her dowry, the support of her daughters till they were married, and a provision that her sons should, besides receiving their portion of the father's inheritance, also share in what had been settled upon her. The obligations upon the wife were, that all her gains should belong to her husband, as also what came to her after marriage by inheritance; that the husband should have the usufruct of her dowry, and of any gains by it, provided he had the administration of it, in which case, however, he was also responsible for any loss; and that he should be considered her heir-at-law.¹⁵

What the family life among the godly in Israel must have been, how elevated its tone, how loving its converse, or how earnestly devoted its mothers and daughters, appears sufficiently from the gospel story, from that in the book of Acts, and from notices in the apostolic letters. Women, such as the Virgin-mother, or Elisabeth, or Anna, or those who enjoyed the privilege of ministering to the Lord, or who, after His death, tended and watched for His sacred body, could not have been quite solitary in Palestine; we find their sisters in a Dorcas, a Lydia, a Phoebe, and those women of whom St. Paul speaks in Philippians 4:3, and whose lives he sketches in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Wives such as Priscilla, mothers such as that of Zebedee's children, or of Mark, or like St. John's "elect lady," or as Lois and Eunice, must have kept the moral atmosphere pure and sweet, and shed precious light on their homes and on society, corrupt to the core as it was under the sway of heathenism. What and how they taught their households, and that even under the most disadvantageous outward circumstances, we learn from the history of Timothy. And although they were undoubtedly in that respect without many of the opportunities which we enjoy, there was one sweet practice of family religion, going beyond the prescribed prayers, which enabled them to teach their children from tenderest years to intertwine the Word of God with their daily devotion and daily life. For it was the custom to teach a child some verse of Holy Scripture beginning or ending with precisely the same letters as its Hebrew name, and this birthday text or guardian-promise the child was day by day to insert in its prayers.¹⁶ Such guardian words, familiar to the mind from earliest years, endeared to the heart by tenderest recollections, would remain with the youth in life's temptations, and come back amid the din of manhood's battle. Assuredly, of Jewish children so reared, so trained, so taught, it might be rightly said: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven."

¹⁵This is not the place to enter into the legal details, fully discussed by the Rabbis.

¹⁶*Koll Kore*, by R. El. Soloweycyk, p. 184. Compare *Taan*. 9, a.

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CHAPTER 4: MARRIAGE: FROM THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA

INTRODUCTORY

It would be interesting to study marriage biologically and sociologically, to get the far and near historical and social background of it as an institution, especially as it existed among the ancient Jews, and as it figures in the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. For, like all social institutions, marriage, and the family which is the outcome of marriage, must be judged, not by its status at any particular time, but in the light of its history. Such a study of it would raise a host of related historic questions, e.g. What was its origin? What part has it played in the evolution and civilization of the race? What social functions has it performed? And then, as a sequel, Can the services it has rendered to civilization and progress be performed or secured in any other way? This, indeed, would call for us to go back even farther — to try to discover the psychology of the institution and its history, the beliefs from which it has [PAGE 629]sprung and by which it has survived so long. This were a task well worth while and amply justified by much of the thinking of our time; for, as one of the three social institutions that support the much challenged form and fabric of modern civilization, marriage, private property and the state, its continued existence, in present form at least, is a matter of serious discussion and its abolition, along with the other two, is confidently prophesied. “Marriage, as at present understood, is an arrangement most closely associated with the existing social status and stands or falls with it” (Bebel, *Socialism and Sex*, 199, Reeves, London; *The Cooperative Commonwealth in Its Outline*, Gronlund, 224). But such a task is entirely outside of and beyond the purpose of this article.

Neither the Bible in general, nor Jesus in particular, treats of the family from the point of view of the historian or the sociologist, but solely from that of the teacher of religion and morals. In short, their point of view is theological, rather than sociological. Moses and the prophets, no less than Jesus and His apostles, accepted marriage as an existing institution which gave rise to certain practical, ethical questions, and they dealt with it accordingly. There is nothing in the record of the teachings of Jesus and of His apostles to indicate that they gave to marriage any new social content, custom or sanction. They simply accepted it as it existed in the conventionalized civilization of the Jews of their day and used it and the customs connected with it for ethical or illustrative purposes. One exception is to be made to this general statement, namely, that Jesus granted that because of the exigencies of the social development Moses had modified it to the extent of permitting and regulating divorce, clearly indicating, however, at the same time, that He regarded such modification as out of harmony with the institution as at first given to mankind. According to the original Divine purpose it was monogamous, and any form of polygamy, and apparently of divorce, was excluded by the Divine idea and purpose. The treatment of the subject here, therefore, will be limited as follows: Marriage among the Ancient Hebrews and Other Semites; Betrothal as the First Formal Part of the Transaction; Wedding Ceremonies Connected with Marriage, especially as Reflected in the New Testament; and Jesus’ Sanction and Use of the Institution, Teaching concerning Divorce, etc. [PAGE 630]

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1. MARRIAGE AMONG THE HEBREWS:

With the Hebrews married life was the normal life. Any exception called for apology and explanation. “Any Jew who has not a wife is no man” (Talmud). It was regarded as awaiting everyone on reaching maturity; and sexual maturity comes much earlier indeed in the East than with us in the West — in what we call childhood. The ancient Hebrews, in common with all Orientals, regarded the family as the social unit. In this their view of it coincides with that, of modern sociologists. Of the three great events in the family life, birth, marriage and death, marriage was regarded as the most important. It was a step that led to the gravest tribal and family consequences. In case of a daughter, if she should prove unsatisfactory to her husband, she would likely be returned to the ancestral home, discarded and discredited, and there would be almost inevitably a feeling of injustice engendered on one side, and a sense of mutual irritation between the families (Judges 14:20; 1 Samuel 18:19). If she failed to pass muster with her mother-in-law she would just as certainly have to go, and the results would be much the same (compare customs in China). It was a matter affecting the whole circle of relatives, and possibly tribal amity as well. It was natural and deemed necessary, therefore, that the selection of the wife and the arrangement of all contractual and financial matters connected with it should be decided upon by the parents or guardians of the couple involved. Though the consent of the parties was sometimes sought (Genesis 24:8) and romantic attachments were not unknown (Genesis 29:20; 34:3; Judges 14:1; 1 Samuel 18:20), the gift of woman in the case was not currently thought of as having a personal existence at her own disposal. She was simply a passive unit in the family under the protection and supreme control of father or brothers. In marriage, she was practically the chattel, the purchased possession and personal property of her husband, who was her ba`al or master (Hos 2:16), she herself being be`ulah (Isaiah 62:4). The control, however, was not always absolute (Genesis 26:34; Exodus 2:21).

The bargaining instinct, so dominant among Orientals then as now, played a large part in the transaction. In idea the family was a little kingdom of which the father was the king, or absolute ruler. There are many indications, not only that the family was the unit from which national coherence was derived, but that this unit was perpetuated through the supremacy of the oldest male. Thus society became patriarchal, and this is the key of the ancient history of the family and the nation. Through the [PAGE 631] expansion of the family group was evolved in turn the clan, the tribe, the nation, and the authority of the father became in turn that of the chief, the ruler, and the king. The Oriental cannot conceive, indeed, of any band, or clan, or company without a “father,” even though there be no kith or kinship involved in the matter. The “father” in their thought, too, was God’s representative, and as such he was simply carrying out God’s purpose, for instance, in selecting a bride for his son, or giving the bride to be married to the son of another. This is as true of the far East as of the near East today. Accordingly, as a rule, the young people simply acquiesced, without question or complaint, in what was thus done for them, accepting it as though God had done it directly. Accordingly, too, the family and tribal loyalty overshadowed love-making and patriotism, in the larger sense. Out of this idea of the solidarity and selectness of the tribe and family springs the overmastering desire of the Oriental for progeny, and for the conservation of the family or the tribe at any cost. Hence, the feuds, bloody and bitter, that persist between this family or tribe and another that has in any way

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violated this sacred law.

Traces of what is known as beena marriage are found in the Old Testament, e.g. that of Jacob, where Laban claims Jacob's wives and children as his own (Genesis 31:31,43), and that of Moses (Exodus 2:21; 4:18). This is that form of marriage in which the husband is incorporated into the wife's tribe, the children belonging to her tribe and descent being reckoned on her side (compare W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, 94). In Samson's case we seem to have an instance of what is known among Arabs as tsadqat marriage (from tsadaq, "gift"), the kid here being the customary tsadaq (Judges 14; 15:1; 16:4). There is no hint that he meant to take his wife home. It is differentiated from prostitution in that no disgrace is attached to it and the children are recognized as legitimate by the tribe. Such marriages make it easier to understand the existence of the matriarchate, or the custom of reckoning the descent of children and property through the mothers. The influence of polygamy would work in the same direction, subdividing the family into smaller groups connected with the several wives. There is, however, no clear evidence in the Old Testament of polyandry (a plurality of husbands), though the Levirate marriage is regarded by some as a survival of it. In other words, polygamy among the Hebrews seems to have been confined to polygyny (a plurality of wives). It is easy to trace its chief causes: **(1)** desire for a numerous offspring ("May his tribe increase!"); **[PAGE 632] (2)** barrenness of first wife (as in Abraham's case); **(3)** advantages offered by marital alliances (e.g. Solomon); **(4)** the custom of making wives of captives taken in war (compare Psalm 45:3,9); **(5)** slavery, which as it existed in the Orient almost implied it.

2. BETROTHAL THE FIRST FORMAL PART:

Betrothal with the ancient Hebrews was of a more formal and far more binding nature than the "engagement" is with us. Indeed, it was esteemed a part of the transaction of marriage, and that the most binding part. Among the Arabs today it is the only legal ceremony connected with marriage. Genesis 24:58,60 seems to preserve for us an example of an ancient formula and blessing for such an occasion. Its central feature was the dowry ([mohar]), which was paid to the parents, not to the bride. It may take the form of service (Genesis 29; 1 Samuel 18:25). It is customary in Syria today, when the projected marriage is approved by both families, and all the financial preliminaries have been settled, to have this ceremony of betrothal. It consists in the acceptance before witnesses of the terms of the marriage as contracted for. Then God's blessing is solemnly asked on the union thus provided for, but to take place probably only after some months, or perhaps some years. The betrothal effected, all danger from any further financial fencing and bluffing now being at an end, happiness and harmony may preside over all the arrangements for the marriage day. Among the Jews the betrothal was so far regarded as binding that, if marriage should not take place, owing to the absconding of the bridegroom or the breach of contract on his part, the young woman could not be married to another man until she was liberated by a due process and a paper of divorce. A similar custom prevails in China and Japan, and in cases becomes very oppressive. The marriage may have been intended by the parents from the infancy of the parties, but this formality of betrothal is not entered on till the marriage is considered reasonably certain and measurably near. A prolonged interval between betrothal and marriage was deemed undesirable on many accounts, though often an

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interval was needed that the groom might render the stipulated service or pay the price — say a year or two, or, as in the case of Jacob, it might be seven years. The betrothed parties were legally in the position of a married couple, and unfaithfulness was “adultery” (Dt 22:23; Matthew 1:19). **[PAGE 633]**

Polygamy is likely to become prevalent only where conditions are abnormal, as where there is a disproportionate number of females, as in tribal life in a state of war. In settled conditions it is possible only to those able to provide “dowry” and support for each and all of the wives. The fact of polygamy in Old Testament times is abundantly witnessed in the cases of Abraham, Jacob, the judges, David, Solomon, etc. It was prevalent in Issachar (1 Chronicles 7:4); among the middle class (1 Samuel 1:1 f). But it is treated, even in the Old Testament, as incompatible with the Divine ideal (Genesis 2:24), and its original is traced to deliberate departure from that ideal by Lamech, the Cainite (Genesis 4:19). Kings are warned against it (Dt 17:17; compare Genesis 29:31; 30). Noah, Isaac and Joseph had each only one wife, and Bible pictures of domestic happiness are always connected with monogamy (2 Kings 4; Psalm 128; Proverbs 31; compare Sirach 25:1; 26:1,13). Marriage is applied figuratively, too, to the union between God and Israel, implying monogamy as the ideal state. Nevertheless, having the advantage of precedent, it was long before polygamy fell into disuse in Hebrew society. Herod had nine wives at one time (Josephus, Ant, XVII, I, 2). Justin Martyr (Dial., 134, 141) reproaches Jews of his day with having “four or even five wives,” and for “marrying as many as they wish” (compare Talm). It was not definitely and formally forbidden among Jews until circa 1000 AD. It exists still among Jews in Moslem lands. Side by side with this practice all along has been the ideal principle (Genesis 2:18) rebuking and modifying it. The legal theory that made the man “lord” of the wife (Genesis 3:16; Tenth Commandment) was likewise modified in practice by the affection of the husband and the personality of the wife. The difference between a concubine and a wife was largely due to the wife’s birth and higher position and the fact that she was usually backed by relatives ready to defend her. A slave could not be made a concubine without the wife’s consent (Genesis 16:2).

3. WEDDING CEREMONIES:

There is a disappointing uncertainty as to the exact ceremonies or proceedings connected with marriage in Bible times. We have to paint our picture from passing allusions or descriptions, and from what we know of Jewish and Arabic customs. In cases it would seem that there was nothing beyond betrothal, or the festivities following it (see Genesis 24:3 ff). **[PAGE 634]** Later, in the case of a virgin, an interval of not exceeding a year came to be observed.

The first ceremony, the wedding procession, apparently a relic of marriage by capture (compare Judges 5:30; Psalm 45:15), was the first part of the proceedings. The bridegroom’s “friends” (John 3:29) went, usually by night, to fetch the bride and her attendants to the home of the groom (Matthew 9:15; John 3:29). The joyousness of it all is witnessed by the proverbial “voice of the bridegroom” and the cry, “Behold the bridegroom cometh!” (Jeremiah 7:34; Revelation 18:23). The procession was preferably by night, chiefly, we may infer, that those busy in the day might attend, and that, in accordance with the oriental love of scenic effects, the weird panorama of lights and

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torches might play an engaging and kindling part.

The marriage supper then followed, generally in the home of the groom. Today in Syria, as Dr. Mackie, of Beirut, says, when both parties live in the same town, the reception may take place in either home; but the older tradition points to the house of the groom's parents as the proper place. It is the bringing home of an already accredited bride to her covenanted husband. She is escorted by a company of attendants of her own sex and by male relatives and friends conveying on mules or by porters articles of furniture and decoration for the new home. As the marriage usually takes place in the evening, the house is given up for the day to the women who are busy robing the bride and making ready for the coming hospitality. The bridegroom is absent at the house of a relative or friend, where men congregate in the evening for the purpose of escorting him home. When he indicates that it is time to go, all rise up, and candles and torches are supplied to those who are to form the procession, and they move off. It is a very picturesque sight to see such a procession moving along the unlighted way in the stillness of the starry night, while, if it be in town or city, on each side of the narrow street, from the flat housetop or balcony, crowds look down, and the women take up the peculiar cry of wedding joy that tells those farther along that the pageant has started. This cry is taken up all along the route, and gives warning to those who are waiting with the bride that it is time to arise and light up the approach, and welcome the bridegroom with honor. As at the house where the bridegroom receives his friends before starting some come late, and speeches of congratulation have to be made, and poems have to be recited or sung in praise of the groom, and to the honor of his family, it is often near midnight when the [PAGE 635] procession begins. Meanwhile, as the night wears on, and the duties of robing the bride and adorning the house are all done, a period of relaxing and drowsy waiting sets in, as when, in the New Testament parable, both the wise and the foolish virgins were overcome with sleep. In their case the distant cry on the street brought the warning to prepare for the reception, and then came the discovery of the exhausted oil.

Of the bridegroom's retinue only a limited number would enter, their chief duty being that of escort. They might call next day to offer congratulations. An Arabic wedding rhyme says:

***“To the bridegroom's door went the torch-lit array,
And then like goats they scattered away.”***

With their dispersion, according to custom, the doors would be closed, leaving within the relatives and invited guests; and so, when the belated virgins of the parable hastened back, they too found themselves inexorably shut out by the etiquette of the occasion. The opportunity of service was past, and they were no longer needed.

At the home all things would be “made ready,” if possible on a liberal scale. John 2 gives a picture of a wedding feast where the resources were strained to the breaking point. Hospitality was here especially a sacred duty, and, of course, greatly ministered to the joy of the occasion. An oriental proverb is significant of the store set by it:

***“He who does not invite me to his marriage
Will not have me to his funeral.”***

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To decline the invitation to a marriage was a gross insult (Matthew 22).

It was unusual in Galilee to have a “ruler of the feast” as in Judea (John 2). There was no formal religious ceremony connected with the Hebrew marriage as with us — there is not a hint of such a thing in the Bible. The marriage was consummated by entrance into the “chamber,” i.e. the nuptial chamber (Hebrew [chedher]), in which stood the bridal bed with a canopy ([chuppah]), being originally the wife’s tent (Genesis 24:67; Judges 4:17). In all lands of the dispersion the name is still applied to the embroidered canopy under which the contracting parties stand or sit during the festivities. In Arabic, Syriac, and Hebrew the bridegroom is said to “go in” to the bride. **[Page 636]**

A general survey of ancient marriage laws and customs shows that those of the Hebrews are not a peculiar creation apart from those of other peoples. A remarkable affinity to those of other branches of the Semitic races especially, may be noted, and striking parallels are found in the Code of Hammurabi, with regard, e.g., to betrothal, dowry, adultery and divorce. But modern researches have emphasized the relative purity of Old Testament sexual morality. In this, as in other respects, the Jews had a message for the world. Yet we should not expect to find among them the Christian standard. Under the new dispensation the keynote is struck by our Lord’s action. The significance of His attending the marriage feast at Cana and performing His first miracle there can hardly be exaggerated. The act corresponds, too, with His teaching on the subject. He, no less than Paul, emphasizes both the honorableness of the estate and the heinousness of all sins against it.

4. JESUS’ SANCTION OF THE INSTITUTION:

The most characteristic use of marriage and the family by our Lord is that in which He describes the kingdom of God as a social order in which the relationship of men to God is like that of sons to a father, and their relation to each other like that between brothers. This social ideal, which presents itself vividly and continuously to His mind, is summed up in this phrase, “Kingdom of God,” which occurs more than a hundred times in the Synoptic Gospels. The passages in which it occurs form the interior climax of His message to men. It is no new and noble Judaism, taking the form of a political restoration, that He proclaims, and no “far-off Divine event” to be realized only in some glorious apocalyptic consummation; but a kingdom of God “within you,” the chief element of it communion with God, the loving relation of “children” to a “Father,” a present possession. Future in a sense it may be, as a result to be fully realized, and yet present; invisible, and yet becoming more and more visible as a new social order, a conscious brotherhood with one common, heavenly Father, proclaimed in every stage of His teaching in spite of opposition and varying fortunes with unwavering certainty of its completion — this is the “kingdom” that Jesus has made the inalienable possession of the Christian consciousness. His entire theology may be described as a transfiguration of the family (see Peabody, *Jesus Christ, and the Social Question*, 149 ff; Holtzmann, *New Testament Theology*, I, 200; Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I, 62; B. Weiss, *Biblical Theol. of the New Testament*, I, 72, English translation, 1882). **[Page 637]**

Beyond this Jesus frequently used figures drawn from marriage to illustrate His teaching concerning the coming of the kingdom, as Paul did concerning Christ and the church. There is no suggestion of reflection upon the Old Testament teaching about marriage in His teaching except at

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one point, the modification of it so as to allow polygamy and divorce. Everywhere He accepts and deals with it as sacred and of Divine origin (Matthew 19:9, etc.), but He treats it as transient, that is of the “flesh” and for this life only.

5. HIS TEACHING CONCERNING DIVORCE:

A question of profound interest remains to be treated: Did Jesus allow under any circumstances the remarriage of a divorced person during the lifetime of the partner to the marriage? Or did He allow absolute divorce for any cause whatsoever? Upon the answer to that question in every age depend momentous issues, social and civic, as well as religious. The facts bearing on the question are confessedly enshrined in the New Testament, and so the inquiry may be limited to its records. Accepting with the best scholarship the documents of the New Testament as emanating from the disciples of Jesus in the second half of the 1st century AD, the question is, what did these writers understand Jesus to teach on this subject? If we had only the Gospels of Mark and Luke and the Epistles of Paul, there could be but one answer given: Christ did not allow absolute divorce for any cause (see Mark 10:2 ff; Luke 16:18; Galatians 1:12; 1 Corinthians 7:10). The Old Testament permission was a concession, He teaches, to a low moral state and standard, and opposed to the ideal of marriage given in Genesis (2:23).

“The position of women in that day was far from enviable. They could be divorced on the slightest pretext, and had no recourse at law. Almost all the rights and privileges of men were withheld from them. What Jesus said in relation to divorce was more in defense of the rights of the women of His time than as a guide for the freer, fuller life of our day. Jesus certainly did not mean to recommend a hard and enslaving life for women. His whole life was one long expression of full understanding of them and sympathy for them” (Patterson, *The Measure of a Man*, 181 f).

Two sayings attributed to Christ and recorded by the writer or editor of the First Gospel (Matthew 5:32; 19:9) seem directly to contravene His teaching as recorded in Mark and Luke. Here he seems to allow divorce [**Page 638**] for “fornication” (*ei me epi porneia*), save for fornication”, an exception which finds no place in the parallels (compare Corinthians 7:15, which allows remarriage where a Christian partner is deserted by a heathen). The sense here demands that “fornication” be taken in its wider sense (Hos 2:5; Am 7:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1). Divorce to a Jew carried with it the right of remarriage, and the words ‘causeth her to commit adultery’ (Matthew 5:32) show that Jesus assumed that the divorced woman would marry again. Hence, if He allowed divorce, He also allowed remarriage. A critical examination of the whole passage in Matthew has led many scholars to conclude that the exceptive clause is an interpolation due to the Jewish-Christian compiler or editor through whose hands the materials passed. Others think it betrays traces of having been rewritten from Mark or from a source common to both Matthew and Mark, and combined with a semi-Jewish tradition, in short, that it is due to literary revision and compilation. The writer or compiler attempted to combine the original sayings of Jesus and His own interpretation. Believing that our Lord had not come to set aside the authority of Moses, but only certain Pharisaic exegesis, and supported, as doubtless he was, by a Jewish-Christian tradition of Palestine, he simply interpreted Mark’s narrative by inserting what he regarded as the integral part of an eternal enactment of Yahweh.

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In doing this he was unconsciously inconsistent, not only with Mark and Luke, but also with the context of the First Gospel itself, owing to his sincere but mistaken belief that the Law of Moses must not be broken. The view implied by the exception, of course, is that adultery ipso facto dissolves the union, and so opens the way to remarriage. But remarriage closes the door to reconciliation, which on Christian principles ought always to be possible (compare Hosea; Jeremiah 3; Hermas, Mand iv. 1). Certainly much is to be said for the view which is steadily gaining ground, that the exception in Matthew is an editorial addition made under the pressure of local conditions and practical necessity, the absolute rule being found too hard (see Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible (five volumes), extra vol, 27b, and The Teaching of our Lord as to the Indissolubility of Marriage, by Stuart Lawrence Tyson, M.A. Oxon., University of the South, 1912).

The general principle expanded in the New Testament and the ideal held up before the Christians is high and clear. How far that ideal can be embodied in legislation and applied to the community as a whole all are agreed must **[Page 639]** depend upon social conditions and the general moral development and environment.

CHAPTER 5: A STUDY IN FIRST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 7

It is critical in the study and discussion that follows on 1 Corinthians 7 that we know EXACTLY which group of people is being discussed because if we do not, we will end up applying the requirements for a particular group of people to another group for which those requirements were never intended. While this chapter can stand on its own, we encourage you to read and study the chapters on “Scriptural Definition And Description Of Marriage” and “Divorce And Remarriage”. We would beg of you not to enter this study with any preconceived notions. The attitude of many Christians is: “I know what I have been taught. Please don’t confuse me with the facts of the Scriptures”. But, the admonition and charge of the Holy Ghost is: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”. First Corinthians chapter 7 is not without great controversy among Christians. The controversy turns on the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:15, 1 Corinthians 7:27-28, and Matthew 19:3-12.

THE ALL IMPORTANT QUESTION TO BE ASKED IS WHO IS ADDRESSED IN FIRST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 7? APPLYING VERSES TO THE SAVED THAT APPLY TO THE UNSAVED RESULTS IN FALSE DOCTRINE.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2 Deals with unmarried people.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2

¹ Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

The main focus of verses 1-2 is unmarried people. These verses emphasize the dangers of a touchy-feely relationship outside of a Scriptural husband and wife relationship. Touching can and does lead to fornication. In verse 2, the Holy Ghost gives the definition of fornication. Fornication is any sex outside of a Scriptural husband and wife relationship. Included in the definition of fornication is adultery. According to the Lord Jesus Christ in *Matthew 19:9*, adultery fits into the biblical definition of fornication. What that means is that a person that is guilty of adultery is also guilty of fornication. We believe that it is the first unfaithful sexual act that a person commits against their spouse that makes the offender an adulterer or an adulteress. Any and all sexual acts following that initial act of adultery is fornication. After the initial act of adultery, the offender who continues in their sin is an adulterer or adulteress who is also a fornicator. Any unmarried person that has a sexual relationship with a married person is guilty of fornication and adultery. For purposes of discussing sexual relationships strictly between men and women, fornication is any sexual act between any male and female that are not Scripturally married to one another and where neither party is married to someone else. Adultery is any fornication that a **married** person has with anyone they are not married to. An **unmarried** person commits fornication and adultery when they have sex with any married person.

We have been very careful here in our language to make sure that our readers understand that Biblical marriage can only take place between a male and a female. Same sex relationships are

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sodomy and an abomination before God and do not constitute a Biblical marriage. Sodomy is yet another act of fornication outside the Scripturally mandated bounds of marriage between a man and a woman. Acts of sodomy are abominable sins of fornication against the Biblically established institution of marriage and as such are Biblical grounds for divorce when the offending party is in a marriage as defined by the Bible. We believe that is one of the reasons that the word “fornication” was used by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:9 because He knew there would come a time when Biblical male and female marriages could and would be destroyed by sodomy. We repeat again and again. Fornication is any sex outside the Biblically established bounds of sex between a husband and a wife. The Lord Jesus Christ defined adultery as an act of fornication in Matthew 19:9 which says:

Matthew 19:9

⁹ 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.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 deals with married men and women.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

³ Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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.

A marriage is to be characterized by benevolence, or kindness, between both the husband and the wife. According to verse four, you are literally owned by your spouse and you have no power over your body. Verse five deals with intimacy and sex within the marital relationship. The Holy Ghost says in verse five that you are not to deny your spouse the rights of the marital relationship without their permission. The Holy Ghost says that if you deny your spouse those rights it would lead to Satan tempting both of you to become involved in fornication. In this context, incontinency describes a weakness when it comes to controlling one’s sexual desires. The only exception that is given to the rule in verse 5 is when both the husband and the wife agree not to have marital relationships for the purpose of giving themselves to prayer and fasting.

1 Corinthians 7:6-9 deals with widows and unmarried (single and divorced) men and women.

1 Corinthians 7:6-9

⁶ But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. ⁷ For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this

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manner, and another after that. ⁸ I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. ⁹ But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

The “but” in verse number six ties verses 3-5 together with verses 7-9. The message from these three verses is that it is better for the unmarried and the widows to remain single for the good of the ministry during the present distress (verse 26). In verses six and seven, God the Holy Ghost is not commanding men to abstain from the marital relationship as a condition for being in the ministry. In fact, God the Holy Ghost says in verse seven that being able to abstain is a gift from God. The gift that is referred to in verse 7 is the gift of the eunuch for the kingdom of heaven’s sake that the Lord Jesus Christ referred to in Matthew 19:11-12 which state:

Matthew 19:11-12

¹¹ But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. ¹² 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.

Paul said it was not a commandment and the Lord Jesus Christ said that some would not be able to receive it. The Roman Catholic doctrine forbidding men to marry is described as a doctrine of devils in 1 Timothy 4:1-3. The term unmarried in verse 8 means either unwedded or single. Unwedded means being single and not having ever been married. Single can mean either divorced or not ever having been married. 1 Corinthians 7:11 further defines the term unmarried to mean those that are divorced. God says in verse nine that it is better for people to marry than to burn in lust for one another. It is the Holy Ghost’s commentary on the word “fornication” from verse 2. Here, the Holy Ghost is saying it is better to become one flesh than to continue to lust after one another in the flesh. That is what is meant by the phrase “it is better to marry than to burn”. The word marry means to physically bring two objects or two people together so that they become one. The act of becoming one flesh constitutes the first act of marriage. If you become one flesh with someone, then you have married them regardless of whether there was an intent to become their spouse. That is why the Holy Ghost warned against becoming one flesh with an harlot. Becoming one flesh with an harlot was not just an act of sexual misconduct. It was/is a very serious thing. The Holy Ghost warned that it was a marriage in 1 Corinthians 6:16 which reads:

1 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁶ What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

That is a direct quote from Genesis 2:24 where we see the world’s first husband and wife being described as “one flesh”.

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1 Corinthians 7:10-16 deals with men and women who are married to unsaved spouses.

1 Corinthians 7:10-17

¹⁰ And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: ¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. ¹² 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. ¹³ And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

These particular verses are among some of the most controversial in the Bible especially since divorce rates have risen in the *professing* church to a point that they are at least equal to the divorce rates in secular society. Verse 10 commands that saved, married women are not to leave their unsaved husbands. Verse 11 states that if the saved wife leaves an unsaved husband, then she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. It is important to note that the saved, departing, and divorced woman is called unmarried meaning she no longer has a husband. However, she is not allowed to remarry because she did not put her husband away for fornication or desertion which is in keeping with Mark 10:12 and 1 Corinthians 7:15. Please note also that it does not say that the departing, saved wife has sinned by leaving. **If the departing, saved wife does not meet the scriptural requirements for divorce and remarriage and she remarries anyhow she is guilty of adultery.** Verses 11 and 12 put the exact same requirements upon the saved husband if he dwells with an unsaved wife. This group of verses indicates that saved folk are to dwell with their unsaved spouses with the hope that they will come to salvation. These verses show the importance of the conduct of the saved spouse before the unsaved spouse. Verse 14 deals with the importance of the marital bond for the sake of the children. Children suffer much as a result of divorces. The presence of a saved parent within the home can set the children apart under God. That is the meaning of the use of the term unclean in verse 14 in relation to the children.

The misunderstanding of verse 15 leads to a lot of controversy in establishing the scriptural grounds for divorce. Many Bible students maintain that the only scriptural grounds for divorce is adultery. Verse 15 says that if an unbelieving mate departs that the Christian is to let them depart. It also says that in the case where the unbelieving depart that the saved brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases. There is a lot of controversy as to what that word bondage means. Many independent Baptist preachers and evangelists believe that the bondage refers strictly to the marriage sexual relationship. What they say is that the saved individual is no longer bound to have sexual

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relationships with the unsaved spouse. That may sound high and holy but it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. It is ludicrous to think that the saved person would still be under obligation in that situation anyway! They are not scripturally obligated nor are they legally obligated. The word bondage cannot apply strictly to the sexual relationship because it is obvious that the sexual relationship cannot continue if the unbelieving mate has departed. What is being referred to is the bondage of the covenant relationship that was bound upon the husband and wife as the result of their becoming one flesh. That covenant is broken by the departing, unsaved spouse and frees the saved spouse to remarry in accordance with 1 Corinthians 7:28. It is obvious from the context of I Corinthians 7 that both the marriage covenant and the sexual relationship is being talked about. If we consider Romans 7:1-3 in this discussion, then we have to come to the conclusion that Paul is also talking about the dissolving of the marriage here also. These verses declare:

Romans 7:1-4

¹ 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? ² 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. ³ So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. ⁴ Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

In Romans 7, the effect of the law is being discussed. To interpret the words bound and loosed in 1 Corinthians 7:27 differently than in Romans 7:2 is to turn the principles of hermeneutics on their head. That is exactly what most Baptist pastors, preachers, evangelists, and teachers do here because OF WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT. They have not discerned it for THEMSELVES from the Scriptures. In Romans 7:2, when the Holy Ghost uses the word bound he is clearly referring to the requirement under the law of Moses that a man or woman is bound to, or in bondage to, their mate as long as they both lived provided that the marital relationship had not been scripturally dissolved. The Old Testament law allowed for divorce. The law of Moses allowed for both divorce and remarriage just as the Lord Jesus Christ allowed for divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19:3-12. In fact, the whole purpose of the divorce was to allow the departed spouse the right to remarry without the danger of being stoned to death for adultery or fornication because she did not have a bill of divorce. The context of Matthew 19:3-12 is clearly remarriage and the Pharisees knew it. Note the use of the phrase "and shall marry another" in Matthew 19:9. The Lord Jesus Christ is granting specific permission for the innocent party to remarry in cases of adultery and fornication. When the Pharisees tempted the Lord Jesus Christ, they were using the Scripture from Deuteronomy 24:1-4 in an attempt to set a trap for the Lord Jesus Christ. Deuteronomy chapter 24:1-4 deals with the legal requirements for **divorce and remarriage**. That the uncleanness that is referred to in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is not fornication is clear from Deuteronomy chapter 22:20-24. The conditions in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 allowed for divorce while the fornication in Deuteronomy 22:20-24 required the

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death penalty; two entirely different situations. The Lord Jesus Christ reminded the Pharisees that divorce was not the will of God, but that God allowed divorce because of the hardness of men’s hearts. To reiterate our conclusions from I Corinthians 7:15, we believe that desertion is another scriptural ground for divorce. We believe that the bondage that is broken is both the covenant relationship and the sexual relationship. To require that an individual remain celibate for the rest of their lives is no different than the Roman Catholic heresy forbidding their priests to marry. It puts an ungodly burden upon people and places them in the snare of the devil. If you don’t believe it, look again at I Corinthians 7:5 where God says that Satan will tempt you.

We also understand that there is great potential here for an unsaved, professing Christian and a sinning saved Christian to abuse the liberty that is granted by the Holy Ghost here in 1 Corinthians 7. The issue revolves around two difficult questions: (1) Who determines if an individual is an unbeliever. (2) How do you determine if a person is an unbeliever? Yet, it is a condition that the Holy Ghost sets. The answer to question number 1 is that the church determines who is the unbeliever. If we are not able to determine who is and who is not a believer, then the Holy Ghost would not have set that as condition to be loosed from the bondage of marriage. Yet, the Holy Ghost clearly stated “if the unbelieving depart”. A decision on whether a person is save is based upon an examination of that person’s actions and their personal testimony. If there is no Christian fruit and no personal testimony in an individual’s life, then we can come to the conclusion that they are not saved. The Bible also say “Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers”. If that is a command that we cannot obey, if we are unable to determine if an individual is a believer, then why did the Holy Ghost include it in the Scriptures? It is because we can with a degree of certainty if an individual is saved, While many will scream that we are not at liberty to make the decision as to whether a person is saved or unsaved, those same people will turn around and try to apply the same “unsaved/saved standard” to the interpretation of “the husband of one wife” in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. While we are granted the liberty by the Holy Ghost in 1 Corinthians 7 to make that decision, it is not a liberty granted in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1. So, the issue in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 cannot revolve around whether an individual was saved or lost when they sought and received their divorce. In fact, divorce is not even mentioned in those chapters. It is read into those passages by individuals who seek to add their own words and self-righteous standards to the Scriptures.

We realize there is yet another issue in play here and that issue deals with a perceived contradiction in the Scriptures. You say: “Why would the Lord Jesus Christ say in Matthew 19:9 that “whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication” contradict Himself in 1 Corinthians 7 verses 15, 27, and 28 and allow an additional exception for divorce for desertion?”. One of the issues that we are dealing with here is progressive revelation in the doctrine of divorce and remarriage. So, did the Lord Jesus Christ contradict the Old Testament law in Matthew 19:9, or did he just change it? You do know that the Old Testament penalty for adultery and fornication was death according to Deuteronomy 22:22-24, don’t you? Yet, the Lord Jesus Christ changed the penalty to divorce in the New Testament (See also our discussion in the paragraph just previous to this paragraph.). Not only did the Lord Jesus Christ do away with the death penalty for fornication and adultery in Matthew 19, he also re-instituted the Scriptural ideal of “one man and one woman for a lifetime”. Let’s get back to the discussion at hand.

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While in Matthew 19:3-12 you will allow the Lord Jesus Christ to change the Old Testament doctrine of stoning someone to death for adultery and fornication to allow for divorce in cases of fornication and adultery, you will not allow the Lord Jesus Christ to add an additional exception to the Scriptures for divorce and remarriage. So, is the Lord Jesus Christ wrong here, or are you wrong here? Guess who I am going to side with! You do know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Author of Matthew 19 AND 1 Corinthians 7 don't you? If you reject 1 Corinthians 7:15,27-28 as an additional exception allowing for divorce and remarriage, you do realize that you set up a contradiction between it and Romans 7:1-4, don't you? You would have to differently interpret the words "loosed" and "bound" in these two passages that deal with identical issues though they are applied in a different context. While you will allow for progressive revelation in such areas as Bible Prophecy and other doctrines such as the doctrine of salvation, you will not allow it in the doctrines of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. We could deal with the issue dispensationally, but that would lead to another protracted discussion. Many of you already have an issue here because you will not allow for any remarriage under any circumstances including the exception that the Lord Jesus Christ allowed in Matthew 19:9. The whole context of Matthew 19:3-12 is divorce and remarriage (remember, AND MARRY ANOTHER). We discuss that issue in the chapter on Divorce And Remarriage. We see Matthew 19:9 in play in 1 Corinthians 7:11 where the saved woman is told that she cannot remarry if she takes the initiative to leave her unsaved husband. Why is that? It is because her husband has not been guilty of adultery or fornication and because of that she is still bound by the law.

1 Corinthians 7:17-24 deals with the service and calling of people in general.

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. ²⁰ Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. ²¹ Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. ²² 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. ²³ Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. ²⁴ Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

These verses deal with the calling of individuals serving in the church. Verses 18 in 19 deal with the natural state in which we are born; either Gentile or Jew. These verses state that the call is irrespective of whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. Verses 20 through 22 deal with the calling of individuals to service. In verses 23 and 24 we are reminded that our calling comes from God and not from men. We are to dwell in that which God has called us to regardless of our natural state and our economic state.

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1 Corinthians 7:25-26 deals with virgins.

1 Corinthians 7:25-26

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

What Paul is saying in verses 25 and 26 is that for his present conditions it is better that the virgin remain a virgin. He states that he is obtained mercy from God to be faithful. Paul is stating that for purposes of the ministry it is better that a man be virgin. He also states that it is not a commandment to be a virgin. To make being a virgin a commandment, would contradict his epistle to Timothy in I Timothy 4:1-3. Paul says in those verses that it is a doctrine of devils to forbid someone from getting married.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28 deals with married AND divorced men AND women virgins.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28

²⁷ Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. ²⁸ 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.

It is obvious from verses 27 and 28 that the Holy Ghost is not dealing with a man who has experienced the death of a wife because the law already allowed for remarriage in the case of the death of a spouse. What the Holy Ghost is saying in verse 27 is that if you are married, then you should not seek a divorce for purposes of the ministry. The word loosed means to be free from the requirements or bondage of the law. In the context of verse 27, the word loosed obviously means divorced. If we compare 1 Corinthians 7:27-28 to Romans 7:1-4, it is obvious that the Holy Ghost is referring to a man being lawfully and scripturally divorced in 1 Corinthians 7:27-28. These verses cannot be referring to the death of a spouse. Put another way, if your spouse died, why would you be seeking to be loosed since death breaks the bonds of marriage anyhow. In verse 28, the Holy Ghost is very careful to point out that if a divorced man, or a virgin woman, decide to get married that **THEY HAVE NOT SINNED**. Read it again. The context of verse 27 is divorce. Many independent Baptist pastors and of evangelists are proud as peacocks when it comes to the issue of divorce. They will strut in front of the congregation all the while bragging that they have never been divorced. They want to be certain to let the divorced men in the congregation know that they have never been divorced. They have the attitude of lording that blessing over divorced men. If you've never been on the receiving end of a divorce you have no idea what the pain is that comes from it. While we know that it is a tearing apart of flesh, that is not the worst part of it. What is even more painful is the emotional and spiritual damage that it does to its victims. **There are many cases of divorce where**

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the victim has not sinned a sin that caused the divorce. What we are saying is that in many cases of divorce that one party may be completely innocent of the sin that caused the divorce. It is wicked and ungodly to hold an innocent victim responsible for the sin of another. If you require a divorced man or woman to remain celibate for the rest of their life when they have been the victims of an adulterous or deserting spouse, then you are holding them responsible for the sin of the guilty party. You are forcing celibacy upon them which is called a doctrine of devils in I Timothy 4:1-3. There are many divorced husbands and wives out there who are divorced through no sin of their own. For pastors and churches to place the blame upon them is to pervert the grace and justice of the living God. There is no time frame set that says how long a deserted spouse has to wait before they can get a divorce. That is the subject of the laws of the land. The Bible just says that if the unbelieving depart that the believer is set free from the bonds of marriage and allowed to remarry.

1 Corinthians 7:29-35 deals with unmarried men and women and virgin women.

1 Corinthians 7:29-35

²⁹ But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; ³⁰ 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; ³¹ And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. ³² 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: ³³ But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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.

Once again, the word unmarried deals with men and women who have never been married, men and women that have deceased spouses, and men and women that have been divorced. In short, the word unmarried refers to a single men and women regardless of previous marital state. These verses deal with the inconveniences that marriage imposes upon those that are in missionary work. Once again in verse 32 and 34, Paul states that for purposes of the missionary ministry that it is better for a man or a woman to be unmarried. He states that the unmarried man or woman would be more focused upon pleasing the Lord. He follows up in verse 35 by stating that those things which he speaks are for the benefit of those who wish to serve the Lord without distractions.

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1 Corinthians 7:36-38 deals with a father and his virgin daughter.

1 Corinthians 7:36-38

³⁶ But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely 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. ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

Since the context of these verses is the work of the ministry, then what is being dealt with here is whether or not an older virgin should get married or remain single for the benefit of the ministry. Paul is also stating that it is not a sin if a father decides it is better to let his daughter get married rather than to stay single.

1 Corinthians 7:39-40 Deals with a widow.

1 Corinthians 7:39-40

³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

In verse 39, the Holy Ghost made sure that the women understand that they are bound to their husbands until their husbands died. From our previous discussion, we also know that a wife is also free to remarry if her unsaved husband either commits adultery or deserts her. The focus of these verses is whether or not a widowed woman can remarry. It is obvious from Paul's instructions that she is allowed to remarry provided she marry a Christian. The Holy Ghost says she is at liberty to marry again. So obviously, these two verses cover remarriage in the context of the death of a spouse. Its application for the man is this: If a man's wife dies he can remarry.

In our closing discussion on 1 Corinthians chapter 7, we will deal with the argument that those like us who believe that divorce is allowed for desertion have God changing positions several times in 1 Corinthians 7. Is that a valid accusation? If we interpret 1 Corinthians 7 to allow divorces in case of desertion, do we believe that God changes positions from verse 11 to verse 15 and then changes His position again in verses 27- 28 and again in verse 39? The answer to that question is that we know for sure that God does not change positions, but we also know for sure that he changes persons throughout 1 Corinthians 7. What we have here is an issue of rightly dividing the Word of Truth. In verses 10 and 11, we are talking about believing spouses who desert their unbelieving spouses. When believing spouses desert unbelieving spouses, the believing spouse must remain unmarried (divorced) because believers are subject to the law. In cases where believers desert unbelievers, the believer

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cannot remarry until such time as the unbelieving spouse either commits adultery or remarries. In verses 12-15 the subject switches to unbelieving spouses who desert their believing spouses. When the unbelieving spouse deserts the believing spouse, the believing spouse is loosed from the bondage of the law and may divorce and remarry. In these cases the unbelieving spouses are not subject to the law, neither indeed can. In verses 27-28 the focus has switched back to a mixed group of people that includes saved, unmarried folks including the divorced and virgins that are told that if they marry they have not sinned. Verses 39-40 are dealing with saved widows. So then, what we have is not a change of positions by God, but a change of persons being addressed. What is critical in interpreting this passage is to determine what the marital status is of each of those being addressed and are they saved or lost.

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CHAPTER 6: ADULTERY, FORNICATION, DESERTION, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

OUR PURPOSE IN THIS CHAPTER

Our purpose in this chapter is to report some secular statistical facts and to give a scriptural presentation of what the Bible has to say about adultery, fornication, desertion, divorce and remarriage. This chapter is a very strong doctrinal chapter. Therefore, it is not intended to be a primer on divorce counseling. For Bible believing pastors and counsellors, there is no solution to the exploding wickedness of divorce in the church outside of the willingness of those whom they counsel to yield to the conviction of the Holy Ghost and the plain teaching of the Scriptures on these subjects. Without repentance and forgiveness there is no balm of Gilead for our divorces. The Lord Jesus Christ has already nailed the chief cause of divorce when he stated in Matthew 19:7 that it was the hardness of men's and women's hearts that is at the root of all divorces. God hates divorces.

The doctrine of divorce and remarriage is among one of the most controversial doctrines in Scripture especially in this day when divorce rates among professing Christians are equal to that of secular divorce rates. That ought not to be. Both legally and scripturally a bill of divorcement is a document declaring the intent of one or both parties to a marriage to divorce. In the Bible, the divorce breaks both the scriptural legal bond and the physical bond whereas in civil law it may only break the legal bond with the sexual relationship being allowed to continue. We state again and again throughout this book that God's intent for marriage has from the beginning been "one man with one woman for a lifetime". God's intent in becoming one flesh is best illustrated by the statement: "Nothing but death separates a man or a woman from their own flesh". God hates the action of divorce and he plainly states that very strongly in Malachi 2:16. The Lord Jesus Christ plainly restated in Matthew 19:6 what God's original intent for marriage was and then stated in Matthew 19:8 that the reason God allowed divorce was because of the hardness of the people's hearts. In other words, the cause for divorce was sin that proceeded from hardened hearts. There are those who vehemently argue that divorce is never scriptural, but what does the Bible say? There are five different conditions where divorces are/were scriptural including: (1) An unspecified act of uncleanness from Deuteronomy 24; (2) God put away (divorced) Israel for her idolatry; (3) God's command to divorce given to the people, the priests, and the Levites of Israel in Ezra chapter 10; (4) The fornication/adultery of one's spouse; (5) The act of desertion by an unbelieving spouse as stated in 1 Corinthians 7 (This one is hotly contested by many, if not most). We will elaborate on those later in our study. There are three divorces recorded in scripture and one of those involved multiple divorces. These are: (1) A case could be made that the casting out of Hagar in Genesis 21:10 by Abraham at the insistence of Sarah was a divorce; (2) God divorced Israel in Isaiah 50:1-2, Jeremiah 3:8; (3) God commanded the people, the priests, and the Levites of Israel to divorce their pagan spouses in Ezra chapter 10 because they had taken to themselves the strange wives.

The terms "divorce" and "putting away" and their cognates are the general terms that the Scriptures use for dissolving a marriage. In addition to the three scriptural grounds for divorce, there are at least 18 (eighteen) grounds for divorce identified in the civil law of many government court systems including desertion, natural impotency, insanity or idiocy, a wife's pregnancy by another person at the time of the marriage, adultery, imprisonment for crimes, incurable insanity that develops

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after marriage, habitual drunkenness, habitual and excessive drug use, habitual cruel and inhuman treatment, bigamy, incest, sodomy, bestiality, conviction of a felony, attempting to take the other spouse's life, infecting the other spouse with a sexually transmitted disease, irreconcilable differences (no fault divorce), and non support . All state courts in the United States now allow for no fault divorces. Divorce has become a very serious issue in the Church and in secular society. Without getting into a lot of detail, the reason that the divorce rate has skyrocketed in the church is because our churches in America are full of unbelieving, professing Christians and the few that are saved are in open apostasy because they lack Godly leadership. They have also divorced the 1611 King James Bible that built the church in America and took up with pagan harlots. The corruption of the God ordained institution of marriage has run hand in hand with the corruption of the King James Bible.

SOME VERY TROUBLING DIVORCE STATISTICS

The statistics concerning divorce in the United States are shocking. The country with the highest divorce rate in the world is the United States of America. Before getting underway with our study we cite the following statistics:

“The percentages of divorces expressed in percentage of membership in American religious organizations are as follows: Nondenominational, 34%; Jews, 30%; Baptist, 29%; Episcopal, 28%; Pentecostal, 28%; Methodist, 26%; Mormons, 24%; Presbyterian, 23%; Catholic, 21%; Lutheran, 21%; Atheist/Agnostic, 21%.”
Cited from: <http://facts.randomhistory.com/divorce-facts.html>

“The following divorce rates apply for: first marriages = 41%, second marriages = 60%, third marriages = 73%. There are 16,865 divorces per week in America.” (Cited from 2011 US Census Data)

“Americans have become less likely to marry. This is reflected in a decline of more than 50 percent, from 1970 to 2010, in the annual number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried adult women (Figure 1). In real terms, the total number of marriages fell from 2.45 million in 1990 to 2.11 million in 2010...Since 1960, the overall percentage of the married population has declined by 16%. Since 1960, there has been an average 22.5% drop in those married in the age group 35-44...The decline in marriage does not mean that people are giving up on living together with a sexual partner. On the contrary, with the incidence of unmarried cohabitation increasing rapidly, marriage is giving ground to unwed unions. Most people now live together before they marry for the first time. An even higher percentage of divorced persons who subsequently remarry live together first...The American divorce rate today is about twice that of 1960, but has declined since hitting its highest point in our history in the early 1980s. For the average couple marrying for the first time in recent years, the lifetime probability of divorce or separation now falls between 40 and 50 percent.... Teenagers

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and the nonreligious who marry have higher divorce rates....Having a religious affiliation (vs. none) makes you 14% less likely to get a divorce.... Between 1960 and 2011, as indicated in Figure 8, the number of unmarried couples in America increased more than seventeen-fold. Unmarried cohabitation — the status of couples who are sexual partners, not married to each other, and sharing a household — is particularly common among the young.... More than 60 percent of first marriages are now preceded by living together, compared to virtually none fifty years ago.... In fact, some evidence indicates that those who live together before marriage are more likely to break up after marriage.... Children from single parent homes are three times more likely to get into trouble. The number of children born in homes without fathers are about 1 million new children each year.... Since 1960, the percentage of babies born to unwed mothers has increased more than sevenfold....Consequently, there has been about a fifteen-fold increase in the number of cohabiting couples who live with children since 1960....Children who grow up with cohabiting couples tend to have worse life outcomes compared to those growing up with married couples. The primary reasons are that cohabiting couples have a much higher breakup rate than married couples, a lower level of household income, and higher levels of child abuse and domestic violence....With more than 50 percent of teenagers now accepting out-of-wedlock childbearing as a “worthwhile lifestyle,” at least for others, they do not seem to grasp the enormous economic, social, and personal costs of nonmarital childbearing.” (Cited from: “The 2012 State Of Our Unions Report” from the University of Virginia)

“Living together prior to getting married can increase the chance of getting divorced by as much as 40 percent.” (Cited from:

<http://www.mckinleyirvin.com/blog/divorce/32-shocking-divorce-statistics/>)

SOME QUESTIONS POSED

In the study that is before us, we have some difficult and controversial questions to answer. During the course of our study, we will deal with definitions and descriptions of the words adultery, fornication, adulterer, adulteress, uncleanness, bound, loosed, putting away, divorce, divorced, divorcement, desertion, and sodomite. Some of the questions that we will deal with include:(1) What is adultery? (2) What is fornication? (3) What is the difference between fornication and adultery? (4) Can a married person be guilty of fornication? (5) Is adultery a sexual act or a ceremonial act? (6) What, if any, are the scriptural grounds for divorce? (7) Does unmarried mean separated, but not divorced? (8) Is desertion a scriptural ground for divorce? (9) Are all divorces absolutely prohibited? (10) Is divorce always wrong? (11) Is divorce always a sin for all parties to the divorce? (12) Under what circumstances is a divorce scriptural? (13) Is divorce an unforgivable sin?. (14) If a person gets divorced can they remarry? (15) If a divorced person gets remarried are they in perpetual adultery? (16) Should a person who has been guilty of an unscriptural divorce put away (divorce) their current

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spouse and reunite with their former spouse? (17) Can you be married to someone and them not be your spouse? Now let's turn to the definition of some terms?

DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF TERMS

Some fundamentalist and Baptist churches believe that the only scriptural grounds for divorce is adultery while other churches believe that adultery and desertion are scriptural grounds for divorce. Some Baptist churches teach that there are no scriptural grounds for divorce. Some fundamentalist and Baptist churches believe that if a divorced person ever remarries they are living in perpetual adultery. Some Baptist churches will not allow a divorced man to testify of his salvation in church services. There are even some Baptist churches that will not allow a divorced man or woman to be a member of THEIR church. Some fundamentalist and Baptist Bible schools, pastors, and evangelists teach that a married person cannot be guilty of fornication. Many fundamentalist and Baptist Bible schools, pastors, preachers, and evangelists believe that both parties to a divorce are guilty of sin. Some fundamentalist and Baptist preachers teach and preach that it is heresy to state that the sexual act constitutes a scriptural marriage (God says that a man and a woman become husband and wife when they become one flesh in the sexual act. There is no scriptural requirement for a ceremony. There is no requirement for a marriage license. There is no requirement either in the Old Testament or the New Testament for a religious official such as a priest, a pastor, or a preacher to perform a ceremony). We are NOT stating here that we believe that marriage is nothing more than a sexual relationship, but we are saying that a sexual relationship establishes a covenant that imposes upon a couple the obligation to enter into a permanent scriptural relationship as husband and wife. When they do not, or cannot enter into a permanent husband and wife relationship, they are both guilty of fornication even if one or both of them is married. If one or both of them is married, but not to each other, then the act of fornication becomes the crime of adultery. Some fundamentalist and Baptist Bible schools, pastors, preachers, and evangelists teach that it is not the sexual act that constitutes adultery, but that it is the marriage ceremony itself that constitutes adultery. We address these and other issues in the discussion that follows.

ADULTERY

Under the Old Testament law, a man could not be guilty of adultery unless he had sex with a woman that was married to another man. What that means is that if he had sex with an unmarried woman, he was not guilty of adultery even if he had a wife. However, if he laid with an unmarried women, he was under the obligation to take care of her as a wife. Perhaps that is why so many of the kings of Judah and Israel had so many wives. Under that same law, an unmarried man could be guilty of both fornication and adultery if he had sex with another man's wife. The following definition for adultery is from the Oxford English Dictionary:

Adultery: Violation of the marriage bed ; the voluntary sexual intercourse of a married person with one of the opposite sex, whether unmarried, or married to another

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(the former case being technically designated single, the latter double adultery).
[Oxford English Dictionary]

In 1388, the Wycliffe translation of Jeremiah 3:9 read as follows:

“Bi lightnesse of hir fornicacioun sche defoulide the erthe, and dide auowtrie with a stoon, and with a tree.” [Oxford English Dictionary]

Let us put the above sentence into Modern English: By lightness of her fornication she defiled the earth, and did adultery with a stone, and with a tree. What this dictionary definition and contextual definition tells us is that adultery is considered to be an act of fornication. Wycliffe’s translation of Jeremiah 3:9 gives us our contextual definition. You will see the definition of adultery repeated several times in this book Adultery is usually defined as a voluntary sexual act committed between two people who are not married to each other, but at least one of whom is a married person. Both parties to this sin are said to be committing adultery, even the unmarried party. If both parties are married, but not to each another, then double adultery is involved. Regardless of the marital status of the individuals involved, all are guilty of fornication. Adultery is a special class of fornication committed by married persons. In the Scriptures, adultery is never based upon a ceremony. Adultery is always based upon a sexual act. The Bible nowhere states or implies that a ceremony must take place in order for a marriage to be scripturally valid and binding. You can perform all the ceremonies you want to, but until a sexual act takes place there is no scriptural marriage. In quoting and refuting Brother Stinnett Ballew, Brother Karl Baker has this to say:

“Karl Baker quotes Stinnett Ballew as saying: “Very plainly, it is the marrying another that is adultery, not the living together. It is not the sex act in the second marriage, but the second marriage itself. If it were the sex act, which was the adultery, then, a person that is too old or physically unable to function sexually could divorce and remarry many times without committing adultery. Again I emphasize the adultery is a second marriage itself.” ...Using Dr. Ballew’s definitions would run you into some serious problems when it came to teaching about David’s sins of 2 Samuel 11 and 12. You can’t have David committing adultery when he went into Uriah’s wife in chapter 11:4 because he didn’t have a ceremony, in fact, according to Dr. Ballew’s definition, David never did commit adultery, because when David did marry Bathsheba in 11:27, Uriah was already dead, verse 26! David couldn’t have committed fornication because he wasn’t having sex before marriage, so I guess the only sin David really committed was killing Uriah!” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, pages 103-104]

We could not have said it better. The words “adultery” and “adulteries” occur a total of 45 times in our King James Bibles: 20 times in the Old Testament and 25 times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the words are used of physical adultery but five times with the remaining 15

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times used of spiritual adultery against God. In the New Testament, the word adultery is used 23 times of a physical act of adultery with the remaining 2 times used of idolatry. Only three different incidents of physical adultery are recorded in the whole Bible. In neither of those three incidents, is the word adultery used. The first act of adultery recorded in the Bible took place when Reuben “lay with” his father’s wife, Bilhah, in Genesis 35:22. The next act of adultery is recorded when David committed adultery with Uriah the Hittite’s wife Bathsheba when “he lay with her” in 2 Samuel 11:3-4. The last recorded act of adultery is by an unnamed son who “had his father’s wife” in 1 Corinthians 5:1. Below, we quote all those passages of Scripture we have referenced in this paragraph:

Genesis 35:22

²² And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine: and Israel heard *it*. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Exodus 20:14

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Leviticus 20:10

10 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.

Deuteronomy 5:18

18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

Deuteronomy 22:22

²² If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.

2 Samuel 11:3-4

³ And David sent and enquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? ⁴ And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

Proverbs 6:32-33

32 *But* whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. 33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

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Ezekiel 16:32

3 *But as* a wife that committeth adultery, *which* taketh strangers instead of her husband!

Matthew 19:9

9 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.

Mark 10:11-12

11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Luke 16:18

18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery.

John 8:3-5

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

1 Corinthians 5:1

¹ 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.

Hebrews 13:4

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

We deal in great depth with these Scriptures that relate to adultery in the section describing adultery as scriptural grounds for divorce. Our next term we describe is fornication.

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FORNICATION

The Oxford English Dictionary definition of fornication is:

Fornication: Voluntary sexual intercourse between a man (in restricted use, an unmarried man) and an unmarried woman. In Scripture extended to adultery. [Oxford English Dictionary]

In a 1450 A.D. document called the Knights de la Tour a phrase in that document with a reference to Bathsheba had this to say:

“King David...felle into avowtry and fornicacion with her”.

[Cited from Oxford English Dictionary under the entry for **fornication** and from Knights de la Tour.]

“Avowtry” is Middle English for adultery and “fornicacion” is Middle English for fornication. What the dictionary definition and the contextual definition is telling us is that adultery is an act of fornication. The only time fornication is called “uncleanliness” in the Bible is in Numbers 5:19 where it is describing the fornication/adultery of a wife after a couple is married. We deal with that under the definition of “uncleanness” below. Concerning the definition of what fornication is Brother Harold Sightler had this to say:

“Now, what is fornication? Certainly, it is reasonable for us to desire to know just what this sin is. From the usage of the word in the New Testament there can be little doubt but that it is the word for sexual intercourse of unmarried persons. The Old Testament word for the same sin is “uncleanness” as used in Deuteronomy 24:1.” (Page 6, Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sightler)

Brother Sightler’s definition is wrong. We would agree that one of the Old Testament words used for fornication is uncleanness, but it is not in Deuteronomy 24:1. The only time in the Old Testament that uncleanness is used of fornication is in Numbers 5:19 where it is used to describe a possible case of adultery. Some Old Testament words and phrases that are used to refer to fornication are “adultery”, “uncover the nakedness”, “go in unto”, “lie with”, “lie carnally with”, “play the harlot”, “playing the whore”, “go a whoring”, “prostitute”, “sodomy”, “sodomite”, and so forth. A proper definition of the word fornication would include any perverted or illicit sexual relationship between two individuals that are not married to each other. That would properly put sodomy, adultery, premarital sex, child molestation, bestiality, and pornography under the umbrella of fornication because that is the way it is used in the New Testament. Do you think for a moment that those same sort of actions would not have ended a marriage in the Old Testament and that by stoning to death?! In the Old Testament, the penalty was stoning to death and in the New Testament the penalty is divorce. Fornication is never used of a sexual act in the Old Testament. It is always used of a spiritual

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act that is committed with idols. The fornication of Matthew 19:9 is not the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:1 because the penalty for fornication in the Old Testament was death and not the putting away of divorce allowed in Deuteronomy 24:1. We discuss this issue in some length later on. Adultery and other unlawful sexual activity between a man and a woman in the Old Testament was dealt with according to the law of Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:12-30 and in most cases required the death penalty. The exception to this rule was Deuteronomy 22:28-29 where if an unmarried man and woman were found lying together they were forced to become husband and wife and the man had to give the woman's father 50 shekels of silver. Fornication can best be defined as any illicit sexual activity outside of the scripturally established confines of marriage. Speaking of this word Karl Baker had the following to say:

“In talking of Stinnett Ballew he says: he further states that fornication is commonly accepted to mean sexual involvement before marriage; and the only place Moses mentions divorcement is Deuteronomy 24:1-4. He uses Jesus' remarks in Matthew 19:9 as a pretext for this conclusion, consequently, interpreting the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24 to be the fornication of Matthew 19. In all these points, Dr. Ballew is totally and scripturally wrong. In fact, we might as well throw in Dr. Ballew's previous paragraph where he accused the Pharisees of twisting the Scriptures by asking why Moses would command to give a writing of divorcement and put her away, when Jesus said Moses suffered them to put away their wives to show it was an optional decree not an original design. Dr. Ballew is wrong in that statement, as well. Moses did command to give her a writing of divorcement – read Deuteronomy 24:1. The bill of divorcement had to be given to her or she would be called an ADULTERESS (Romans 7:1-3). Anybody knows that who knows the law! A woman could marry another man under the law by either death or divorcement, but if it was by divorcement; she had to have proof or she would be stoned (Leviticus 20:10). The good doctor forgot to study Scripture with Scripture before he made such a statement, for if he had checked the cross-reference of Matthew 19 in his center reference Bible, it would have taken him to Mark 10:2-4 where it is Jesus who asked what did Moses command you, and it's the Pharisees who replied Moses suffered us to write a bill of divorcement. Kind of messes up his accusation a little, doesn't it? One thing is for sure, contrary to Dr. Ballew's assumption, Jesus was not interpreting the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:1 to be fornication as a sex act committed before marriage. All we have to do is go to Deuteronomy 22.... Look at Deuteronomy 22 and see if it does not wash away Dr. Ballew's foundation of sand, (the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24 is fornication before marriage)...”[The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, pages 80-81]

“Jesus said except it be for fornication. You have no right to corrupt the word of God by saying it is an act before you get married when all the evidence points to any time a man or woman is unfaithful to their marriage vows, the offended party has

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a right to seek a divorce if they cannot live with it. God did it any Ezekiel 16 and Jeremiah 3. If the offended party decides to remarry, they have not sinned! Jesus made the allowance! You have no right to condemn what God allows.” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 100]

Brother Karl Baker’s point is well taken that the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24 is not the fornication of Matthew 19:9. We deal with that issue several times in this chapter. One could ask at what point does adultery become fornication.

A woman is guilty of being a whore and a harlot when she commits her first act of fornication and/or adultery. A man is guilty of being a whoremonger when he commits his first act of fornication and/or adultery. What that means is that if you come together sexually with multiple partners, then you have had, or do have, multiple (living) spouses. Many pastors scream against acts of fornication being called marriages because they and many of their deacons are guilty of premarital sex and/or adultery after their marriages. The act of adultery also constitutes an act of fornication. If the sexual act(s) constitute a marriage (and it does), then they are guilty of having multiple wives which by their own twisted interpretation and application would permanently disqualify them from the ministry. Again, the Holy Ghost plainly states in 1 Corinthians 6:16 that when a man joins himself unto an harlot that they become one flesh. That is the definition of a scriptural marriage. Some of the men we are talking about were guilty of fornication before they were saved and some of them were guilty of fornication after they were saved. God does not give a different set of qualifications for the ministry based upon whether a man was saved or lost. Many self-righteous, once-married peacocks take what they consider to be the “safe” route by not allowing anyone who has ever been divorced, saved or lost, to enter into the ministry. While we partially agree with that interpretation that salvation is not the issue, we totally disagree that divorce is the disqualifying issue. The issue is how many scriptural wives does a man have in the present tense. What that means is if a man has a former wife that he has been scripturally divorced from, that she is no longer counted as a wife. If the divorced man did not remarry, he does not have a wife. If he remarried, then he has only one wife. The same reasoning applies to a widower.

For those who say that a married person cannot fornicate you need to reread Matthew 19:9 where the Lord Jesus Christ uses both the word “adultery” and the word “fornication”. You also need to read Ezekiel 16 where adultery is equated with fornication at least three times. For those of you who like running to “the Greek” you also need to know that we know that two entirely different Greek words are used for fornication and adultery in Matthew 19:9. Many fundamentalists claim to love the King James Bible until you challenge their doctrine. Then they like to run to “the Greek” and that is especially true in interpreting 1 Timothy 3:2. We do not speak Greek and if we did, we would still use the King James Bible. “Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue”(1 Corinthians 14:19). Greek is an unknown tongue in an English speaking congregation.

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UNCLEANNES**

It is sometimes difficult to determine the exact definition of the word uncleanness because it is used in so many different ways in the Old Testament to describe such things as ceremonial uncleanness, religious uncleanness, unlawful sexual activity, a woman's menstrual cycle, any discharge of waste from the human body, dead human bodies, leprosy, the touching of dead animals, the consumption of certain unclean animals, and so forth. In the New Testament, the word "uncleanness" is also used in a number of different ways that fall into two different categories: spiritual uncleanness and sexual uncleanness. The Oxford English Dictionary definition of uncleanness is:

"Lack of moral cleanness ; moral impurity." [Oxford English Dictionary]

In a 1603 Shakespeare work called "Measure For Measure", we have the following contextual definition for uncleanness:

"Marry sir, by my wife, who, if she had bin a woman Cardinally giuen, might haue bin accus'd in fornication, adultery, and all vncleanlinese there." [Cited from the Oxford English Dictionary and Shakespeare's 1603 work "Measure For Measure"]

To put this phrase in today's English it would say: "Marry sir, by my wife, who, if she had been a woman Cardinally given, might have been accused in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness there". Notice in this definition that the words fornication AND adultery are equated with all uncleanness. That is the same sense that it is used in the Old Testament in Numbers chapter 5. Numbers chapter 5 verses 12, 13, and 19 state:

Numbers 5:12-13

¹² Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, ¹³ And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and *there be* no witness against her, neither she be taken *with the manner*;

Numbers 5:19

19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness *with another* instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse:

If the woman in Numbers 5 had actually been caught in the act of adultery, then both her and the adulterer would have been stoned to death as required by Leviticus 20:10. Leviticus 20:10 reads:

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Leviticus 20:10

¹⁰ 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.

In the context of Numbers 5, it is obvious that the husband and the woman suspected of adultery or fornication had been married for some time. The woman is said to have lain with a man carnally in Numbers 5:13. Verse 13 also indicates that her adultery had not resulted in a pregnancy. That fact is revealed in the phrase “neither be she taken with the manner”. In Numbers 5:19 we see that uncleanness is equated with adultery and/or fornication, but that is not the case in Deuteronomy 24:1-2 where it is stated:

Deuteronomy 24:1-2

1 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. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s *wife*.

The marginal note in the King James Bible for Deuteronomy 24:1 sheds some light on the interpretation of the phrase “found some uncleanness”. The King James marginal note refers to it as a matter of nakedness. In other words, it may have been some defect that could not be observed until the woman was naked in the marriage bed. It is also possible that the uncleanness described in Deuteronomy could be a physical defect that was not evident until there was an attempt to consummate the sexual relationship in the marriage bed. If the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:1-2 were adultery then the law of Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:13-21 would apply which would bring the death penalty and not divorce. Brother Karl Baker had this to say about the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:

“The uncleanliness of Deuteronomy 24 is not fornication before marriage, because that is covered in Deuteronomy 22! It is evident that Jesus cannot be interpreting fornication to be the uncleanliness of Deuteronomy 24:1, because when a man found his espoused wife had fornicated before marriage, he did not give her a writing of divorcement; rather, he took her to the elders of the city to be proved, and she better have proof in hand or she was to be stoned. Divorce for uncleanness cannot be fornication. It must be something her husband could not stand about her that he considered unclean. Why do you think the Pharisees are saying “for every cause”? One more reason we should know that Deuteronomy 24:1 is not premarital sex is that when the woman goes out with her divorce papers she can be another man’s wife; do you believe the divorce does not state why he put her away? Moreover, do you believe that the second husband does not know he is not marrying a virgin? Also, does not Deuteronomy 24:3 say that if the latter husband hates her, that he can divorce are also?

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Is the latter husband putting her away for fornication also? Why would the first husband want her back if she were a fornicator in the first place?" [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 83]

The word uncleanness is used much the same way in the New Testament as it is in the Old Testament. It is used in both a spiritual sense and in a sexual sense. It is used eight times in relation to sexual uncleanness. We will look at Romans 1:24-28, Galatians 5:19, and Colossians 3:5 where we see:

Romans 1:24-28

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Galatians 5:19

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Colossians 3:5

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

In all three occurrences of the word "uncleanness" in the above Scriptures, we can see from the context of the word that it is a reference to some sort of sexual sin. It is not identified with any particular sexual sin just sexual sin in general. It obviously has more to do with a wicked mind set or tendency to commit sexual sins. It is used in the context of sexual acts such sodomy, adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, inordinate affection, and evil concupiscence. These are all actions that lead to divorce and the destruction of the God ordained institution of marriage. A more and more frequent event in our reprobate American society is that of same sex, sodomite relationships destroying scriptural marriages. So, it is a very serious issue that must be dealt with. The question that must be answered by those who advocate no divorce under any circumstance, no divorce except for adultery, and no divorce except for fornication is what if any scriptural grounds exist for a divorce when an innocent spouse has been the victim of a spouse who has been guilty of sodomy, or pornography, or bestiality, or child molestation? Are you actually going to tell me that the exception

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clauses “saving for the cause of fornication” in Matthew 5:32 and “except it be for fornication” in Matthew 19:9 do not apply to acts of fornication that involve sodomy, pornography, bestiality, child molestation, and adultery?? Speaking strictly to the issue of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, how do you administer justice and punishment in the New Testament economy for sexual sins that required the death penalty in the Old Testament economy? The obvious conclusion is that divorce is the recourse for the offenses of fornication and/or adultery in marriage.

DIVORCE

We open this section by quoting Brother Karl Baker who wrote:

“It is evident that divorce can be the only action to alleviate the suffering that once was a capital punishment (Leviticus 20:10). It replaces the Old Testament form of judgment against the unchaste in marriage. The Lord in his omniscience knew that because nations and laws outside of Israel’s theocracy were going to be reached, and just as the Jews were unable to enforce certain laws after it fell into secular powers and their jurisdictions (John 18:31-32), so would the Christians in those countries where the gospel would be ministered, need effectual ordinances for the sake of moral and spiritual relief... One thing more, if adultery is the second “ceremony” and not a “sex act” (page 33, Dr. Ballew’s book), does it include the “adultery” of 1 Corinthians 6:10?” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 128]

Divorce is the putting away of a husband or wife. God put away Israel for adultery. Though God hates putting away, he regulated divorce in the Old Testament Law because he knew the hardness and the wickedness of men’s hearts would lead to divorces that would bring great harm if they were not restrained by the Law. God also regulates divorce in the New Testament by limiting its grounds to adultery, fornication, and desertion. There was no divorce allowed in the Old Testament for adultery and fornication because the adulterer and the adulteress were put to death. Though allowing for divorce in the New Testament, God has deliberately made divorce as difficult and as painful as possible because if He did not the institution of marriage would be destroyed by the unbridled lust and wickedness of men’s and women’s hearts. By the time God was incarnate in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, divorce was being practiced for every cause by the Jewish people contrary to the law and the original intent of God that marriage be one man and one woman becoming “one flesh” for a lifetime (No man or woman separates from their flesh without dying). God in the flesh rebuked the Pharisees for their licentious interpretation and application of Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

The words used in our King James Bibles to describe the destruction of a marriage are put away, putteth away, putting away, divorce, divorced, divorcement, unmarried, and loosed. These words are used to describe the breakup of human marriages and the putting away of God’s wife, Israel. These words occur in only twenty-seven (27) verses in the whole Bible. These 27 verses occur in the context of only 105 verses dealing with the issue of divorce. Forty-four of those verses come from Ezra chapter 10 alone. So that you may go and read all these Scriptures in context we include

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them here and they are: Leviticus 21:7, Leviticus 21:14, Leviticus 22:13, Numbers 30:9, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Ezra 10:1-44, Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 3:1-11, Ezekiel 44:22, Malachi 2:10-16, Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:3-12, Mark 10:2-12, Luke 16:18, 1 Corinthians 7:10-15, and 1 Corinthians 7:27-28. Make sure that you read and study all the verses in context because a verse taken out of context is a pretext for false doctrine. Some would include Romans 7:1-4 in the list of verses that we just gave, but those verses are not about divorce. Those verses are about a woman who would be guilty of adultery. Those verses are not being used by the Holy Ghost to teach doctrine about men's divorces. The Holy Ghost is using those verses to teach that once we die to our sin we are no longer in bondage to, or married to Satan, and are therefore loosed and free to marry the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, Romans 7:1-4 can be used to interpret the words "loosed" and "bound" in 1 Corinthians 7:27. And we do use them later for that purpose. God's attitude toward divorce is best illustrated by Malachi 2:10-16 where He states:

Malachi 2:10-16

¹⁰ 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?

¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

Not only were these wicked men and wicked priests divorcing the wives of their youth, they were taking up with "the daughters of a strange God" who were nothing but temple prostitutes. The priests were the leaders in this wickedness before God as is documented in Malachi 2:1-9 and yet they continued to minister in the house of God while committing adultery with temple prostitutes. That sounds like some "fundamentalist" churches of today. Now, let's go pick up twenty-three more of the verses that we called out above (We deal with Ezra chapter 10 under a separate topic in this chapter):

Leviticus 21:13-14

13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity. 14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or

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profane, *or* an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.

Leviticus 22:13

13 But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof.

These verses in Leviticus give us no real insight into the meaning of the word divorce. We do not get a scriptural definition of divorce until we reach Deuteronomy 24:1-4 where it is written:

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

1 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. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*. 3 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; 4 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.

Note that a bill of divorcement had to be written and given to the woman that was being divorced so that she would be allowed to go out of her former husband's house and remarry. If she tried to marry another man without a bill of divorce, both she and the man she would marry would be stoned to death for adultery as required by Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22. For that reason, the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:1 could not be fornication or adultery because a divorce was allowed in Deuteronomy 24. Now, we come to the matter of God's divorce which we have already stated was caused by Israel's adultery. This divorce is recorded in Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:8 where we read:

Isaiah 50:1

1 Thus saith the LORD, Where *is* the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

Jeremiah 3:8

8 [The Lord said] And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorcement; yet her

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treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

So much for the statements of many fundamentalists preachers and pastors that adultery is not a grounds for divorce as we have already discussed above. To get a real grasp of the issues involved here, you really need to read and study all of Ezekiel 16 and Jeremiah 3:1-11. Ezekiel 44:21-22 is the last Old Testament Scripture we will look at.

Ezekiel 44:21-22

21 Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court. 22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.

In Ezekiel 44:22, the phrase “her that is put away” refers to a divorced woman. Now, lets turn to the New Testament where a great deal of controversy exists over Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:6-9, Mark 10:7-12, Luke 16:18, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, and 1 Corinthians 7:27-28. Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 5:

Matthew 5:31-32

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 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.

Now let’s turn to Matthew 19:6 where we read:

Matthew 19:6-9

⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. ⁷ They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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.

Now let’s turn to Mark 10 and begin reading in verse 7:

Mark 10:7-12

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his

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wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Luke 16:18

¹⁸ Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery.

Those verses in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19 do not say that a person cannot marry any divorced person. What these verses are saying is that a person cannot marry another person who has been put away (divorced) for fornication else he or she is guilty of adultery. What this also means is that a single person can commit adultery because it is said that both are guilty of adultery. That is why both were stoned to death under the Old Testament law. These verses do not say that a man or woman commits perpetual adultery if they marry a divorced person. We deal with that issue in a separate topic that follows. The conditional statements “saving for the cause of fornication” and “except it be for fornication” is what drives the interpretation of both of these passages as it relates to who is guilty of adultery and who is allowed to divorce and remarry. We deal with those issues below under the topics of the scriptural grounds for divorce and remarriage.

Many argue on the basis of Matthew 19:6 and Mark 10:9 that God puts all marriages together. This false doctrine creates its own list of difficult problems and impossible situations that are to numerous to be dealt with here. Imagine the myriad of scenarios that could be documented or devised that would be almost impossible to resolve. From a human perspective, the sin and damage of most divorces cannot be undone and must be dealt with in an attitude of forgiveness that does not bring the repentant sinner under endless condemnation. However, if they will not repent, they are under the condemnation of God. Those repentant sinners guilty of causing divorces should be forgiven and charged to “go, and sin no more”. If an unrepentant sinner continues down a path of adultery, they must be put out of the church. This discussion brings us to this conclusion: Contrary to what many fundamentalist and Baptist preachers and pastors preach and teach, God does not put most marriages together. While God in his permissive will allows unscriptural marriages, he does not put them together. God does not put a believer and an unbeliever together. God did not put a Jew and a pagan together. The scriptures do not say: “what therefore God has **allowed** to be joined together, let not man put asunder”. The scripture is emphatic that God joined them together. There have been a lot of unholy unions down through the years. The last such unholy union will take place during the tribulation when the apostate church, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, becomes the bride of Satan. How many marriages today do you think God has actually joined together?

“Divorced” in the Old Testament and the New Testament is a term meaning having been married but now unmarried. Being scripturally unmarried, gives you the right to remarry

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(Deuteronomy 24:2-3; Matthew 19:9; and 1 Corinthians 7:15, 27-28). In 1 Corinthians 7 we have the case of a believing wife that has left an unbelieving husband and the following instructions are the charge to the believer from the Holy Ghost:

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28

²⁷ Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. ²⁸ 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.

First Corinthians 7:10-11, plainly states that the departed spouse is unmarried. You cannot be unmarried without a divorce. That does away with the whole false idea that the term “unmarried” of 1 Corinthians 7:11 is referring to a temporary separation. Therefore, “unmarried” applies to those who have never been married and to those who have been married but are no longer married because of death or divorce. The term unmarried only occurs four times in our Bibles and all these are in 1 Corinthians 7. Concerning this term “unmarried” in 1 Corinthians 7:11, Brother Karl Baker had this to say:

“Unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband! Now if married means a ceremony and she had one, because she had a husband, how can she remain **unmarried?** Unless the word “married” means, as we have implied, not to join her flesh to another man’s flesh, thereby marrying with him. Is that not also how Paul use the term in Romans 7, **“So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress,”**? That is why Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 emphasizes not joining ourselves to harlots, because in so doing we become “one flesh” even though we did not intend to “marry” her. We technically are marrying her when we join our flesh with hers.” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 94]

Brother Baker is driving home the idea that it is the sexual relationship that establishes the marriage. Divorce ends that sexual relationship. Divorce is a very painful thing because it is the ripping asunder of one flesh. Divorce is a knife in the heart of love. Divorce is death itself. In many ways divorce is much more painful than the death of a spouse because if you love someone you will always wonder if there was something you could have done to have prevented the divorce. Divorce is not always a sin in the Bible for all parties involved. There can be an innocent party in a divorce. The Bible no where says that divorce is sin. Sin can and does lead to divorce. In quoting Stinnett Ballew, Brother Karl Baker had this to say about the doctrine that states that divorce is sin:

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“let me, [Stinnett Ballew], say in the very beginning divorce is sin. It is not the unpardonable sin, but it certainly is sin. I do not believe any couple is ever led of the Lord to get a divorce. Divorce is man’s way out, not God’s.” Then Brother Karl Baker states: “But Dr. Ballew, the Bible states in 1 John 3:4, “sin is a transgression of the law”. **Where** is the Scripture that backs up the statement that divorce is sin? I realize that divorce can be sin (Matthew 19:9) and can cause sin (Matthew 19:9) but divorce is **not** sin in every case. Deuteronomy 24 is the law, and what the law allowed or made a provision for **cannot** be called sin (Romans 7:12, 14 also, Romans 5:13). Jesus allow divorced for fornication and desertion by an unbeliever (Matthew 19:9, 1 Corinthians 7:15), and it **cannot be sin** if our Lord condoned it as acceptable.... **God himself has gone through a divorce!**” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 75]

We have heard it stated many times that divorce is always sin and that both parties to the divorce are guilty of sin. That is not true. To state that “Divorce is ALWAYS wrong” or “God NEVER approves of divorce” is to contradict the Scriptures. The following scriptural facts contradict those views: (1) God gave a law that permitted and regulated divorce AND REMARRIAGE (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).(2) It was the will of God that the priests and the people of Israel put away their strange wives (Ezra 10:10-11).(3) God Himself divorced the nation of Israel (Isaiah 50:1-2, Jeremiah 3:8).(4) The Lord Jesus Christ granted permission to divorce AND REMARRY if a spouse was guilty of fornication (Matthew 19:9). (5) the Holy Ghost allows for divorce in 1 Corinthians 7 in cases of desertion by an unbeliever. Next in our discussion, we will deal with the scriptural grounds for divorce.

THE SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

If your doctrine states that divorce is man’s way and not God’s way, then how does that doctrine line up with Ezra chapter 10 where God required the people and priests of Israel to put away their strange wives and how does your doctrine line up with Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:7-8 where God divorced Israel? Turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:7-8:

Isaiah 50:1

1 Thus saith the LORD, Where *is* the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

Jeremiah 3:7-8

7 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*. 8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill

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of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

So, is divorce man's way out and not God's way out? We will deal with Ezra chapter 10 a little later on. We realize that some of what we are about to say here is very controversial, but here we go anyhow. The real question here is not how we feel about the issue, but what does the Bible say? What, if any, are the scriptural grounds for divorce? From Malachi 2:16, we realize that God hates divorce, but we also realize that God made provision for it under the law and under grace because of the hardness of men's and women's hearts. While death does end a marriage, there are also three other scriptural justifications for divorce. These are: (1) God's command to divorce given to the people, the priests, and the Levites of Israel in Ezra chapter 10 because they had taken to themselves the strange wives as identified in Ezra 10:2, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, and 44. There are some object lessons that can be learned from Ezra chapter 10, if we will just set aside the unscriptural teachings that have been hammered into us on the anvil of false teaching. (2) A second ground for a scriptural divorce is an act of fornication known as adultery. (3) The third ground for a scriptural divorce is an act of desertion whereby an unbeliever rejects and deserts a believing spouse. We will now proceed to deal with these three grounds for divorce.

GOD'S COMMAND IN EZRA 10 AS SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

Our first scriptural justification for divorce is God's command to divorce given to the people, the priests, and the Levites of Israel in Ezra chapter 10 because they had taken to themselves the strange wives as identified in Ezra 10:2, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, and 44. The women were called strange wives because they were pagans. The reason for the divorces was to enforce ecclesiastical separation between the priests, the Levites, and the congregation of Israel as a unit and the pagan nations that surrounded them. The law that had been violated was Leviticus 21:7, Leviticus 21:14, and Deuteronomy 7:3. The indictment of Israel took place in Ezra 9:1-2 and the trial and sentence was pronounced in Ezra chapter 10. The divorces were probably carried out at least in part in accordance with Deuteronomy 24:1. These Scriptures state:

Leviticus 21:7

⁷ 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.

Leviticus 21:14

¹⁴ A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, *or* an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.

Deuteronomy 7:3

³ Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto

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his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

Ezra 9:1-2

¹ Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, *doing* according to their abominations, *even* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. ² For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of *those* lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

Ezra 10:1-3

¹ Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore. ² And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. ³ Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

Ezra 10:10-12

¹⁰ And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. ¹¹ 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. ¹² Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

Ezra 10:18-19

¹⁸ And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. ¹⁹ And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, *they offered* a ram of the flock for their trespass.

Deuteronomy 24:1

¹ 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.

What about that?! In Ezra chapter 10, we have a commandment from God to divorce (put

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away) their pagan, unbelieving wives. The law in Leviticus chapter 21 was given specifically to the priests and the law in Deuteronomy 7 was given generally to all the people of the nation of Israel. What is significant here, is not only did God allow these divorces, but also that he commanded them! So, were these divorces wrong? Put another way, were these divorces sin? There are those that state that divorce is always wrong, but these events in Ezra 10 prove that statement to be entirely false. While we know that there is sin associated with divorce, there is not one verse in the Bible that states that divorce is sin because if there were, God could be accused of sin because He divorced (put away) the nation of Israel because she was unfaithful to God when she went a whoring after false gods. Brother Karl Baker said this:

“You cannot show me one verse in either Testament that states that divorce is a sin when the offended party divorces the guilty party, as previously stated in Deuteronomy 24, Matthew 19, and a 1 Corinthians 7.” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 76]

While we know that divorce always involves sin, we also know that there are innocent parties in some divorces. Many fundamentalists and Baptists deny that because it destroys their theology that states that all parties to a divorce are guilty, even the innocent, and if the innocent party remarries they are guilty of adultery and/or perpetual adultery. Brother Karl Baker has rightly said:

“Divorce is the only act in the whole Bible that makes a guiltless person a sinner by association.” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 61]

It is this same type of guilt by association that has been used by many fundamentalists and Baptists to permanently disqualify an innocent divorced man from the ministry. What this false doctrine essentially does is to hold an innocent party responsible for the sin of the guilty party. What comes to mind here is Exodus 23:7 which says:

Exodus 23:7

⁷ Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

The wicked end up getting justified in their conduct while the faithful innocents are forced to pay the penalty for the guilty's sin. In continuing our discussion on Ezra chapter 10, we would note that the priests had to put away their profane wives and that no steps were taken to remove them from the priesthood. In fact, there is every indication that they were required to put away their pagan wives so that they would be ceremonially clean in order to be able to administer the sacrifices. The guilt and sin associated with the divorces in Ezra 10 was that of the people, the priests, and the rulers of Israel and not of the pagan spouses they had married. The pagans were innocent in the divorces. Yet, those who were guilty of causing the divorces, because they had broken the law in the first place when they had married the pagan wives, were allowed to continue in the priesthood. Can you imagine that: a

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divorced priest ministering in the house of God!

FORNICATION/ADULTERY AS SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

Our second ground for a scriptural divorce is an act of fornication known as adultery. God put away His wife, Israel, for adultery. That makes adultery a scriptural ground for divorce. God called that wife a harlot three different times in Jeremiah 3:1-11, six different times in Ezekiel 16:1-43, and four different times in the book of Hosea. That adultery and whoredom was described as fornication in 2 Chronicles 21:11, Ezekiel 16:15, Ezekiel 16:26, and in Ezekiel 16:29. In Revelation 2:20-22 we see fornication equated with adultery where we read:

Revelation 2:20-22

²⁰Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. ²¹ And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. ²² Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

So, how is it that adultery is not fornication and how is it that fornication and adultery are not grounds for divorce in the eyes of some doctors of the law? A friend of ours, Brother John Asquith, argues that fornication and adultery are not the same and spends eight pages in his book proving it. We are not saying that Brother John Asquith is a doctor of the law because he is an outstanding Christian man, the most Biblically literate individual we know, and a wonderful pastor. He has taught us many things that we have never heard from another man. Nevertheless, those things line up with the Scriptures. He has been a wonderful blessing to this author and we love him, but we do not agree with him on this issue. While we agree that fornication and adultery are not the same, we do not agree with anyone who states that adultery is not an act of fornication. Adultery is an act of fornication by a married individual with an individual they are not married to. First Corinthians 5:1 also proves that adultery is an act of fornication. This verse reads:

1 Corinthians 5:1

¹ 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.

We here quote Brother John Asquith with whom we disagree on the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:1:

The Oxford editors go no further with their proof. Some of the Brethren have. Certain of the brethren have seized upon another use of the word fornication as being

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proof that its definition includes adultery. Again, they are wrong.

They quote *I Cor. 5:1*, *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*. This, to some, is proof positive that fornication can mean adultery. A closer look at the verse proves otherwise.

The assumption made here is that there is a living father whose latest wife has been having an affair with the man's own son. Such a sin is not without precedent in the Word of God, *Gen. 35:22, 49:4*. Yet such a sin is also named among the Gentiles. In my brief sojourn on this earth, I have heard of a couple cases reported.

The key to the verse is the phrase *not so much as named among the Gentiles*. There is a perfectly sound, rational explanation that does not alter the word *fornication* to give it a definition that it never had before 1611 and has nowhere else in the AV 1611. [Further Thoughts On The Word Of God, John M. Asquith, pages 109-110, copyright 2005]

This particular sin of adultery with a stepmother was outlawed in the Roman Empire when the book of 1 Corinthians was written. That is why the sin was not so much as named among the Gentiles. In the Roman Empire, adultery with a stepmother was considered to be incest also and resulted in permanent exile and the loss of citizenship and all property [Cited from: Justinian Code, Book IX, Title IX of the Roman Code, The Law of Adultery and Debauchery, dated 18 B.C.]. The Holy Ghost is rebuking the church at Corinth because they were tolerating something that would not even be tolerated amongst unsaved Gentiles in the Roman Empire. The point of the Holy Ghost is that the Romans were putting like offenders out of the empire while the church at Corinth was doing nothing to put the offender out of the church. Brother John Asquith states that the father called out in 1 Corinthians 5:1 is dead while we believe that the father called out is alive. So, what would be the issue here? If the son's father was dead there would be no real issue here under Roman law. Under God's law, it would be an act of fornication that would be named among the Gentiles. The issue is that the father is alive and the son is guilty of an act of fornication known as adultery with his father's wife, in other words, his stepmother. That is the same issue with Reuben when he took his father's wife (concubine), Bilhah, in Genesis 35:22. Bilhah was one of Reuben's stepmothers. It is clear that Leviticus 18:8, Deuteronomy 22:30, and Deuteronomy 27:20 are in view in 1 Corinthians 5:1 and these verses read:

Leviticus 18:8

⁸ The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it *is* thy father's nakedness.

Deuteronomy 22:30

³⁰ A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.

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Deuteronomy 27:20

²⁰ Cursed *be* he that lieth with his father’s wife; because he uncovereth his father’s skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

If the father were dead, the law just cited would be of none effect just like the law of not marrying two sisters was of none effect after the death of one of the sisters (Leviticus 18:18). If the father was dead, there was no violation of the law and therefore, no reason to call it out as the Holy Ghost did in 1 Corinthians 5. This would be true although it would have been a particularly revolting act of fornication with no need to reference the woman as being the father’s wife if the father was already dead. There is no provision in the Law of Moses that prohibited a man from marrying a dead man’s former wife provided they were not blood kin as defined by Leviticus 18. It is clear that the King James translators knew that the Holy Ghost was making reference to the Scriptures we just quoted because they are given as marginal cross references for 1 Corinthians 5:1. What we have in 1 Corinthians 5:1 is an act of adultery being described as fornication just as it is in Matthew 19:9. If fornication cannot be an act of adultery, then there are no scriptural grounds for divorce based upon adultery because the Lord Jesus Christ **initially** limited just grounds for divorce to fornication. We reject that notion. What that would mean is that there would be no recourse for a spouse trapped in a marriage to an adulterous mate. It would force the victimized spouse to live in a polygamous state where they were sharing the marriage bed with another mate of their spouse. Would that be right? In fact, a New Testament law or precept that allowed that situation to continue would violate the spirit of the restoration of the “one flesh” ideal reestablished by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-8. **For those of you who believe that a married person cannot be guilty of fornication, why would adultery/fornication in marriage not be justification for a divorce and fornication before marriage would be?** Adultery is a much more serious matter because it involves an illicit sexual act and the breaking of vows and/or a covenant. Also, if divorce is not allowed for adultery, how can a spouse who is having continuous sexual affairs be stopped? Does the innocent party have to run the risk of getting a fatal sexually transmitted disease by continuing in a marriage with a sexually promiscuous spouse with no recourse to a divorce to end the danger? I realize that some of you self righteous hypocrites would counsel that person to separate from their spouse and remain celibate and alone for the rest of their lives when God has allowed a means of grace for the innocents that are trapped in such adulterous marriages. Forcing the innocent spouse to live in celibacy would violate the intent and the spirit of 1 Corinthians 7:5 which declares:

1 Corinthians 7:5

⁵ 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.

Many times the only solution that will work for an innocent spouse is a divorce. Brother Karl Baker put it very well when he said:

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Divorce is a divine sanctioned grace in the New Testament established by our Lord himself (Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7)[The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 71]

That divine sanctioned grace is divorce and remarriage if so desired by the innocent party. You do remember that God said that is not good for man to be alone don't you (Genesis 2:18)? You do remember that God has said that it is better to marry than burn don't you (1 Corinthians 7:9)? You do remember that God has said that it is a doctrine of devils to forbid marriage, don't you (1 Timothy 4:3)? Brother Harold Sigtler had this to say concerning fornication and adultery:

“The Lord makes it clear that “fornication” is the only ground for divorce. Fornication and adultery are often terms used interchangeably, though they are not the same. There is a difference in the Scriptural use of the two words. Fornication is the practice of illicit sexual relation of unmarried peoples; while adultery is the same sin practiced by married people.” (Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sigtler, Page 3)

“Divorce is never permissible upon the grounds of adultery. Now I full well recognize this to be a controversial thought. Many good preachers and many good Christians will not agree with me here. However, a careful study into the general subject has convinced me that adultery, as terrible as it is, is not a Bible ground for divorce.”(Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sigtler, Pages 5-6)

Now, as much as we respect Brother Harold Sigtler, those statements will not stand an unbiased test of the Scriptures as we will now document. The problem here comes through misinterpreting and misapplying the word “fornication” when the Lord Jesus Christ plainly stated in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 that a spouse could be guilty of fornication. The way most fundamentalist and Baptist preachers and pastors handle the problem before us is to twist the words of the Lord Jesus Christ by stating that fornication applies only to unmarried people. **It just does not make any sense at all that a sexual act “BEFORE” a marriage would be scriptural grounds for divorce and that an unfaithful sexual act “AFTER” a marriage would not be scriptural grounds for divorce.** It is incredible to us that anyone could actually buy into that belief! We suspect that many fundamentalists and Baptists are unwittingly walking hand-in-hand with the Roman Catholic harlot Mary while she leads them into the crypts of Roman Catholic theology. If you do not believe it, take a look at Appendix I to this chapter where we document the Roman Catholic marriage heresies from the 1563 Council of Trent and the 1994 Roman Catholic Catechism: some of which we quote in this chapter.

For those who selectively use a few passages of Scripture to give a false impression that divorce and remarriage is never permissible and that those who remarry are always guilty of adultery, even perpetual adultery, let's put a package together that includes the whole counsel of God concerning adultery. The next three and a half pages include the pertinent Scriptures that speak to adultery. Those scriptures include Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:18, Deuteronomy

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22:13-30, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Matthew 5:27-32, Matthew 19:1-12, Mark 10:2-12, Luke 16:18, John 8:3-9, and Romans 7:1-4 which we now quote:

Exodus 20:14

¹⁴ Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Leviticus 20:10

10 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.

Deuteronomy 5:18

¹⁸ Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

Deuteronomy 22:13-30

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: 15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth *the tokens of* the damsel’s virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: 16 And the damsel’s father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; 17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech *against her*, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these *are the tokens of* my daughter’s virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; 19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred *shekels* of silver, and give *them* unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. 20 But if this thing be true, *and the tokens of* virginity be not found for the damsel: 21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father’s house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. 22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. 23 If a damsel *that is* a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; 24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour’s wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. 25 But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: 26 But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; *there is* in the damsel no sin *worthy* of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth

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him, even so *is* this matter: 27 For he found her in the field, *and* the betrothed damsel cried, and *there was* none to save her. 28 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; 29 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. 30 A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

¹ 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. ² And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*. ³ 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; ⁴ 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.

Matthew 5:27-32

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. 31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 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.

Matthew 19:1-12

¹ 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; ² And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. ³ 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? ⁴ And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ 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? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath

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joined together, let not man put asunder. ⁷ They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. ¹¹ But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given. ¹² 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*.

Mark 10:2-12

² And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. ³ And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? ⁴ And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. ⁵ And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. ⁶ But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. ⁷ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; ⁸ And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. ¹⁰ And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. ¹¹ And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. ¹² And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Luke 16:18

¹⁸ Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery.

John 8:3-9

³ And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴ They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵ Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶ 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*. ⁷ 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. ⁸ And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹ And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at

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the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

Romans 7:1-4

¹ 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? ² 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. ³ So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. ⁴ Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

After having read all of that, our first conclusion is that there was no divorce for adultery or fornication in the Old Testament. According to Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22, the penalty for adultery was death by stoning! Case closed. The remedy for the innocent spouse for adultery in the Old Testament is that the guilty spouse was put away by stoning them to death! This was an especially fast and effective means of divorce for adultery that ensured there would be no repeat offenders! Do you actually think that God would not supply some means of relief for the innocent spouse in the New Testament!? That means of relief in the New Testament is that the innocent spouse was allowed to put away the guilty spouse through divorce. Though Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not mention adultery, it is often brought into the discussion concerning adultery for the purpose of destroying the means of grace that the Lord Jesus Christ provided for those who are victims of adultery. This approach makes the fornication of Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:1. A typical interpretation of this passage is that of Brother Harold Sightler who writes:

“In Deuteronomy 24:1 we find the explanation for the permission given Moses to divorce one’s wife. When he found in his wife some “uncleanness” which occurred before marriage, he was then permitted to give her a writing of divorcement and send her out of his house. This uncleanness is called fornication in the New Testament. Being unfaithful to the marriage vow has never been or ever will be grounds for divorce. Like Hosea, we are to forgive even adultery”. (Page 3, Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sightler)

To this we respond, the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:1 is not premarital fornication or adultery because if it were the law of Deuteronomy 22:21-24 would apply and the offenders would be stoned to death. They would not be allowed to divorce and remarry. Brother Sightler is correct when he says that being unfaithful to the marriage vows in the Old Testament was no grounds for divorce. The marriage was terminated in a whole lot faster fashion than a divorce could ever

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accomplish. The offenders were stoned to death! That is why a bill of divorce was required in Deuteronomy 24:1. It was insurance against getting stoned to death for adultery! In Deuteronomy 24:1-4, those getting the divorce were granted the right to remarry. In fact, the woman that was divorced could get remarried and divorced again! As we have already mentioned, the marginal note in the King James Bible for Deuteronomy 24:1 sheds some light on the interpretation of the phrase “found some uncleanness”. The King James marginal note refers to it as a matter of nakedness. In other words, it was some defect that could not be observed until the woman was found naked in the marriage bed. It is obvious that Deuteronomy 24:1-4 had a wide range of interpretation from the way the Pharisees tried to use it in their confrontation with the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19 and Mark 10. The Pharisees interpreted it of divorce being justified for every cause. Unlike many modern day preachers, pastors, and teachers they knew it did not apply to fornication or adultery and the confrontation between the Pharisees and the Lord Jesus Christ in John 8:3-9 proves it. In John 8, in tempting the Lord Jesus Christ, the Pharisees brought the woman caught in adultery to the Lord Jesus Christ knowing that under the law she had to be stoned. They wanted to know what the Lord thought. In the confrontation that ensued, He put them on the run convicting them out of their own mouths. The Lord probably wrote Leviticus 20:10 on the ground. The Lord Jesus Christ wanted to know where the man was who participated in the act of adultery because he was supposed to be stoned to death also.

In our Lord’s response to the Pharisees in Matthew 19, He reset the law for marriage to God’s original intent set down in Genesis 2:24. He also done away with the “for every cause divorce” and established fornication as a scripturally just grounds for divorce. Here is where the controversy begins. In the New Testament, fornication applies to every sexual sin under the sun including adultery. Adultery is an act of fornication committed by two people at least one of whom is married. We would refer you back to our extensive discussion on fornication. The fornication referred to here is not premarital sex. **Why would the Lord allow a divorce for a presumed act of premarital sex and not allow divorce for an acts of adultery and/or fornication during a marriage??** The act of adultery and/or fornication during marriage would be much more destructive to a relationship than an act of premarital sex. Again, for those of you who believe that adultery is not an act of fornication, you need to study Ezekiel 16 in depth where acts of adultery are called fornication at least three different times. We realize the context of Ezekiel 16 is spiritual fornication, but that does not change its application to the adultery that is described in the context.

What many Christians do is to take Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18 alone and use them to condemn any divorce and to teach a doctrine of “perpetual adultery” for all those that have been divorced and remarried. That is akin to neglecting 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 when trying to teach the scriptural doctrine of the rapture of the saints (Church). It does not present the whole counsel of God. Still others will take Mark 10:11-12, Luke 16:18, Matthew 5:32, and Matthew 19:9 and use all of them, but then deliberately neglect to use the phrases “saving for the cause of fornication” in Matthew 5:32 and “except it be for fornication” in Matthew 19:9. Many also will deliberately neglect to use the phrase “and shall marry another” from Matthew 19:9. That is a critical error in interpretation. Matthew 19:3-10 is granting the right of the innocent party in a divorce to divorce and remarry when their spouse is guilty of fornication. **In other words the context of**

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Matthew 19:3-10 is lawful divorce and remarriage. Concerning the exception clauses the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia had this to say:

“Why, then, will reason stand by this exception? Because adultery is per se destructive of monogamic family life. Whoever, married, is guilty of adultery has taken another person into family relation. Children may be born to that relation — are born to it. Not to allow divorce in such case is to force an innocent party in marriage to live in a polygamous state. There is the issue stated so plainly that “the wayfaring man need not err therein,” and “he who runs may read,” and “he who reads may run.” It is the hand of an unerring Master that has made fornication a ground for divorce from the bond of matrimony and limited divorce to that single cause. Whichever way we depart from strict practice under the Savior’s direction we land in polygamy. The society that allows by its statutes divorce for any other cause than the one that breaks the monogamic bond, is simply acting in aid of polygamy, consecutive if not contemporaneous.”[The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Copyright 1929, James Orr General Editor, Volume II, page 865]

Now let’s get back to Harold Sightler’s assertion that divorce is never permissible on the grounds of adultery. While that may sound very righteous, “no divorce, ever” is not the historical position nor is it the scriptural position. The Westminster Confession of 1646 stated:

“Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.”[Westminster Confession Of 1646, Chapter XXIV, Section V]

Matthew Henry (1662-1714) had this to say about Matthew 19:9

“He [The Lord Jesus Christ] settles the point by an express law; I say unto you (v. 9); and it agrees with what he said before ch. 5:32); there it was said in preaching, here in dispute, but it is the same, for Christ is constant to himself. Now, in both these places,(1.) He allows divorce, in case of adultery; the reason of the law against divorce being this, They two shall be one flesh. If the wife play the harlot, and make herself one flesh with an adulterer, the reason of the law ceases, and so does the law. By the law of Moses adultery was punished with death, Deu. 22:22 . Now our Saviour mitigates the rigour of that, and appoints divorce to be the penalty.” [Matthew Henry’s Commentary On The Whole Bible, on Matthew 19:9]

Matthew Poole [(1624-1679) said this about Matthew 19:9:

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“We met with the like determination of our Lord’s upon this question Matthew 5:32, only there it was (instead of committeth adultery) causeth her to commit adultery, that is, in case she married again. Here our Lord saith the like of the husband: we have the same, Mark 10:11 Luke 16:18. The reason is this: Because nothing but adultery dissolves the knot and band of marriage, though they be thus illegally separated, yet according to the law of God, they are still man and wife. Some have upon these words made a question whether it be lawful for the husband or the wife separated for adultery to marry again while each other liveth. As to the party offending, it may be a question; but as to the innocent person offended, it is no question, for the adultery of the person offending hath dissolved the knot of marriage by the Divine law. It is true that the knot cannot be dissolved without the freedom of both persons each from another, but yet it seemeth against reason that both persons should have the like liberty to a second marriage. For,

1. The adulteress is by God’s law a dead woman, and so in no capacity to a second marriage.
2. It is unreasonable that she should make an advantage of her own sin and error.
3. This might be the occasion of adultery, to give a wicked person a legal liberty to satisfy an extravagant lust.

But for the innocent person, it is as unreasonable that he or she should be punished for the sin of another. But what our Saviour saith here, and in the other parallel texts, is undoubtedly to be understood of husbands and wives put away not for adultery, but for other light and trivial causes, for which by the law of God no divorce is allowed.” [See Matthew Poole’s Commentary On The Holy Bible, Volume 3, pages 88 and 89]

Matthew Henry and Matthew Poole also believed that 1 Corinthians 7:15 granted another scriptural cause for divorce and that being desertion. We will quote those comments later. Brother Karl Baker had this to say concerning Matthew 19:

“Trying to keep the churches pulpits “pure” by preaching against double married preachers at the expense of doctrinal truth is no more effective than the Pharisees trying to clean up the outside of the cup and platter, when the inside is full of extortion and excess... First of all, Jesus said that because of the Pharisees perversion of Deuteronomy 24; to preserve the spiritual intent of God’s mercy to those who are married that found themselves joined to an unfaithful spouse, the allowance of divorce under the grounds of fornication (which also included adultery, read the dictionary) would be the **only** acceptable act that constituted an annulment of the marriage bondage under the law. It is not the right of the guilty party to instigate the

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divorce proceedings (see the statement under the statutes of law in index).” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, pages 98-99]

“Therefore, Matthew 19 is to be understood to mean what our Lord plainly stated in the first place: a lawful means by which one is allowed by the grace of God to put away an unfaithful spouse. We are to interpret it as our Lord specified [as] the relief of an innocent party in a situation where the heart has been hardened against the spouse for violating the marriage bonds by fornication. The application is this: reconciliation is to be made for all offenses with one exception – fornication (and that is not a commandment, it is an option for the relief of a broken spirit!)...The putting away has to be done by the innocent party and if the accusation of fornication is true, the Lord will honor the innocent by allowing the divorce and marriage again.” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 110]

In closing this section on adultery as a scriptural grounds for divorce, we have proved that adultery is a scriptural grounds for divorce and remarriage. Throughout this book we have quoted, and will continue to quote, numerous authors on the issues that are before us, but those authors do not determine our doctrine. We have also looked at many Bible dictionaries and commentaries NOT to determine where we should stand on these issues, but to see where various “great men of God” stood on these issues. What we can tell you is that it is a mixed bag with many “great men of God” coming down on opposite sides of the issue. We are not mocking here. We know many great preachers that we disagree with on this issue that we have driven hundreds of miles to hear preach. While we have never met Brother Karl Baker, we pretty much agree with almost everything that he says in his book “The Marriage and Divorce Controversy”. It was his book that motivated us to search the whole counsel of God on these issues. Boy were we surprised! The bottom line is this: What does the Bible say!

DESERTION AS A SCRIPTURAL GROUND FOR DIVORCE

Matthew Henry had this to say about desertion as a scriptural ground for divorce and remarriage:

“The Christian calling did not dissolve the marriage covenant, but bind it the faster, by bringing it back to the original institution, limiting it to two persons, and binding them together for life. The believer is not by faith in Christ loosed from matrimonial bonds to an unbeliever, but is at once bound and made apt to be a better relative. But, though a believing wife or husband should not separate from an unbelieving mate, yet if the unbelieving relative desert the believer, and no means can reconcile to a cohabitation, in such a case a brother or sister is not in bondage (v. 15), not tied up to the unreasonable humour, and bound servilely to follow or cleave to the malicious deserter, or not bound to live unmarried after all proper means for

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reconciliation have been tried, at least of the deserter contract another marriage or be guilty of adultery, which was a very easy supposition, because a very common instance among the heathen inhabitants of Corinth. In such a case the deserted person must be free to marry again, and it is granted on all hands. And some think that such a malicious desertion is as much a dissolution of the marriage-covenant as death itself. For how is it possible that the two shall be one flesh when the one is maliciously bent to part from or put away the other? Indeed, the deserter seems still bound by the matrimonial contract; and therefore the apostle says (v. 11), If the woman depart from her husband upon the account of his infidelity, let her remain unmarried. But the deserted party seems to be left more at liberty (I mean supposing all the proper means have been used to reclaim the deserter, and other circumstances make it necessary) to marry another person. It does not seem reasonable that they should be still bound, when it is rendered impossible to perform conjugal duties or enjoy conjugal comforts, through the mere fault of their mate: in such a case marriage would be a state of servitude indeed.” [Matthew Henry Commentary On The Whole Bible, on 1 Corinthians 7:15]

Matthew Poole had this to say about desertion as a scriptural ground for divorce and remarriage:

“If the unbelieving husband or the unbelieving wife will leave his or her correlate, that is, so leave them as to return no more to live as a husband or as a wife with her or him that is Christian, let him depart. Such a person hath broken the bond of marriage, and in such cases Christians are not under bondage, they are not tied by law to fetch them again, nor by the laws of God to keep themselves unmarried for their perverseness. But it may be objected, that nothing but adultery, by the Divine law, breaketh that bond.

Answer. That is denied. Nothing but adultery is a justifiable cause of divorce: no man may put away his wife, nor any wife put away her husband, but for adultery. But the husband’s voluntary leaving his wife, or the wife’s voluntary leaving her husband, with a resolution to return no more to them, breaks also the bond of marriage, frustrating it as to the ends for which God hath appointed it; and, after all due means used to bring again the party departing to their duty, doth certainly free the correlate. So that although nothing can justify repudiation, or putting away a wife or a husband, and marrying another, but the adultery of the person so divorced and repudiated; yet the departure either of husband or wife without the other’s consent for a long time, and refusal to return after all due means used, especially if the party so going away doth it out of a hatred and abomination of the other’s religion, will justify the persons so deserted, after due waiting and use of means to reduce him or her to their duty, wholly to cast off the person deserting; for no Christian in such a case, by God’s law, is under bondage.” [See Matthew Poole’s Commentary On The Holy

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Bible, Volume 3, page 560]

Brother Karl Baker had this to say about 1 Corinthians 7 and the doctrine of desertion:

“Are you going to say, that when Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7, “**A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases, but the Lord hath called us to peace**” does not mean, because of the desertion of the unbeliever, God is not freeing (loosed, I believe it says in verse 27) you from the bondage of marriage? Why, the whole context of the chapter is the commandments concerning marriage!” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 101]

Brother Harold Sightler had this to say about whether desertion is a scriptural basis for divorce:

“Divorce is never permissible on the grounds of desertion. This happens many times. Husband or wife will simply walk away. They will desert one another. I know the laws of our state will permit divorce on this ground but the Bible knows nothing of divorce on such grounds.” (Page 5, Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sightler)

But does Harold Sightler’s statement line up with what the Bible teaches on grounds for divorce? That is the question that we answer next. Is desertion a scriptural ground for divorce?

What about the man or woman who deserts their mate and never gets a divorce, but lives a life of fornication. Isn’t it ungodly to keep a Christian brother or sister in bondage to a mate who is consorting with the Devil by rubbing fornication in the Christian’s face. Isn’t it ungodly to continue in fellowship with a mate who is in open fornication when God has commanded Christians to separate from the unfruitful works of darkness. Isn’t it ungodly to continue in fellowship with a mate who is in open fornication when God has commanded Christians NOT to keep company with any man that is called a brother who is a fornicator: how much more so an unbelieving mate. This creates a big problem for those who maintain that adultery is a second ceremony and not an act of fornication. Calling the marriage ceremony adultery allows the unsaved mate to live a licentious life style without being held accountable for it. When you will not allow a scriptural divorce in cases of adultery and desertion you are punishing the innocent party for the sin of another. Adultery is not a ceremony. Adultery is an **act of fornication** by a married person. If adultery and fornication are forgivable sins, then how is it that divorce is an unforgivable sin?? You will deny that you believe divorce is an unforgivable sin, but that is not what the application of your doctrine screams. If my doctrine creates a huge conflict with another Biblical doctrine, I had better be adjusting my doctrine to line up with the Scriptures. When the application of OUR law conflicts with God’s law and God’s mercy and grace, then we need to check our law against the Scriptures. When your doctrine will not allow for divorce where the Scriptures allow for it, then you subvert and hijack the mercy and grace of God in the life of an innocent believer who has been grievously injured by an act of treachery on the part of an unfaithful mate. This leads us to our third ground for divorce.

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Our third ground for a scriptural divorce is an act of desertion whereby an unbeliever rejects and deserts a believing spouse. A believer cannot desert an unbelieving spouse and remarry. If a believer deserts an unbelieving spouse they must remain UNMARRIED (divorced). You cannot be unmarried without a divorce. The argument for desertion being a scriptural ground for divorce is based mostly upon 1 Corinthians chapter 7 which we deal with in the next few paragraphs. We would encourage you to read our chapter in this book on 1 Corinthians chapter 7. There are generally four arguments presented against using desertion as a scriptural ground for divorce: (1) They interpret the word “unmarried” in verse 11 to mean separation; (2) They say you put yourself in a supposed impossible position of trying to establish who is unbelieving in verse 15; (3) They accuse you of believing that God changes positions from verse 11 to verse 15 and then changes His position again in verse 27-28 and then back again in verse 39; (4) They accuse you of contradicting the Lord Jesus Christ who said in Matthew that the only grounds for divorce was fornication. Lets deal with the idea of “unmarried” being interpreted as “separated”.

Does the word “unmarried” in verse 11 mean separation? What is legally called separation cannot exist in an unmarried, or in other words, a divorced state. Separation does not fit in the context of 1 Corinthians chapter 7. That the Holy Ghost is defining divorce as being unmarried is clearly stated in the context of 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. A legal separation is not a divorce. It enables you to live separately but to remain legally married. A legal separation comes via a secular court order and is no where found in the Scriptures. Many try to infer it from 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, but those verses plainly state that the departed spouse is unmarried, not separated. At the risk of being accused of tautology, unmarried means “not married”: unmarried does not mean separated. Unmarried applies to those who have never been married and to those who have been married but are no longer married because of death or divorce. The only reason we even address the issue of legal separation here is because some unscripturally call the “unmarried” of 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 “the separated” in an attempt to eliminate desertion as a scriptural ground for divorce. In the context, unmarried means not having a sexual relationship with another person and thereby making them your spouse. That chokes those who refuse to acknowledge the scriptural definition of marriage as becoming one flesh without the necessity of a ceremony. First Corinthians 7:10-11 is a restatement of the law and runs parallel to Romans 7:1-4. Romans 7:1-4 is not about divorce and remarriage, but is about living in an adulterous state. Divorce and remarriage have to be read into Romans 7:1-4 because they are not stated or implied in the context. Now, let’s read Romans 7:1-4:

Romans 7:1-4

1 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? 2 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. 3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised

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from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Here, we can plainly see that the law of death in marriage is being used to show that the believer's death to the law through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ broke our marriage with Satan so that we could and should be married to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the application of the text, but if we are going to use it in the context of a debate or a discussion on marriage, then we need to rightly divide it according to the Old Testament laws of marriage and divorce and not read our doctrine into it. If you read your doctrine into it, we call that adding to the word of God (Revelation 22:18-19). Notice that the Romans 7:2 says, "woman which hath an husband," and "her husband." What is this text picturing? The picture is of a woman married to one man, who commits adultery. Under the Mosaic Law, she would now be stoned for committing adultery; there would be no remarriage for her. Nowhere in this context is divorce/remarriage mentioned. Why? Because a divorced woman no longer has a husband. Her marriage is over. The picture here is of adultery, not a divorce/remarriage situation. It really is that simple. This text has nothing to do with remarriage. The binding of the law refers to their marriage and the loosing from the law refers to the breaking of the marital bond in this case through death. The loosing from the law of a spouse also takes place in a scriptural divorce which is the whole point of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. That loosing allows remarriage which is the whole point of verses 2 and 3 where a bill of divorcement is given. That is also what the meaning of bound and loosed is in 1 Corinthians 7:15, and 27 where we see:

1 Corinthians 7:15

¹⁵ 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.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 28 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.

It is already an established scriptural fact that no sin is involved when a person remarries after the death of a mate. So, verse 27 cannot be referring to a widow or a widower. Verse 27 is referring generally to all those in verses 15-26. Those that have suffered the death of a mate are addressed in the closing two verses of 1 Corinthians 7, verses 39 and 40. Brother Karl Baker had this to say about 1 Corinthians 7:27-28:

"Do not seek a wife, but, if you do-make sure it is in the Lord (verse 39) and you have not sinned if you do (verse 28)!... Can't you see in 1 Corinthians 7:15 with verse 27, the cross reference of Romans 7:2 that says "bound" and then says "loosed" with verse 2 and then says "free" in verse 3? Free to do what – stay single? 1 Corinthians 7:27 says that if you are loosed from a wife, and that includes verse 15, seek not a wife – **But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned: and if a virgin**

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marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh but I spare you (verse 28).” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 96]

What is clearly established in 1 Corinthians 7:27-28 is that it is not a sin to remarry if there were scriptural grounds for divorce. That scriptural grounds is established here in 1 Corinthians 7 by the desertion of an unbelieving mate. In most cases, the deserting, unsaved mate will have a sexual relationship with a party that is not their spouse (marry) another and loose (release) the saved victim from being bound (married) to the unsaved deserter. This act of adultery would give the saved victim an additional ground for a scriptural divorce. A rough parallel can be drawn between the divorces allowed for the desertion of unbelieving mates in the New Testament and the divorces allowed for the strange wives that Israel had taken from the pagans in their day that were documented in Ezra chapter 10. That rough parallel exists in the fact that in both cases believers were ordered and/or allowed to be divorced from their unbelieving spouses. The actions that were taken in Ezra chapter 10 prove that divorce is not always a sin because those divorces were sanctioned by God Himself.

We also want to emphasize here that if the believer deserts the unbeliever they are bound to remain unmarried, or be reconciled to, to their former spouse until their former spouse either dies, gets remarried, or sexually consummates another relationship. Brother Karl Baker has this to say concerning this matter:

“Before we leave 1 Corinthians 7, I would like to say this; in dealing with desertion, it is only the desertion of the unsaved. God doesn’t expect us to take advantage of his graces or pervert them. When two Christians have trouble and one departs, it is not verse 15, but verses 10-11 that they fall under – reconciliation”. [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 102]

Is it true that we put ourselves in an impossible position if we try to establish who is an unbeliever in line with 1 Corinthians 7:15? We have heard it stated that if we interpret the desertion of 1 Corinthians 7:15 and 1 Corinthians 7:27-28 as another grounds for divorce that we are put in the untenable position of trying to discern if an individual is a believer. It is sometimes phrased in this manner:

“If the abandonment by an unbelieving spouse is grounds for divorce, we face the unenviable responsibility of determining whether the departing spouse is redeemed. While evidence can be procured to show definitively that a spouse has been unfaithful we will have a hard time proving that any given individual is an unbeliever”.

Or, it is phrased like this:

“Further, to see “abandonment by the unbelieving spouse” as grounds for divorce puts us in the situation of trying to determine whether the departing spouse is

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born-again.”

Statements like these beg the question. If we cannot with some degree of certainty determine whether a person is saved, then why would the Holy Ghost use the phrase “if the unbelieving depart”. It has to mean that we can conclude that an individual is unsaved based upon their conduct or their words. While we cannot judge a persons heart, we are charged to base our continuing full fellowship with our families, our friends, and those around us upon whether they are believers. This charge is given to us in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 where we read:

2 Corinthians 6:14-15

¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

While we cannot judge a persons heart, we can judge their fruits. If we do not have some basis upon which to determine if a person is a believer, then we cannot have any assurance of being able to obey any commandment to separate from unbelievers. The same principle of interpretation, or hermeneutics, applies to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:15. Therefore, we can with some degree of certainty determine whether an individual is saved.

If we interpret 1 Corinthians 7 to allow divorces in case of desertion, do we believe that God changes positions from verse 11 to verse 15 and then changes His position again in verses 27- 28 and again in verse 39? The answer to that question is that we know for sure that God does not change positions, but we also know for sure that he changes persons throughout 1 Corinthians 7. What we have here is an issue of rightly dividing the Word of Truth. In verses 10 and 11, we are talking about believing spouses who desert their unbelieving spouses. When believing spouses desert unbelieving spouses, the believing spouse must remain unmarried (divorced) because believers are subject to the law. In cases where believers desert unbelievers, the believer cannot remarry until such time as the unbelieving spouse either commits adultery or remarries. In verses 12-15 the subject switches to unbelieving spouses who desert their believing spouses. When the unbelieving spouse deserts the believing spouse, the believing spouse is loosed from the bondage of the law and may divorce and remarry. In these cases the unbelieving spouses are not subject to the law, neither indeed can. In verses 27-28 the focus has switched back to a mixed group of people that includes saved, unmarried folks including the divorced and virgins that are told that if they marry they have not sinned. Verses 39-40 are dealing with saved widows.

Do we contradict the Lord Jesus Christ when we allow divorce on the ground of desertion when He said except it be for fornication? What we have in this question is a denial of the doctrine of progressive revelation as it relates to marriage, divorce, and remarriage. While the question could be dealt with dispensationally, there is no need to when it is obviously a matter of progressive revelation. While many will allow for, and even promote, the doctrine of progressive

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revelation in Bible Prophecy, Salvation, the Scriptures, and other doctrines, they deny that it can be applied to the doctrines of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. That creates a major problem for those who try to apply laws written strictly for the Jews to the Gentiles. The original biblical doctrines of marriage, divorce, and remarriage were laws that were written for the Jewish people in a society that was actively regulated and controlled by the five books of the law. The Gentiles were not subject to that law. In Matthew 5 and Matthew 19, the Lord Jesus Christ overrode and permanently changed some Old Testament Jewish laws that had been in existence for thousands of years. That was his prerogative because he is the Author and God of the law and the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ eliminated the “for every cause” divorce interpretation of the Pharisees that had probably existed since shortly after Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was written because man’s natural tendency is to pervert the law to feed his wicked flesh. The Lord Jesus Christ also eliminated the death penalty for fornication and adultery that had existed for thousands of years. Was that a matter of contradiction also? No, it was a matter of progressive revelation. Note also that the Lord Jesus Christ was dealing with nothing but Jews in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19. The gospel was to go forth to Jew and Gentile. The Lord Jesus Christ also knew that the Gospel would be going forth to the Gentile nations that had not the rule of the Jewish law. He also knew that many newly converted Christians would be deserted by their unbelieving spouses as the Gospel was sent forth to all the earth. What we have here is another case of pharisaical men finding the swords among the plowshares and vice versa and calling it a contradiction because it does not fit their doctrine. It was not some scribe or Pharisee that made the following statements:

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

¹⁰ And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: ¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

1 Corinthians 7:15

¹⁵ 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.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28

²⁷ Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. ²⁸ 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.

It was God the Holy Ghost that made those statements. Though it was not some scribe or Pharisee that made the above statements, it is always a bunch of scribes and Pharisees that will deny them. We have heard many men twist and contort the words unmarried, bondage, bound, and loosed in 1 Corinthians 7 into the most mangled verbal mess we have ever heard. They would put most propagandists to shame. It makes you wonder if English is their first language. If you have a problem interpreting the

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words bound and loosed, go and look again at Romans 7:1-4 for the contextual definition that is the same as it is in 1 Corinthians 7. The reason some have a problem with this passage is because they see an apparent contradiction with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ that is somewhat difficult to explain without the application of the Laws of Progressive Revelation and Progressive Mention. What we have in 1 Corinthians 7 is not a contradiction of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, but rather further revelation on the doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage by the Holy Ghost. It is an addition to the doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage by the Holy Ghost.

REMARRIAGE AFTER DEATH AND DIVORCE

When the scriptural conditions are given allowing for divorce and remarriage, in no case is a ceremony stated or implied. It is assumed that the marriage is made and broken by a sexual act. In the case of a broken marriage, a bill of divorcement was required. We are going to turn to some comments made by Brother Harold Sightler. We will briefly refute his comments and then move onto a deeper analysis of the whole issue of remarriage. Brother Harold Sightler said:

“In Matthew 19:8-9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18, the grounds for divorce is only “fornication”; and the remarriage of the divorced person is forbidden. And let us remember that this is the ONLY grounds upon which one may scripturally divorce”. (Page 7, Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sightler)

Luke 16:18 does not include fornication as a grounds for divorce, but fornication is included as a grounds for divorce in Matthew 19:8-9 and Mark 10:11-12. In a scriptural divorce, the permission to remarry is granted by the bill of divorcement. The topic under discussion in Matthew 19 and Mark 10 was divorce and **remarriage**. There was no question in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ that fornication was a scriptural (lawful) ground for divorce. The Lord Jesus Christ made it so himself when he said a married woman could fornicate and that it was grounds for divorce. The answer of the Lord Jesus Christ made it lawful for the innocent party to remarry when their spouse was guilty of fornication. The Lord Jesus Christ made it plain that if anyone married a person that had been put away for fornication then they themselves were guilty of adultery. Brother Harold Sightler also said:

“The question is often asked, Why cannot the innocent party remarry after divorcing according to the scripture? Look again carefully at the passage above, Matthew 19: 8-9, “Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.” This is the innocent man whose wife is put away for fornication who is forbidden to remarry. If we reread the passages from Romans 7:2-3 and I Corinthians 7:10-12 as well as the passages in Genesis which refer to the origin, purpose and sacredness of the marriage relation, we must conclude that it was never in the mind of God, nor did it occur to Jesus when He explained the matter to the Pharisees, that remarriage could be permitted”. (Pages 7-8, Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sightler)

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The innocent man is **NOT** forbidden to remarry. This interpretation by Brother Harold Sigtler is just plain wrong. The concept of remarriage did occur to the Lord Jesus Christ because he used the word “remarry” in His response to the Pharisees. When the Pharisees came to the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19, their whole fallacious argument was based upon a licentious interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The context of the question that the Pharisees asked plainly included divorce AND remarriage: twice, in fact. Read Deuteronomy 24:2-3 again and again very slowly and very carefully. The Lord Jesus Christ in his answer to the Pharisees also answered their question in the context of “putting away AND shall marry another (remarry)”. In His response to the Pharisees, not only did the Lord Jesus Christ do away with the “for every cause” divorce interpretation, but He also overrode the Old Testament death penalty required for adultery from Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:21-24. Brother Sigtler goes on to say:

“To marry the second time is wrong and sinful....It is better, beloved, to be on the safe side and not to guess at the will of God or risk disobedience”. (Page 8, Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sigtler)

The Bible nowhere says that it is wrong and sinful to marry a second time. That has to be read into the Bible through the prism of someone’s doctrinal bias. It is based upon the false ideas that both parties to a divorce are always wrong, that God does not allow divorce under any circumstances, and that God does not allow remarriage. It is better not to do anything less or do anything more than what the Scriptures require than it is to risk adding to or taking away from the Word of God by yielding to the unscriptural prejudices and fears of men. Yielding to the prejudices and fears of men is the source of much heresy and apostasy in the Church. That is why we demand a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. When we do not yield to the whole counsel of God on a particular subject, we risk disobedience, apostasy, and heresy.

Returning to the issue of fornication as it relates to the grounds for lawful divorce and remarriage we want to reemphasize that contrary to what is taught and preached in many fundamentalist and independent and denominational Baptist churches, a married person can be guilty of fornication (See our detailed discussion under fornication above). The proof of that statement is given by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:9. That also makes sex between a man and a woman who are unmarried fornication. A married person who commits adultery is guilty of both adultery and fornication. The bottom line is that both married and single people can be guilty of fornication. Fornication is any sex outside of the God ordained boundaries of marriage. That makes pornography fornication. That makes sodomy fornication. In other words, that makes sex between a man and a man and a woman and a woman fornication. What the world calls homosexuality and lesbianism, the word of God calls sodomy. The Bible does not refer to them as homosexuals, and lesbians, and gays. The Bible calls them sodomites. The necessity of dealing with sodomy as being fornication when dealing with the issue of scriptural marriage has come to the forefront in the year 2014 because many relationships between husband and wife are being destroyed by many sodomites and sodomitesses coming out of Satan’s closet and deserting their spouses. For those of you who believe that the fornication called out by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 is sex

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before marriage, or sex between couples neither of whom is married, what are you going to do when the sodomite or sodomitess who comes out of Satan's closet starts running around on their mates in a same sex abominable relationship? Are you going to require that the innocent mate remain in the relationship and endanger their lives? If they get scripturally divorced, are you going to require them to remain celibate and unmarried for the rest of their lives in violation of Matthew 19:9 and 1 Corinthians 7 verses 15, 27, and 28? Or, will you say in your self righteous, pharisaical hypocrisy that they should not have the desire to have a sexual relationship while you continue to have a normal sexual relationship with your spouse? Brother Karl Baker has well said:

“The answer the good doctors have for all this is; the innocent must stay unmarried and wait upon their spouses return or the tranquility that only death can bring! The problem is, this sounds fine if the Lord commanded such. However, that is not what the Scriptures say and I, as a minister, am not going to help support a false and erroneous method of sanctimonious spirituality”. [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 113]

In Matthew 19:12 and 1 Corinthians 7:7, celibacy is described as a proper gift of God that would not be able to be received by some. Forbidding to marry or remarry when the Scriptures allow it is described as a doctrine of devils in 1 Timothy 4. Forbidding to marry or remarry reeks of the heresy of Roman Catholic celibacy. It comes from the same Roman Catholic theological crypt as forbidding divorce under any circumstances. **THE BIBLE SAYS: IT IS BETTER TO MARRY THAN BURN! THE BIBLE SAYS: BUT AND IF THOU MARRY, THOU HAST NOT SINNED!**

Much of the argument as to whether a divorced person can remarry is based upon a false belief that divorce does not end a marriage or that divorce is never allowed under any circumstances. Therefore, so the unscriptural argument goes, since divorce is never permitted, then remarriage is out of the question. Now, let's look at Matthew 19:3-12 where it is written:

Matthew 19:3-12

3 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? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, 5 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? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 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. 9 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. 10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. 11 But he said unto them, All *men*

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cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given. 12 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*.

The whole context of Matthew 19:3-12 is lawful divorce and lawful remarriage. To use these verses to teach that a divorced person cannot remarry is twisting the whole passage out of context to promote a preconceived unscriptural doctrine that divorced people can never remarry. What we are obviously dealing with here are matters hard to be understood because most of our fundamentalist and Independent Baptist preachers, pastors, and teachers wrest these Scriptures to the destruction of their divorced brethren and make their divorced brethren unto themselves as heathen men and publicans. What the phrase “and shall marry another” does is put the whole passage in the context of divorce and remarriage. What this passage also teaches is that a married person can be guilty of fornication unlike some who teach the false doctrine that a married person cannot be guilty of fornication in the present tense. The Lord Jesus Christ himself said that a wife can commit fornication in Matthew 19:9. Adultery is an act of fornication that becomes the crime of adultery when the act of fornication is committed by a married person with a person that they are not married to. If a wife can be guilty of fornication when she commits adultery, then a husband can be guilty of fornication when he commits adultery. The complimentary passages to Matthew 19:3-12 are located in Mark 10:2-12 and in Luke 16:18.

Mark 10:2-12

2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Luke 16:18

18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery.

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1 Corinthians 7

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. 10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife. 12 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. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 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. 15 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. 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 28 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. 39 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.

According to the Lord Jesus Christ, divorce does end a marriage. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ say to the woman at the well in John 4: “thou HAST HAD five husbands and what was her sin? She was obviously having sex with a man who was not her husband because he was married to another woman! She was committing adultery and fornication and he was committing adultery and fornication. Also, the clear implication of this passage is that she has been divorced five times. Why would the Lord hold it against her that she had been married five times, if those men had simply died? The Lord Jesus Christ showed us that she was a sexually promiscuous woman, living with a man who was not her husband. Notice that he does not say that she is married to all five of those men. He says that she “hast had” (past-tense) five husbands. She is no longer married to those men. Therefore, it is inaccurate to speak of a divorced person as having multiple living spouses because of the divorces. If her previous divorces had not dissolved those previous marriages, the Lord Jesus Christ would have said that “thou hast (present tense) five husbands”. So much for those preachers, pastors, and teachers that state that a divorced man has more than one wife if he remarries. That whole theory is blown out of the water with this one passage of Scripture! Do you actually think the Lord Jesus Christ would change his wording if it was a man at the well who “hast had” five wives? Based upon what the Lord Jesus Christ said here, you cannot say that a lawfully divorced man or woman who is married now has more than one husband or wife. When a person is divorced from a spouse, that person is no longer their spouse in any sense of the word. Otherwise, the Lord Jesus Christ would have used the present tense to indicate that the five men were still her husbands.

We have already proven beyond a reasonable doubt that divorce and remarriage are allowed in the case where a spouse is guilty of the act of fornication called adultery. We have also proved that divorce permanently dissolves the marriage and that people who are scripturally divorced are allowed

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to remarry. Brother Karl Baker had this to say concerning the issue of remarriage:

“Divorce is a divine sanctioned grace in the New Testament established by our Lord himself (Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7)... Divorce therefore has to be a loosing of the marital bonds (1 Corinthians 7:15). For those who know the law (Romans 7:1), divorce also annuls the relationship and allows a divorced person, by the permissive will of God to marry another person without being an adulterer (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) just as death separates the bond in unquestionable terms (Romans 7:4-6). Therefore, divorce does the same to those who have chosen death over life in the spiritual sense (1 Timothy 5, 1 Corinthians 7:14-15, Romans 8:5-8, Ephesians 2:1-5, and 2 Corinthians 5:11-12) as much as death in the physical sense. The minister of the gospel has no right to take upon himself a self-imposed law of righteousness for the sake of preserving the church against the so-called “evil fruits” of unrighteousness because he feels if he doesn’t the life of the church will die or the church will be affected by the evil to such a degree she will never recover.” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 71]

“Dr. Ballew says: Even though the Lord permits a man to put away his wife on the basis of fornication, he does not clearly give him freedom to remarry.... Karl Baker says: Now if a man is divorced in the eyes of God (Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, is he not?); And if the woman may go and be another man’s wife lawfully (Deuteronomy 24:2-3); and if in fact she can do it twice (Deuteronomy 24:3); then do you mean to tell me the divorce did not totally and unconditionally separate the two so the man could marry again?” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 88]

“Both they that have been loosed who choose to remarry and virgins are explicitly told that the choice of marriage is ultimately a personal decision of self-determined necessity and although marriage may cause “trouble in the flesh” (verse 28), the trouble is not because of sin (verse 28), it is just more of the present distress of life (verse 26)... These so-called “well meaners” go to no ends to try to prove that under no condition does divorced mean you are “free” to marry again – no matter if Christ or Paul the apostle accepted it. Divorce does not mean, “loosed” to these “gnat strainers” whose only method of interpretations is based upon “private interpretation”.” [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 97]

Remember that remarriage is included in the Old Testament permission to divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, which the Lord Jesus Christ replaces in Matthew 19:9. In Matthew 19:9, the Lord Jesus Christ said that He prohibited divorce and remarriage, except in the case of fornication. In the phrase “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery” he joins the putting away (divorce) with the remarriage by the word

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“and”. Tying the two together is consistent with Deuteronomy 24:2-3 where remarriage was allowed after a scriptural divorce. Notice that divorce ends the marriage. In verse 2, she goes and becomes another man’s wife. Verse 4 refers to her first husband as her “former” husband. He is no longer her husband. They have no relationship, and indeed are forbidden to re-establish a relationship. Their marriage is over. In no sense does God or the law consider her and her first husband still to be married. Nor does she commit adultery against her first husband when engaging in the marriage relationship with her current husband. Otherwise, she would be stoned for adultery and would not be continuing in a second marriage (much less a second divorce as the text indicates). No, her marriage is over.

Brother Karl Baker in quoting Brother Stinnett Ballew had the following to say:

“Dr. Ballew stresses the idea that although the woman is *free* to marry, the man is evidently *not free* because in the next paragraph he says: “Even though the Lord permits a man to put away his wife on the basis of fornication, he does not clearly give him freedom to remarry”. [The Marriage & Divorce Controversy, Karl Baker, page 79]

In his book, Brother Baker goes on to rightly condemn this statement of Brother Ballew. We see no need to clearly give the divorced man the freedom to remarry because the law specifically grants him the permission to remarry with the proviso that he could not remarry the woman he had put away for uncleanness. Also, the Lord Jesus Christ specifically grants permission to divorce AND remarry in cases of fornication. Furthermore, why would the woman be explicitly given the right to remarry and the same right be denied to the man. The Pharisees’ question in Matthew 19 was focused upon the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 which allowed divorce for uncleanness. The fact that they framed their questions in terms of “for every cause” shows that adultery was not in view, but they got more than they bargained for. The Lord Jesus Christ used the whole confrontation to set aside the whole of the Pharisees’ doctrine of divorce and to reestablish God’s original intent for marriage from Genesis 2:24. The Pharisees’ question in Matthew 19 was NOT on the issue of adultery because the Pharisees knew that adultery was handled according to Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22 which required the death penalty for both parties. That was the whole point of the confrontation between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Pharisees in John 8:1-12. The woman’s adultery required the death penalty, but where was the man? This whole series of confrontations should put to rest the false doctrine that the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:1 was fornication or adultery because that whole issue was covered in Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:13-30. The penalty for the uncleanness of Deuteronomy 24:1 was divorce. The penalty for the fornication/adultery of Deuteronomy 22:13-31 was death. It is significant to note that the declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:9 abrogated, or done away with, the death penalty for fornication and adultery in marriage. The penalty would now be divorce with the innocent party being allowed to remarry. The guilty party is not allowed to remarry without committing adultery.

All **unscriptural** divorce and remarriage constitutes a sin of adultery under the following conditions: 1. A man who divorces his wife and takes a second wife commits adultery against his first

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wife if he did not divorce her for her fornication and/or adultery, or desertion. The second woman he marries also commits adultery if the husband did not scripturally divorce his first wife. The same is true for the woman also 2. A man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery if that woman’s former husband was not put away for fornication and/or adultery, or desertion.³ A woman who divorces her husband and marries another commits adultery if the woman did not put away her former husband for fornication and/or adultery, or desertion.⁴ A man who divorces his wife is guilty of causing her to commit adultery if his wife was not put away for fornication and/or adultery, or desertion. We will close out this section with a comment from Brother Harold Sigtler where he stated:

“It is a dangerous thing to lower God’s standards to accommodate man’s weakness.”
(Page 8, Divorce and Remarriage, Harold B. Sigtler)

To which we reply, that it is a dangerous thing to raise man’s standard above the word of God because you then get into the doctrines and commandments of pharisaical men whose natural tendency is to exceed the righteousness of the Scriptures resulting in the subverting of the grace of God . “For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.” (Matthew 23:4).

ARE THOSE THAT ARE REMARRIED LIVING IN PERPETUAL ADULTERY?

Consider now the interpretive snare created by the unscriptural position that divorce does not end marriage. Some churches will not let divorced people join their churches because they say they are in perpetual adultery as long as the continue to stay married after their divorces. Some churches describe it as “living in sin”. This false doctrine that states that a divorce does not permanently end a marriage is the creator of yet another unforgivable sinner and that being the “perpetual adulterer/adulteress” that can be added to the blasphemer of the Holy Ghost and the divorced man. [We are being satirical here. We do not believe that divorce and adultery are unforgivable sins] Can the “perpetual adulteress/adulterer” ever join a Bible believing New Testament church? The church is clearly commanded to separate from those who continue in sin (Matthew 18:15-17, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 1 Corinthians 5:9). A Scripture that is pertinent to the discussion before us is Galatians 5:19-21 which says:

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹ 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.

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Note that adultery is at the top of the list in Galatians 5. In verse 21, the phrase “they which do such things” means “they which continually do these things”. If we believe a remarried person commits an act of adultery every time they engage in the marriage act with their new spouse, these verses deny them salvation. That would mean that they are going to Hell. What if that remarried person was already saved? Do you actually believe they would lose their salvation? The view that a remarried couple is “living in perpetual adultery” comes from a misinterpretation of Scripture and is rooted in Roman Catholic theology which states:

“2384 Divorce is a grave offense against the natural law. It claims to break the contract, to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other till death. Divorce does injury to the covenant of salvation, of which sacramental marriage is the sign. Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery:

If a husband, separated from his wife, approaches another woman, he is an adulterer because he makes that woman commit adultery, and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress, because she has drawn another's husband to herself.” [Quoted from the 1993-1994 Roman Catholic Catechism]

The “living in perpetual adultery” argument denies that a scriptural divorce ends a marriage. Usually it misuses Romans 7:3 or 1 Corinthians 7:39 to argue that only death ends a marriage. It also misuses Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18 to the exclusion of Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:9. Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 include the exclusion clauses “saving for the cause of fornication” and “except it be for fornication”. What those two clauses establish is a scriptural ground for divorce and that ground is fornication/adultery. However, Deuteronomy 24:1-3 clearly indicates that divorce ends marriage. In John 4, Christ told the woman at the well “thou hast had five husbands,” pointedly using the past-tense to indicate that those previous marriages were divorced.

How does this individual quit committing this adultery? Do they divorce their new spouse? That would create yet another problem. Furthermore, it is never right to commit wrong to correct wrong. Remarrying an individual you have divorced after you have married a different spouse is not lawful. Deuteronomy 24:3-4 has this to say:

Deuteronomy 24:3-4

³ 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; ⁴ 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.

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So, that rules out a divorce and remarriage to the former spouse. Do they quit sleeping with their new spouse? To do so means they become guilty of yet another sin by breaking God’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 7:4-5, where married folks are told not to cease from the marriage bed except for a time of fasting and prayer, making sure to come together again. Is God now commanding them to sin? The answer to that question is obviously no. What we need to do in these situations is to apply the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:9 where he clearly states that the innocent party can remarry in cases that involve fornication and in 1 Corinthians 7:15, 27-28 where the Holy Ghost plainly states that a person that has been loosed from a marriage does not sin if they remarry. These verses state:

Matthew 19:9

⁹ 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.

1 Corinthians 7:15

¹⁵ 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.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28

²⁷ Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. ²⁸ 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.

To be loosed is to be freed from the marriage bond. The marriage bond becomes bondage when the innocent victim of a fornicating and adulterous spouse is required to remain either celibate in marriage or unmarried for life while the guilty spouse is allowed to force the innocent spouse to continue to suffer. To require the innocent victim to continue to suffer would be a violation of the spirit of Matthew 19:10-12 and 1 Timothy 4:1-3 which state:

Matthew 19:10-12

¹⁰ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. ¹¹ But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given. ¹² 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*.

1 Timothy 4:1-3

¹ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the

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faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³ Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

In Matthew 19:12 and 1 Corinthians 7:7, celibacy is described as a proper gift of God that would not be able to be received by some. Forbidding to marry or remarry when the Scriptures allow it is described as a doctrine of devils in 1 Timothy 4. Forbidding to marry or remarry reeks of the heresy of Roman Catholic celibacy. It comes from the same Roman Catholic theological crypt as forbidding divorce under any circumstances. Furthermore, for you to set up a rule that requires an innocent spouse to remain celibate, or unmarried for life, while their adulterous mate continues to fornicate is to violate the command not to defraud the marriage bed that is explicitly stated as follows in 1 Corinthians 7:

1 Corinthians 7:5

⁵ 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.

We cannot overemphasize that Matthew 19:1-12 is given in the context of **LAWFUL DIVORCE** and **REMARRIAGE**. That is what the phrase **“and shall marry another”** means. For you to state that Matthew 19:9 does not allow for remarriage, is to take away from the Scriptures.

The topic under discussion in Matthew 19 is divorce and remarriage. There was no question in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ that fornication was a scriptural (lawful) ground for divorce. The Lord Jesus Christ made it so himself when he said a married woman could fornicate and that it was grounds for divorce. The answer of the Lord Jesus Christ made it lawful for the innocent party to remarry when their spouse was guilty of fornication. The Lord Jesus Christ made it plain that if anyone married a person that had been put away for fornication then they themselves were guilty of adultery. In reading these scriptures, remember that Deuteronomy 22 and 24 give two different exceptions to the prohibition concerning divorce. In Deuteronomy 22, the exception was fornication and the penalty was death. In Deuteronomy 24, the exception was uncleanness and the penalty was divorce. We also need to remember that God (the Lord Jesus Christ) gave an exception to the prohibition against divorce in Matthew chapters 5 and 19. The exception was fornication and the penalty was divorce and **NOT** death. We also need to remember that the Biblical definition of fornication is **ANY** sex outside the God ordained boundaries of a marriage between a man and a woman. That makes adultery, premarital sex, sodomy, child molestation, pornography, etc to be fornication. We realize that in the New Testament that two different Greek words are used for fornication and adultery. We realize that in the Old Testament that two different Hebrew words are used for fornication and adultery. Both words in both Testaments refer to illicit sexual intercourse: the only difference being whether the offenders had husbands or wives. In 1 Corinthians chapter 7 it is very crucial that you look at every detail so that you will know exactly what group of individuals

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are being dealt with.

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED: SUMMARY

At the outset of this study we posed 17 different questions which we have answered during the course of this chapter. The answers to these questions form somewhat of a summary of this chapter and are given in brief here:

- (1) What is adultery? Adultery is an act of fornication that involves two people of the opposite sex not married to each other, one of whom is married. Both parties whether single or not are said to be guilty of adultery.
- (2) What is fornication? Fornication is any sexual act outside the God ordained boundaries of marriage between a man and a woman. Fornication includes adultery, harlotry, prostitution, sodomy, pornography, rape, bestiality, and child molestation.
- (3) What is the difference between fornication and adultery? Fornication is any sexual act outside the God ordained boundaries of marriage between a man and a woman whereas adultery is an act of fornication committed by a married person with someone they are not married to.
- (4) Can a married person be guilty of fornication? Yes a married person is guilty of fornication when they have sexual intercourse with someone they are not married to.
- (5) Is adultery a sexual act or a ceremonial act? Adultery is never described as a ceremonial act in the Scriptures. It is always a sexual act.
- (6) What, if any, are the scriptural grounds for divorce? There are three scriptural grounds to dissolve a marriage. These are death, fornication/adultery, and desertion.
- (7) Does unmarried mean separated, but not divorced? Unmarried means divorced. Unmarried is never referred to as a separation in the Scriptures.
- (8) Is desertion a scriptural ground for divorce? As we have proved, desertion is a scriptural ground for divorce.
- (9) Are all divorces absolutely prohibited? As we have seen they are not because God divorced Israel and God ordered the priests and the people of Israel to divorce their pagan wives in Ezra 10.
- (10) Is divorce always wrong? Not only is divorce not always wrong, it is sometimes absolutely necessary for the relief and the protection of the innocent. It is even commanded by God in certain instances.
- (11) Is divorce always a sin for all parties to the divorce? As we have seen, not every party to a divorce is guilty of the sin that led to the divorce. Many times, the innocent are made to suffer the penalty of the guilty.
- (12) Under what circumstances is a divorce scriptural? There are three scriptural grounds to dissolve a marriage. These are death, fornication/adultery, and desertion.
- (13) Is divorce an unforgivable sin? Though most divorced people in fundamentalist and Independent Baptist churches are treated as if their divorces are an unforgivable

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sin, there is but one unforgivable sin and that is the blaspheming of the Holy Ghost.

(14) If a person gets divorced can they remarry? All those that have been scripturally divorced can get remarried if they have suffered wrong through the desertion or adultery/fornication of their spouses.

(15) If a divorced person gets remarried are they in perpetual adultery? No, they are not in perpetual adultery if they get remarried. Such a preposterous concept is based upon the false doctrine that divorce does not end a marriage. This is especially true where an innocent party to a divorce has been granted a scriptural divorce. Furthermore, even the guilty party or parties in a divorce are guilty of but one act of adultery when they get remarried and that being the initial sexual consummation of the new marriage. The ceremony itself is not an act of adultery.

(16) Should a person who has been guilty of an unscriptural divorce put away (divorce) their current spouse and reunite with their former spouse? No, they cannot divorce their current spouse and remarry their former spouse because that would be yet another sin because the Scriptures ban that practice.

(17) Can you be married to someone and them not be your spouse? According to Mark 6:17-18 a man can be married to a woman and her not be his wife . These verses say:

Mark 6:17-18¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. ¹⁸ For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

What these verses indicate is that though Herod was married to Herodias through a sexual relationship, he could not scripturally be her husband because she was scripturally married to Herod's brother Philip. What we have here is a case of adultery and bigamy on the part of Herod and Herodias. The same situation existed with the woman at the well in John 4:7-30. In John 4:17-18, the reason the man the woman at the well was sleeping with was not her husband is because he was another woman's husband. Though the woman at the well had "married" this man, he could not be her husband because he already had a wife. We know this may offend some of our Christian sisters, but under the Old Testament law this man was not guilty of adultery because he was not having sex with a woman who was married to another man.

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APPENDIX I

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

CANON I – If any one saith, that matrimony is not truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of the evangelic law, (a sacrament) instituted by Christ the Lord; but that it has been invented by men in the Church; and that it does not confer grace; let him be anathema.

CANON V – If any one saith, that on account of heresy, or irksome cohabitation, or the affected absence of one of the parties, the bond of matrimony may be dissolved; let him be anathema.

CANON VII.– If any one saith, that the Church has erred, in that she hath taught, and doth teach, in accordance with the evangelical and apostolical doctrine, that the bond of matrimony cannot be dissolved on account of the adultery of one of the married parties; and that both, or even the innocent one who gave not occasion to the adultery, cannot contract another marriage, during the life-time of the other; and, that he is guilty of adultery, who, having put away the adulteress, shall take another wife, as also she, who, having put away the adulterer, shall take another husband; let him be anathema. [This statement contradicts and denies the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:7 allowing the innocent party to remarry, but is in keeping with the unscriptural doctrine of marriage pushed by many so-called fundamentalist and Baptist preachers and pastors]

CANON VIII – If any one saith, that the Church errs, in that she declares that, for many causes, a separation may take place between husband and wife, in regard of bed, or in regard of cohabitation, for a determinate or for an indeterminate period; let him be anathema.
[This denies 1 Corinthians 7:3]

CANON IX – If any one saith, that clerics constituted in sacred orders, or Regulars, who have solemnly professed chastity, are able to contract marriage, and that being contracted it is valid, notwithstanding the ecclesiastical law, or vow; and that the contrary is no thing else than to condemn marriage; and, that all who do not feel that they have the gift of chastity, even though they have made a vow thereof, may contract marriage; let him be anathema: seeing that God refuses not that gift to those who ask for it rightly, neither does He suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able. [To require anyone to remain celibate and unmarried as a condition of service in the church is a violation the literal intent and spirit of Matthew 19:12, 1 Corinthians 7:7, 1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 4:1-3, and Titus 1:6]

CANON X – If any one saith, that the marriage state is to be placed above the state of virginity, or of celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity, or in celibacy, than to be united in matrimony; let him be anathema. [This is adding to the Scriptures and contradicts Hebrews 13:4. Marriage, and not celibacy, is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and the His Church.]

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[All cited from the twenty-fourth session of the Council of Trent, November 11, 1563, the doctrine on the sacrament of matrimony] Note from the author: The sacrament of matrimony is a Roman Catholic heresy that makes marriage a part of the works that accumulate to salvation.

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1650 Today there are numerous Catholics in many countries who have recourse to civil divorce and contract new civil unions. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ - "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" The Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law.

2353 Fornication is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young

2382 The Lord Jesus insisted on the original intention of the Creator who willed that marriage be indissoluble. He abrogates the accommodations that had slipped into the old Law. Between the baptized, "a ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power or for any reason other than death."

2383 The separation of spouses while maintaining the marriage bond can be legitimate in certain cases provided for by canon law. If civil divorce remains the only possible way of ensuring certain legal rights, the care of the children, or the protection of inheritance, it can be tolerated and does not constitute a moral offense.

2384 Divorce is a grave offense against the natural law. It claims to break the contract, to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other till death. Divorce does injury to the covenant of salvation, of which sacramental marriage is the sign. Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery:

If a husband, separated from his wife, approaches another woman, he is an adulterer because he makes that woman commit adultery, and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress, because she has drawn another's husband to herself.

[All cited from the 1993-1994 Roman Catholic Catechism (the numbers preceding the text are the so-called canon numbers)]

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CHAPTER 7: WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT SEXUAL PERVERSION AND SODOMY

INTRODUCTION

Many would ask why in the world would you include a chapter on sexual perversion and sodomy in a book about marriage, divorce, remarriage, and the “husband of one wife controversy”? The answers are really quite simple. We do not use the clinical terms homosexual and lesbian to describe what the Bible calls sodomites. Many churches are being attacked because they will not perform same sex wedding ceremonies for sodomites and sodomitesses. Sodomy is destroying many Biblically based marriages with sodomites coming out of Satan’s closet to divorce their husbands and wives to form abominable same sex unions that violate the Biblical mandate for marriage being one man with one woman becoming one flesh for a lifetime. There are also denominations putting these devils in their pulpits when they will not allow a divorced man to pastor. This issue is even more difficult to face if you believe that a man who has had a divorce is permanently disqualified from the ministry. We will again address this issue in the upcoming chapter on “Standards For Church Service”, but would you permanently disqualify a man from the ministry whose wife left him and divorced him for an abominable same sex relationship with another woman?? Men have already had to face this issue. Will you cling to a doctrine that would disqualify this man from the ministry? These devils have subverted the United States Constitution by having hate crime and hate speech laws passed in the United States that choke of freedom of speech. Its wickedly desired end is to choke off all preaching against that which God calls an abomination. If allowed to come to full fruition, it will end the God ordained Biblical institution of marriage.

Many times sodomites will jump on what they falsely and wickedly perceive to be the injustice of God in requiring the death penalty for men having sex with men and women having sex with women. They only see what they want to see. God also required the death penalty for many other offenses which we will document later in our discussion. The purpose of this discussion is to state what the Bible has to say about sexual perversion and sodomy. You have read in this book and will read again in this book that sexual perversion and/or fornication is any sex outside the God ordained boundaries of sex between a male husband and a female wife. That rules out “same sex marriages”.

The research for this chapter has left us feeling much violated after having conducted much research on the homosexual/sodomite agenda for the United States of America and the rest of the world. There is a variety of filth out there that is much more wicked than we had ever imagined. The wickedness of man is great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually. Much of the reading that we have done has been revolting to the Christian conscious. The words wicked, vile, and an abomination are not adequate to describe the cesspool and sewer of depravity which mankind has slithered into with Satan. The gathering of some of the statistics for this page required that we read some very vulgar language and statistics that are not fit for Christian ears. This is not a topic to research for a Christian that is young in the faith. How it must have pained God to have to record in the pages of Scriptures the deeds of reprobate minds. The focus of this page is to present what God says about sodomy and other sexual perversions. While conducting this research this Scripture came to mind:

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Ephesians 5:11-12

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

There is much that has been done in secret to push the sodomite agenda. Much more has been done publicly recently to push the sodomite agenda. It is a shame that a Christian must talk about the wickedness of sodomy and sexual perversion. The sodomite agenda is being pushed in our apostate churches, our public schools, our medical facilities, our work force, our military, our government, and our entertainment. This is nothing new for the Roman Catholic cult. Her “celibate” priests have raped and molested young boys for at least nine-hundred years now and will continue to do so. That is a fruit of their wicked doctrine of forced celibacy. If it were possible to gather the statistics, I wonder how many sodomites would tell you that they had their first sodomite sexual experience at the hands of a Roman Catholic priest. Interpret that statement in light of the fact that the three largest studies of child molestation prove that if a child was molested by a sodomite, that fully two-thirds (66.6%) of those children would engage in homosexuality as an adult. In our society, sodomy has exacted a terrible price in disease, sickness, and violence. The statistics will both amaze and shock you. Read on. In God’s eyes, any sex outside the bounds of a scriptural marriage between a man and a woman is perverted sex. That means that incest, fornication, adultery, pedophilia, pornography, bestiality, sex change operations, and sodomy are all perversions of God’s gift of sex to married couples. God’s definition of marriage is one man and one woman tied together for one lifetime in holy matrimony. What does the Bible have to say about sodomy and/or sexual perversion?

This chapter does not deal in depth with the Scriptural doctrine of adultery and fornication. Adultery is having sex with someone other than the one you are married to. Fornication is any sex outside the bounds of a Scriptural marriage. Fornication can also be used to describe homosexual acts in the New Testament. The context will determine what is meant. An adulterer or adulteress can also be guilty of fornication. Under Old Testament law, both adultery and fornication were offenses worthy of death. Adultery and fornication are perversions of God’s gift of sex to Scripturally married couples. The subject of adultery is addressed in the Bible at least 61 different times in 54 verses. Fornication is addressed in the Bible at least 44 different times in 44 verses. Neither do we deal with what the Bible has to say about whores, whoring, harlots, and whoremongers. These particular sins are called out at least 91 different times in 88 verses. Adultery, fornication, whoredom, harlotry, and whoremongering will all send you to hell if you do not put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repent of your sin. However, what follows deals with what God has to say about a heinous form of sexual perversion known as homosexuality/sodomy.

A PRESENTATION ON WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT SEXUAL PERVERSION

Any one sin that is not covered by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ will send sinners to hell. God hates all sin, but according to the Bible, God has an especially strong hatred of sexual perversion.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT SEXUAL PERVERSION AND SODOMY

Bestiality, sodomy (homosexuality), and cross dressing (transgender dressing) are the only sexual sins that God specifically refers to as an abomination. Read Leviticus 18:22-30, Leviticus 20:13, Deuteronomy 22:5, and 1 Kings 14:24 to verify that statement. An abomination is something that is utterly detestable to God. Mankind's sins of bestiality and sodomy (homosexuality) have brought down upon mankind the most destructive judgements of God recorded in the Bible. Three of these events include the worldwide flood of Genesis 6, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and more in Genesis 19, and the destruction of 65,000 Jews in Judges chapters 19-21. The Lord Jesus Christ stated in Luke 19:27 that there was another destruction coming for the very same reasons. This passage will be discussed later on in conjunction with Genesis 6, 2 Peter 2-3, and the book of Jude. The ten tribes in the north (Israel) were always under judgement of God because of their idolatry and the abominations associated with it. God cursed those tribes because of their wickedness. They went into captivity much sooner than did Judah. Judah was also wicked, but nearly as bad as Israel was. There are three kings in the history of Judah that prove that anytime the kings broke down the idols and removed sodomy out of the land that they came under the mighty hand of God and his blessing. Because Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord great revival was experienced. throughout the land. We are convinced that this was so for the reign of Hezekiah also, but we could not find any specific references to sodomy during the period of great revival and restoration under Hezekiah.

In the King James Bible, there are at least twenty (22) separate Scriptures that deal with the sins of sodomy and/or sexual perversion including cross dressing. These Scriptures include Genesis 19, Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 18:23, Leviticus 20:13, Leviticus 20:15-16, Deuteronomy 22:5, Deuteronomy 23:17, Deuteronomy 27:21, Judges 19:22-30, 1 Kings 14:24, 1 Kings 15:12, 1 Kings 22:46, 2 Kings 23:7, Luke 17:29, Romans 1:18-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Colossians 3:5, 1 Timothy 1:10, Genesis 6, 2 Peter 2:6, and Jude 7. Leviticus chapter 18 identifies specific sexual sins including incest, adultery, human sacrifice, sodomy (homosexuality), and bestiality (humans having sex with animals). Leviticus chapter 20 establishes the punishment for sexual perversions of men and women identified in Leviticus 18. Man likes to use the terms gays, lesbians, transgenders, cross dressers, and homosexuals to describe these reprobates. God refers to all these groups as sodomites. In God's eyes, the activities of these groups are not alternative lifestyles. God calls these actions sin and those who participate in them he calls sinners. In fact, God refers to these actions as an abomination. God sent the Lord Jesus Christ to the cross to die for sinners and that includes sodomites.

Many sodomites in attempting to justify their sinful lifestyle will tell you that they were born sodomites. Many want you to think that it is a genetic disorder. Nothing could be further from the truth. Sodomy is not a genetic disorder, but it is SIN. Sodomy is as much a sin as murder, adultery, stealing, rape, drinking alcohol, assault, and etc. There is no biological link to sodomy. Many so-called scientists have tried to establish a link and have failed miserably. These scientists have put forth "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called". It is blasphemy to accuse God of allowing someone to be born a sodomite when God has called sodomy both a sin and an abomination. If men and women are born sodomites, then God has caused them to sin. That is blasphemy! Buying into the idea that homosexuality is an inborn trait, and therefore innocent and

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defensible, would be like stating that murder, stealing, assault, and drinking alcohol are caused by birth defects. That would lead to total anarchy. Homosexuality is not a civil right. It is sin just like murder and stealing. Homosexuality will send you to hell just like murder and stealing will. Would you argue that someone has the right to commit murder?

There is never any good mentioned in connection with Sodom. The word Sodom occurs 48 times in the King James Bible. Sodom is first mentioned in Genesis 10:19 in connection with its being a city of Ham's son Canaan. Remember from Genesis 9:25 that a curse had already been pronounced upon Canaan because of Ham (Canaan's father) looking upon Noah's nakedness (Genesis 9:22). Canaan must have had some part in this event for the curse to have been pronounced upon him. We know from Genesis 13:13 that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly". We also know from Genesis 18:20 that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was "very grievous" before the Lord. From Abraham's plea to God in Genesis 18:23-33, we know that there were not even ten people within the city of Sodom that were not given over to the sexual perversion of the city of Sodom. From that point on, we know that the city of Sodom was exceedingly wicked. It was so wicked that the sin associated with it became known as sodomy. Now let us read the story in Genesis 19 of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as well as Admah and Zeboim (Deuteronomy 29:23)

Genesis 19

1 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; 2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. 3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. 4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: 5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. 6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, 7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. 8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. 9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. 10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. 11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. 12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and

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whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: 13 For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. 14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. 15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. 16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. 17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. 18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: 19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: 20 Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. 21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. 22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. 23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. 26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. 27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: 28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. 29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt. 30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. 31 And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: 32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. 33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. 34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. 35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and

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lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. 36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. 37 And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. 38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

Genesis chapter 19 presents one of the most sordid events recorded in Scripture. Verses 4 through 7 describe a city that is almost totally given over to sexual perversion. The phrase “that we may know them” in verse 5 and the phrase “do not so wickedly” in verse 7 means that they wanted to know them sexually. Notice from verse 9 that the men of Sodom were going to break the door down so that they could forcefully sodomize Lot’s two guests (angels) that they referred to as men. Notice some other details in this passage:

1. Lot was willing to sacrifice at least two of his virgin daughters to the sodomites outside his door (verse 8).
2. Lot also had at least two other daughters in the city of Sodom because Lot “seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law” (verse 14).
3. Lot and his family so lingered in the city that the two angels “laid hold upon” the hands of him and his family and set them forcefully outside the city (verse 16).
4. Lot’s two virgin daughters made their father drunk and conceived two sons by their father Lot (verses 31-38). As Christians, it is hard for us to even imagine how a man could subject his family to the sexually perverted horrors of Sodom, lose more than half of his family to the horrors of sexual perversion, see the city of Sodom’s destruction because of those horrors, and still yet conceive two children by his own daughters following that destruction. The offspring of these two incestuous relationships, the Moabites and Ammonites, became a perpetual thorn in the side of God’s people. Israel was constantly at war with them.
5. The sexual perversion of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim resulted in the total destruction of everything and everybody in those cities (verses 24-25 and Deuteronomy 29:23).

The next sexual perversion that God deals with is that of bestiality. God says in Exodus 22:19:

Exodus 22:19

Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death.

Bestiality is men and women having sex with animals. That is what the phrase “Whosoever lieth with a beast means”. The penalty for this sin was death.

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In Leviticus 18 God establishes laws for governing sexual relations. Leviticus 20 establishes God's penalties for violation of his laws governing sexual relations. The Bible uses the term "uncovering nakedness" to refer to having sexual relations. In the Bible, seeing someone's nakedness means to violate a person's privacy (Some would disagree with that statement). Hence, to look upon someone's nakedness is not having sexual relations with them. Therefore, the sin of Ham in Genesis 9:22 did not involve sexual relations with his father Noah. However, it was a sin to look upon Noah's nakedness. Looking upon someone's nakedness was a sin that could lead to actual sexual relations and/or unclean thoughts. Pornography is looking upon someone's nakedness. Another problem with Ham is that he broadcast what he had seen. Another question that arises is why was Ham in his father's tent to start with? Some would disagree here and say that Canaan's and Ham's sin was that of sodomy. It may be that this is a very strong statement as to why God expects men and women to keep their nakedness covered. Here, it resulted in a curse. From the scriptures that follow we will also see that witchcraft, sorcery, and wizardry were associated with sexual perversion and the worship of pagan gods. Now let us look at Leviticus chapters 18 and 20.

Leviticus 18:6-30

6 None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD. 7 The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 8 The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. 9 The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. 10 The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness. 11 The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 12 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman. 13 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. 14 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt. 15 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 16 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness. 17 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness. 18 Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time. 19 Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness. 20 Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. 21 And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD. 22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind:

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it is abomination. 23 Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. 24 Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: 25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. 26 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: 27 (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) 28 That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. 29 For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. 30 Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 20:1-21, 27

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. 4 And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not: 5 Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people. 6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. 7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. 8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you. 9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him. 10 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. 11 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. 12 And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them. 13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there

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be no wickedness among you. 15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. 16 And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 17 And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; it is a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity. 18 And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness; he hath discovered her fountain, and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people. 19 And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, nor of thy father's sister: for he uncovereth his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity. 20 And if a man shall lie with his uncle's wife, he hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness: they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. 21 And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.

Leviticus 20:27

27 A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

A study of Leviticus 18 (the rule) and Leviticus 20 (the penalty) reveals the following about God's rules for human sexual conduct:

1. God forbids sex between a father and daughter or a son and mother. The penalty was death (Leviticus 18:7, Leviticus 20:11).
2. God forbids sex between a son and a father's wife. The penalty was death. (Leviticus 18:7, Leviticus 20:11).
3. God forbids sex between brothers and sisters. He shall be cut off (cast out) in the sight of his people (Leviticus 18:9, 11; Leviticus 20:17).
4. God forbids sex between a grandfather and his granddaughters (Leviticus 18:10).
5. God forbids men to have sex with their aunts or their aunts-in-law. The penalty was dying childless (Leviticus 18:12-14, Leviticus 20:19).
6. God forbids sex between a father-in-law and a daughter-in-law. The penalty was death (Leviticus 18:15, Leviticus 20:12).
7. God forbids sex with a man's sister-in-law except in the role as kinsman redeemer. The penalty was that they were to be childless (Leviticus 18:16, Leviticus 20:21, Deuteronomy 25:5).
8. God forbids sex between a man and the daughter of that man's wife or the wife's granddaughters. This would be the case if a man married a woman who already had children. In such a case the man, his wife, and the daughter were

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to be put to death. This obviously applied if all three were willing participants. (Leviticus 18:17, Leviticus 20:14).

9. God forbids sex between a man and his wife’s sister while the wife is still alive (Leviticus 18:18).
10. God forbids sex during a woman’s menstrual cycle. Both were cut off from among the people (Leviticus 18:19, Leviticus 20:18).
11. God forbids sex between married and unmarried people (adultery). The penalty for both was death (Leviticus 18:20, Leviticus 20:10).
12. God forbids sex for the purpose of sacrificing the seed (the infant) to Moloch (an idol). The penalty was death (Leviticus 18:21, Leviticus 20:1-5).
13. God forbids sex between a man and a man or sex between a woman and a woman. The penalty was death for both (Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13)
14. God forbids mankind having sex with animals. The penalty was death for both the animal and the person (Leviticus 18:23, Leviticus 20:15-16, Exodus 22:19).
15. Communication with familiar spirits and the practice of witchcraft, sorcery, and wizardry were used in combination with sexual perversion and promiscuity in the worship of pagan gods. The vilest part of this debauchery was sodomy. By definition communication with a false god was communicating with familiar spirits. The penalty for this sin was death. (Leviticus 20:6, Leviticus 20:7, Deuteronomy 18:9-12)

Many times sodomites will jump on what they falsely and wickedly perceive to be the injustice of God in requiring the death penalty for men having sex with men and women having sex with women. They only see what they want to see. See again the discussion just completed. God also required the death penalty for the following offenses: touching mount Sinai (Exodus 19:12); murder (Genesis 9:5-6; Leviticus 24:17, 21; Numbers 35:16, 17-18, 21, 30-31); smiting or cursing one’s mother or father (Exodus 21:15, 17; Leviticus 20:9); stealing and selling a man (Exodus 21:16, Deuteronomy 24:7); having sex with animals (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:15-16); working during or defiling the Sabbath (Exodus 31:14-15, Numbers 15:35); strangers coming nigh the tabernacle (Numbers 1:51, Numbers 3:10, Numbers 3:38, Numbers 18:7); false prophesying (Deuteronomy 13:5, Deuteronomy 18:20); practicing idolatry (Leviticus 20:2, Deuteronomy 17:1-7); adultery (Leviticus 20:10); practicing witchcraft and dealing with familiar spirits and wizards (Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 20:27); rebellion against the priest and the judge (Deuteronomy 17:12); rape (Deuteronomy 22:25); blaspheming the name of the Lord and cursing (Leviticus 24:14-16, 23); a son rebelling against his mother and father (Deuteronomy 21:18-21); fornication, or, sex outside marriage (Deuteronomy 22:21); and finally a man having voluntary sex with a virgin that is engaged to another man (Deuteronomy 22:23) All this proves that the wages, or the penalty, for sin is death (Romans 6:23). If you want deliverance from the wages of sin turn from your sin (repent) and put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ .

Many times the infant children of those who were involved in the sexual perversion that

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occurred in the worship of pagan gods were sacrificed unto those pagan gods. These infants were burnt to death. Many times the end of sexual perversion is inflicting pain upon others and self. It is a product of a mind that is totally given over to Satan. It is also a perfect picture of the depravity of man.

The next sexual issue that God deals with is the abomination of cross dressing. God says in Deuteronomy 22:5:

Deuteronomy 22:5

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

One of the marks of a sodomite is a man that will dress like a woman and a woman that will dress like a man. This is a Biblical standard that Satan has been tearing down for decades in the television and movie cesspools and the sodomite dominated fashion design industry. It started in the television industry by dressing men up as women and then poking fun at them and laughing about it. We will guarantee you that God is not amused by it. He calls it an abomination. Sodomy and cross dressing are an abomination unto God. God does not want his children to dress in a manner that does not clearly identify them as either male or female. God does not want the world to mistake his children for sodomites.

In the very next chapter of Deuteronomy God deals again with the issue of sodomy. He says:

Deuteronomy 23:17

17 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

For those of you who do not have a 1611 King James Bible that has kept the marginal notes and cross references you will not be able to verify this statement. The 1611 King James Bible and most center column reference editions of Cambridge King James Bibles have the original King James translators' marginal notes and cross references in them. The marginal note on the word "whore" in verse 17 is "sodomites". In other words the whore that is the subject of Deuteronomy 23:17, is a female sodomite that prostitutes herself to other females.

God again deals with sexual perversion in Deuteronomy 27 where we read:

Deuteronomy 27:20-23

20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. 21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. 22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. 23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen.

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These verses in Deuteronomy 27 again deal with incest (verses 20 and 22), bestiality (verse 21), and adultery (verse 23). God pronounced a curse upon all those that took part in these abominations.

The events in Judges 19 stand right up next to the events in Genesis 19 as events that will live in Biblical infamy. Both of these events brought a very painful judgement upon those involved in them that would have to be classified with the greatest man caused tragedies in world history. Both of these were driven by God’s judgement on sodomy. Let us take a look at Judges chapter 19:

Judges 19:22-30

22 Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. 23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. 24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. 25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. 26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man’s house where her lord was, till it was light. 27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold. 28 And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. 29 And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. 30 And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.

Once again we see those fateful expressions “that we may know him” and “do not so wickedly” (See again Genesis 19:5-6). These sodomite men were not interested in the women. They wanted to have sex with the man. Once again we have a man offering up two innocent women to appease the violent sodomites at the door (See again Genesis 19:8). The sodomites were given the visitor’s concubine and they sexually abused her to death. We are not quite sure why the Levite cut his dead concubine up into twelve pieces, but we know that it was a vile act in itself. We know from Judges 19:30 that this was a unique event in the history of Israel since the Exodus from Egypt. The events in Judges chapter 19 became so well known that there was a proverb in Israel that stated:”as in the days of Gibeah”. It was quoted in Hosea 9:9 and 10:9. This one horrific incident of sodomy was the straw that broke the camel’s back. It resulted in judgement that brought civil war in Israel because the tribe

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of Benjamin refused to surrender the sodomites who were responsible for the death of the concubine (Judges 20:12-15). The carnage that resulted caused 40,000 deaths in Israel (Judges 20:21, 25) and 25,000 deaths in the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 20:46). This amounted to 94% of the men in the tribe of Benjamin and 10% of the men in the tribes of Israel. This amounts to 65,000 deaths not including those in Jabeshgilead. The root cause of this whole incident was sodomy.

First Kings 14 is the first place in the recorded history of the kings of Israel where God dealt with a national issue of sodomy. Do you remember all the way back to the sordid events at the end of Genesis 19 where Lot conceived sons of his own daughters following the destruction of Sodom? Some of the fruit of that wickedness shows up here. Notice that Rehoboam's mother was an Ammonitess.

1 Kings 14:21-26

21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. 22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. 23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree. 24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 25 And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: 26 And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

Because of the idolatry and the sodomy connected to it, God brought judgement upon the nation of Judah. King Shishak of Egypt invaded Judah and sacked Jerusalem and took away all the gold and treasures from both the king's house and the house of the Lord (verses 25-26).

The next three incidents dealing with sodomy in the nation of Judah take on somewhat of a positive note in that they show that God rewards obedience to his commandments to remove sodomy out of the land. These were some of the best times in the history of the nation of Judah. They involve the good kings Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah. The total of their reigns covers 97 years. I Kings 15:12 makes this statement:

1 Kings 15:12

12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

This was a statement about King Asa. There was a period of peace for the first ten years of the reign of Asa followed by a great military victory over Zerah the Ethiopian. This was one of greatest

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military campaigns in the history of the world. Asa’s army was outnumbered by almost 2 to 1 and God gave him one of the greatest military victories in the history of the world. Zerah’s army that came against Asa was one-million strong (2 Chronicles 14:9). Asa’s army numbered 580,000 (2 Chronicles 14:8). Asa was a king of Judah. Asa reigned for 41 years. The following Scriptures cover the reign of Asa: 1 Kings 15, 1 Kings 16, 2 Chronicles 14, 2 Chronicles 15, 2 Chronicles 16.

The following statement was made about Jehoshaphat, king of Judah:

1 Kings 22:46

46 And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

We know from verse 46 above that Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa (See also 1 Kings 15:24). Jehoshaphat reigned 25 years. According to 1 Kings 22:43, 2 Chronicles 17:3-4, and 2 Chronicles 20:32, Jehoshaphat was a Godly king that did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. Another significant statement was that in 1 Kings 22:46 where it is stated that he took the sodomites out of the land. He also sent priests, Levites, and teachers throughout Judah teaching and proclaiming the word of God. According to 2 Chronicles 17:14-18, he fielded an army of 1,160,000 men. That was a huge army for its day. God put Jehoshaphat above most of the of the rest of the kings of Israel and Judah. He ranked among the top six of the greatest kings in Israel and Judah. This group included David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Asa (his father), Jehoshaphat, and Josiah. All this happened because he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and took away the sodomites out of the land. To read the rest of the story of Jehoshaphat’s reign read 1 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 17, 2 Chronicles 18, 2 Chronicles 19, and 2 Chronicles 20.

The following statement was made about Josiah, king of Judah:

2 Kings 23:7

7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

Josiah reigned for 31 years in Judah. Perhaps the greatest short term revival in the history of Israel and Judah took place during the reign of Josiah. We know from the Scriptures that the single greatest Passover in the history of Israel and Judah took place during the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 23:22). Josiah tore down the houses of the sodomites, put the workers with familiar spirits and wizards out of the land, and destroyed the images, idols, and abominations that were found in Judah. Josiah also purged and rebuilt the house of the Lord. It is significant that this great revival only took place after he dealt with the idolatry in the land and tore down the houses of the sodomites that were right next door to the house of the Lord. Another amazing thing in the events surrounding the reign of Josiah is that the prophecy given 369 years before in 1 Kings 13:1-2 was fulfilled to the letter in 2 Kings 23:17-18.

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This is the last mention of the sodomites specifically in the Old Testament though their actions were dealt with many times in the prophets and in the books of the kings (Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles) when speaking of the abominations of the heathen.

The clearest statement against homosexuality and/or sodomy in the New Testament is from Romans chapter 1. It is very clear in the text that homosexuality and sodomy end in being turned over to a reprobate mind.

Romans 1:18-32

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

In this passage from Romans chapter 1 God is very specific in his condemnation of unnatural sexual acts (sodomy). From the progression in Romans 1, you can see that men and women fall into these unnatural sexual acts because they have rejected God (verses 18-22). Notice in verse 21 that their hearts became darkened. After their hearts were darkened, they became fools and started worshiping themselves (corruptible man). In verse 24, the progression into sodomy is completed when they dishonor their own bodies between themselves. In verse 25, they started worshiping and serving their

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unnatural sexual desires until God gives them up to their vile affections (sodomy) in verse 26. Again in verse 26, the women are shown to be having sexual relationships with other women. Men are shown to be having sexual relationships with men in verse 27. Note that it was a four stage progression into the sodomite lifestyle:

1. The men left or rejected God;
2. The men left the natural use of the woman;
3. Men burned in their lust for other men;
4. Men were lying with men sexually.

Note that the word natural is used 3 different times in this passage and the word nature is used once. It is not natural that men would have sex with men and women would have sex with women. God himself said in verse 26 that same sex relationships are AGAINST nature. Verse 27 also says that God is just in turning them over to a reprobate mind in verse 28. It says that they receive recompense of their error which is meet. That word meet means proper and right. In verse 28, the phrase “to do those things that are not convenient” also refers to unnatural acts of sex.

What does the term reprobate mind mean? A short definition would be that it is a seared conscious that is unable to respond to God. Paul uses the term reprobate several times. It is once again associated with the term without natural affection in 1 Timothy 3:1-9. In Titus 1:15-16, the term reprobate is associated with an abomination and a defiled (seared) mind and conscience. When a man or a woman gets turned over to a reprobate mind they cannot be saved because they have rejected God. Because they have rejected God, God has rejected them. The term reprobate is used in Jeremiah 6:30 in relation to those that God has rejected. Notice that when an individual gets turned over to a reprobate mind that the progression into sin gets deeper and deeper (verses 29-31). The word implacable in verse 31 means that an individual that has been turned over to a reprobate mind cannot be persuaded that what they are doing is wrong. The dictionary definition of implacable is “incapable of being appeased or changed”. In a sense, it summarizes a reprobate mind. We see in verse 31 that the sodomites are without natural affection and unmerciful. That is why Christians and Jews have suffered many “hate crimes” at the hands of sodomites. Many of the Nazis were sodomites. As a group, the sodomites are the most violent people in the world. It is because they are unmerciful and without natural affection. Romans 1:32 shows that the end of the sodomite lifestyle is the judgement of God and death.

Paul once again deals with sexual perversion in 1 Corinthians 6:9 where he says:

1 Corinthians 6:9

9 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,

I want to remind you again that the Bible looks upon any sex outside of a marriage between one man

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and one woman as being a perversion of God's gift of sex. In verse 9 above, four sexual sins are identified. Two of these sins, men being effeminate and men being abusers of themselves with other men, are talking about homosexuality (sodomy).

Colossians 3:5-6 says:

Colossians 3:5-6

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

Inordinate affection is defined as depraved and vile passion. It is once again a reference to sexual perversion. Inordinate affection is identified as one of those sins that bring the judgement of God on those who are guilty of them.

1 Timothy 1:9-10 says:

1 Timothy 1:9-10

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.

Condemnation of acts of sexual perversion are a constant theme of the Holy Ghost inspired writings of the Apostle Paul. Here in one of the final books that he wrote he once again condemns those that defile themselves with mankind.

The first mention of sodomy in the New Testament comes from the lips of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In Luke 17, the Lord Jesus Christ makes a connection between the way it will be when he returns and the way it was in the days of Noah (Genesis 6) and the days of Lot (Genesis 19). The most significant statement in Scripture concerning sodomy and its connection to destruction is made by the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke where we see:

Luke 17:26-29

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

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In this Scripture, the Lord Jesus Christ connects the destruction of the world by the flood with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because it was totally given over to sodomy. Reread Genesis 19. We know from the comparison made by the Lord Jesus Christ that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for the same reasons that the world was destroyed by water in Genesis 6 and 7. Sodomy was the cause of both events of destruction. From Genesis chapter 6 we read:

Genesis 6:5, 11-12

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

How do we corrupt the flesh? We do it by having perverted sex outside the Scriptural bounds of marriage between one man and one woman. The Lord Jesus Christ said that when he returned it would be as it were in the days of Noah and Lot. In other words, the world we be totally consumed with perverted sex and sodomy. The day of his return must be close since sexual perversion is an indicator of it.

Both Peter and Jude made the same connection with sodomy and the coming judgement and destruction. Both mentioned the destruction of the flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Both 2 Peter and Jude are written in the context of rebuke to an unbelieving and apostate church. These two books are very clear that not only will the end times church be apostate, but that it will be consumed with unrestrained sexual activity and sexual perversion.

2 Peter 2:4-8

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

2 Peter 3:3-6

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and

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the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

Jude 4-8, 14-19

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. 5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. 8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. 16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. 17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Both Jude and Peter were dealing with, and prophesying of, the apostasy, heresy, mockers and scoffers, and the sexual perversion in the end times church. According to Jude, the end times church will be full of unbelieving, sodomite, church members. Jude describes these church members as filthy dreamers that defile the flesh (verse 8). After referring to the sodomites of the flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jude said: "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (verse 19). Today we have denominations that were specifically organized for sodomites. The Metropolitan Community Church is one such denomination. We have denominations such as the Roman Catholics, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, and some Baptist Churches that are ordaining male and female sodomites to the ministry. Most of these are also performing same sex marriages where the partners and the church enter into a marriage covenant with the Devil for the destruction of their souls. Any church that would conduct a same sex marriage ceremony is a part of the Bride of Satan. She is described in Revelation 17. The building in which any same sex marriage ceremony takes place is the Synagogue of Satan.

The reason for the destruction of the flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah were

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unbelief, mockery, and sexual perversion. The reason for destruction of the world in our age will be unbelief, mockery, mistreatment of Israel, persecution of the Lord’s true church, and sexual perversion. The toleration of sodomy has always been associated with abominable pagan religions. Where sodomy and child molestation exists, there is false religion present. Anytime a child is molested the offender should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Where it can be proved beyond a shadow of a doubt, if it involves the rape or sodomy of a child, the offending party should be executed. I do not care if it is an apostate Baptist such as Bob Grey or a child molesting, sodomite Roman Catholic priest or nun. With the death penalty, there are no repeat offenders with more dead children left behind to be buried.

The Bible ends the book of Revelation with several passages that deal with the judgement of all sin including sexual perversion and sodomy. Revelation 21:8, Revelation 21:27, Revelation 22:11, and Revelation 22:15 deal specifically with those that are excluded from heaven. If you are excluded from heaven you are included in hell.

Revelation 21:8

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Revelation 21:27

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Revelation 22:11

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Revelation 22:15

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

And so the Bible concludes in these four verses in Revelation with yet another warning to those who would involve themselves with sexual perversion. The closing chapters of our Bible are clear. If you are in a life of sexual perversion, you will either repent or burn for an eternity in the Lake Of Fire.

CHAPTER 8: STANDARDS FOR CHURCH SERVICE

WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

At a minimum, this chapter deals with and attempts to answer the following questions and more:

- (1) Do you believe that a bishop or deacon should be filled with the Holy Ghost?
- (2) Do you believe in a literal interpretation of the Scriptures?
- (3) Do you believe that the so-called qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 also apply to men who seek to be teachers, missionaries, evangelists, church treasurers, missions program directors, and so forth?
- (4) Do you believe that if a man gets a divorce after he is saved, that he is permanently disqualified from any position of leadership in the church including bishop and deacon?
- (5) Do you believe that a man who was divorced “before” he was saved is qualified for positions of church leadership including bishop and deacon?
- (6) Do you believe the timing of a man’s salvation has any effect on whether he is qualified for the offices of bishop or deacon?
- (7) Do you believe that a man disqualifies himself from the offices of elder, bishop, and deacon if he marries a divorced woman?
- (8) Do you believe that divorce ends a marriage in the eyes of God so that a former spouse is no longer scripturally a spouse in any sense of the word?
- (9) Was polygamy a potential problem in the early New Testament church era?
- (10) Is the context of the conflict in 1 Timothy and Titus Jewish or Gentile in nature? How does this context affect the doctrinal and historical interpretation of these passages?
- (11) Do you believe you have the discernment to determine whether anyone is/was saved at a particular point in time?
- (12) Would you leave a never divorced man in a bishop’s or deacon’s office when by his conduct he reveals that he is not filled with the Holy Ghost?
- (13) Do you believe that an adulterous or fornicating pastor or deacon should be allowed to remain in the ministry?
- (14) Would you kick a man out of the ministry whose sodomite wife left him for an abominable same sex relationship?
- (15) Do you believe that the so-called qualifications for church office are absolute standards or are they intended to be a general standard by which the overall present character and conduct of a man may be judged to determine his suitability to serve in the offices of bishop and deacon?
- (16) Was Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ qualified to pastor churches?
- (17) How should and how does Paul’s marital status affect the interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:2?
- (18) Is a divorced and remarried man disqualified from being the pastor of his

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home?

We have included an appendix to this chapter that deals with the interpretation of the phrase “husband of one wife” by numerous commentaries and by many preachers of the distant past and some more recent. If you do not read the comments in that appendix, you will lose some of the benefit you would otherwise have experienced. Many of the comments are very enlightening. In some cases, we give the comment and then add some of our own comments to it. Our comments will be preceded by the statement: **Note from this author**. We wished we had access to more free commentaries so we could further research this topic.

WHAT THEY BELIEVE AND PRACTICE

The very first question that should be answered when dealing with those who might be qualified to hold the offices of bishop and deacon is: “Do you believe that a bishop or deacon should be filled with the Holy Ghost?”. While many will quickly say that they believe that a bishop or deacon should be filled with the Holy Ghost, they make no real effort to hold those in those positions accountable for their unholy conduct much less hold them to the general standards for bishops and deacons from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Acts 6:1-7 says:

Acts 6:1-7

¹ And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. ² Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. ³ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. ⁴ But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. ⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: ⁶ Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. ⁷ And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The laying on of hands was an Old Testament principle that carried over into both the appointing of members to the Jewish Sanhedrin and into the New Testament Church (Numbers 8:10, Numbers 27:18-23, Deuteronomy 34:9, Acts 13:1-3, 1 Timothy 4:14, Hebrews 6:2). The Bible says to lay hands on no man suddenly. That is what the modern apostate church is so guilty of. That is why we have so many wicked men in our pulpits in America. In Acts 6, we have the first seven deacons called by the church. The only “qualifications” given to the church was that these men had to be: (1) of honest report; (2) full of the Holy Ghost; (3) and full of wisdom. These three requirements alone

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would disqualify most men that occupy American pulpits. Gone would be most of those who hold positions of leadership by virtue of their educational, economic, and social status. The most important of these three would be that of being full of the Holy Ghost. Most men who hold the positions of bishop and deacon in American churches are not full of the Holy Ghost because they are lost, hell bound sinners. They are not even qualified to be members of Bible believing churches much less to be bishops and deacons. The proof of that is in the filthy, Satanic effluent that comes spewing forth from their mouths as they step behind their pulpits and lecterns. That is also true of many fundamentalist and Independent Baptist churches. If we used Acts 6 as our first stop when examining men for church office, we would not even have to go to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Even if we could get to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 there is a wide range of misinterpretation in fundamentalist and Baptist congregations.

Many Baptist pastors will not allow divorced men to preach in their pulpits. Many Baptist pastors and evangelists will not preach in a pastor's pulpit if that pastor allows divorced men to preach in his pulpit. Many Baptist pastors will break fellowship with and ostracize a man who will allow a divorced man into his pulpit. Some Baptist pastors, preachers, and evangelists do not believe that a divorced man can be anointed of the Holy Ghost in the pulpit. Some Baptist preachers and evangelists will break fellowship with a pastor who will not break fellowship with a pastor who allows divorced man to preach in his pulpit. Now, if that sounds confusing, it ought to. I guarantee you that God is not in it because God is not the author of confusion. Many Baptist pastors, evangelists, and preachers will take a pastor who allows a divorced man to preach in their pulpits to the Peter Ruckman Whipping Post as if he is the standard of judging the standards for the ministry. Some Baptist churches will allow divorced men to hold church offices and preach and teach provided their divorce took place before their salvation. Other Baptist churches will allow a divorced man to hold any office including pastor in their church and to preach and teach provided he maintains Biblical standards of holiness in his life. So you can see there is a wide variety of belief and practice in Baptist churches. Regardless of what you believe and practice, some of these beliefs and practices have to be scriptural and some of them have to be unscriptural. Some of these folks have to be scripturally wrong. They are wrong either in interpretation and/or application. If you exceed the standards of the scriptures in application, then you are guilty of setting yourself up as a self-righteous judge. If your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scriptures, then you are guilty of being a self righteous Pharisee. Many men parrot the positions of their pastor, or their favorite evangelist, or their favorite seminary/institute professor without having studied the scriptures and determined for themselves the whole counsel of God on the matter. Rather than being a workman that rightly divideth the word of truth, they are a lazy, mocking parrot. As a reminder to the parrots, it is not what thus saith the man, but instead what **THUS SAITH THE LORD**. Many men hold positions on the matter under discussion that are obviously contradictory to the clear teaching of the scriptures and the Spirit of the Holy Ghost of God. Regardless of motivation, to go beyond the clear teaching and standards of the scriptures is doctrinal error also. When we set the bar higher than the scriptures, we are putting ourselves in the role of the Holy Ghost of God. We have made that scripture which God never intended to be scripture. In other words, we have added our personal standards to the scriptures: our own private interpretation. Put bluntly, we have put man's words into God's mouth. We call that adding to the Scriptures!

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Do you believe that the so-called qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 also apply to men who seek to be teachers, missionaries, evangelists, church treasurers, missions program directors, and so forth? There are some Baptist churches that believe that the qualifications for bishop (pastor) and deacon also apply equally to preachers, evangelists, missionaries, teachers, song/music leaders, musicians, choir members, etc. That is not scriptural. There are but three New Testament church offices. Those are elders, bishops, and deacons. Preacher is not a New Testament church office. Evangelist is not a New Testament church office. Teacher is not a New Testament church office. Missionary is not a New Testament church office. Song leader is not a New Testament church office and so forth. For anyone to attempt to apply the standards for bishops and deacons to anyone other than bishops and deacons is to ADD to the Scriptures. It is nothing more than a self-righteous standard that exceeds the righteousness of the Scriptures. That makes it a manmade doctrine. Concerning the subject of this paragraph Ralph Woodrow had the following to say:

“A preacher who was ready to ‘clean house’, as he put it, declared that no person in his church who had a previous marriage could sing in the choir, hold any position in the church, or even serve as an usher! “I don’t believe in second marriages!” he said. A close friend of his (who had divorced and remarried) said to him in private, “I know you have only married once, but did you ever have a sexual relationship with another woman?” (Being close friends, neither considered this conversation too personal.) With some hesitation the pastor admitted there had been some involvement with...two women...long before he was married to his wife. “Well,” replied the other man, “you have been married to THREE women and never even divorced the first TWO. I have been married only TWICE, but I got a divorce!...Woodrow continues:

Some months ago I heard a man give his testimony about how God saved him from a very wicked life. Though raised in church, he had rebelled at an early age, became involved with gangs, got into drugs, cursed God, chased women, living with one then another, though he never legally married. Then he got saved, went to Bible School where he married a Christian girl, and is now an ordained minister. We can all rejoice in what God has done for him. But there is a serious INCONSISTENCY here. The denomination which ordained him does not allow divorce and remarriage (in the ministry or in deacons). Had he married even ONE of these women he lived with, any marriage after that would not be ‘first’ marriage and ordination would have been refused!

The inconsistency of this double standard says, in effect, “Don’t get married – just live with different ones. God will forgive this, and if you do finally get married it will be a first marriage. But if you marry and it doesn’t work out, you can never get married again...and certainly never be a deacon or minister!” [Divorce And Remarriage, pages 83-84 Ralph Woodrow, 1991]

Stanley A. Ellisen said this about the subject before us:

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“How far should these restrictions be carried? If they cannot be deacon or pastor, can they serve as usher? Collect offering? Or would that be too close to the duties of a deacon? Would they be allowed to pray or read Scripture from the pulpit, or give their testimony from the pulpit? Would that be too close to ‘preaching’? To press it further, would the divorced person be allowed to sing in the choir or sing a solo? Or would such a performance border too closely to the concept of ministry? I have not heard of any such church who restricts divorced folks from being deacons or pastors from contributing to the offering plate, however.” [Divorce and Remarriage, Stanley A. Ellisen, page 83]

Some Baptist churches take this hypocrisy a step further when they will even go so far as to prohibit divorced man from testifying of his salvation in church services. What does this do for the command of the LORD to “let the redeemed of the LORD says so”? There are even some Baptist churches that will not allow a divorced man or woman to be a member of THEIR church. We are also aware that some Baptist churches do not allow women to teach anyone at all. That does not line up with Titus 2:3-4 which states:

Titus 2:3-4

³ The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; ⁴ That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

We have also heard many preachers and pastors attempt to **selectively** apply the rules that applied to the Old Testament priesthood to men in the ministry in the New Testament. It will not work and we will explain. If you are going to apply some of them, you will have to apply all of them to New Testament bishops and deacons. Here are those requirements from Leviticus chapter 21:

(1) The priests could not shave their heads or their beards. (There goes most of the pastors and preachers from American pulpits). There goes those of you who preach against beards. For those of you who preach against beards, you must have been among those who plucked out the beard of the Lord Jesus Christ before the crucifixion. (2) The priests could not have tattoos. (There goes many military men and drunks who visited tattoo parlors before they got saved) (3) The priests had to marry a virgin. (How about you preacher man? Did you marry a virgin?). Or, how many women’s virginity did you steal before you had a ceremony? (4) The priest’s wife could not have been a whore (How many different women have you engaged in sex with?) Did you have sex with your wife before you had a ceremony. You guessed it. You made her a whore when you done that. (5) The priests’s wife could not be profane; in other words unsaved. (How about you preacher man? Was your wife saved when you got married, or did she make a profession after you were married?). (6) The priests could not take divorced women for wives (more on this one later). (7) The priests could not have any physical defect such as being blind, lame, brokenfooted, brokenhanded, a eunuch, having a flat nose, a crooked back, or being a midget. Physical defects would disqualify many men from the ministry today. (8) We have bad news for every preacher and pastor who believes that New Testament bishops and deacons must meet the requirements for Old Testament priests. You have all missed the boat

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because you are not of the lineage of Aaron. Rats! Why didn't we read that one first! Verse 1 in Leviticus 21 says this:

Leviticus 21:1

¹ 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:

From the list above, the one that states that the priest cannot marry a divorced woman is the one that is most frequently regurgitated and unscripturally applied to the “qualifications” for potential bishops, elders and deacons in the New Testament. The one that most “once married” peacocks dare not bring up is the requirement that the priest had to marry a woman who was not a whore. The reason they dare not bring it up is that most of them have made their wives a whore when they stole their virginity before their redundant, hypocritical marriage ceremonies. Then there is also those promiscuous fornicators that bedded down every whore under the sun before their redundant, hypocritical marriage ceremonies. They are the Don Juans of our pulpits that brag about all their “pre-marital” affairs before they got saved. And, these are the men we set aside divorced pastors and preachers for!?? Many of these virgin stealers and Don Juans are also the ones that cannot wait to open up the wounds of a divorced man and pour salt in them while their conduct makes a divorced man a saint by comparison. While we agree that the conduct of bishop's, elder's, deacon's wives should be above reproach, you cannot disqualify a man from the ministry because his wife has had a divorce. If you do that, you would again be guilty of reading divorce into a passage that neither directly states or insinuates that a [wife's] divorce disqualifies a man from the ministry. If you look real close, you will see that the potential bishop's wife's conduct is not even mentioned in 1 Timothy 3 whereas the deacon's wife's conduct is mentioned in verse 11. Looking at Titus chapter 1, we see that deacons are not even mentioned. However, we do see the standards for elders and bishops mentioned without the conduct of their wives even being brought up.

In the chapter before us, it will become clear to our readers why we spent so much time and effort in the chapter on “Marriage” in emphasizing the fact that God considers a sexual relationship to be a marriage. We are about to embark on one of the most controversial subjects in so-called fundamental Bible believing churches. It is a controversy that walks hand in hand with the controversy concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Those have also been the subject of three previous chapters in this book. The controversy of this chapter swirls around the interpretation and application of 1 Timothy 3:2. While many refer to the lists in 1 Timothy 3 as “qualifications” for church office, we prefer to call those lists “Standards For Church Service”. We have not always held to the position on this subject that we now hold to. We will admit that the decades long opinions and positions we once held on this subject prior to thoroughly studying this issue for ourselves were the opinions of our peers and mentors in the churches that we have served in. In short, they were what we had been taught and not what we have rightly divided. It was an issue that we had not sought the whole counsel of the Word Of God on. If you will consult the Introduction to this book, you will see how thorough our research and study has been. We have researched the commentaries of many respected preachers and the works of all the so-called church fathers in preparing for this book. We

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did not do the research to find out where we should stand on the subject before us. Our convictions are based upon an independent study of the entire subject from the Bible. We studied the works of others to find where they stood on this subject and what we have found is that many good men of God come down on opposite sides of the issue we are dealing with here. So, what is the problem here? Job 32:9 says that great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. We realize that many will not even read what we have written here because they “know what the have been taught”. They will reject what we say here out of hand. Proverbs 18:13 says: “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him”. Proverbs 15:32 says: He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

A CHALLENGE AND WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT

If we are wrong on this issue, we have a very strong desire to be proved wrong and to be corrected. If you have a thoroughly researched counter argument against what we have said in this book and what we will say in this chapter, or if you have further supporting arguments, please feel free to contact us via email at: contact@earnestlycontendingforthefaith.com. Before you get outraged and start attacking us, we would encourage you to temporarily set aside everything you have been taught or preached on this subject. Then pick up a King James Bible and take every occurrence of the 62 words listed on page 3 of the Introduction to this book and read and study them in context and take notes before you pick up any commentaries. Then you can go back and pick up all that you have been taught and preached that lines up with the King James Bible. We have to many parrots today and not enough Biblical oracles. We do not wish to remove any old landmarks here. We just want to make sure that those old landmarks are set in their proper Biblical context.

We have read many good articles and books on the subject before us, some of which we agree with and others we do not agree with. There is some really wild stuff out there on both sides of this issue! Before anybody points the Peter Ruckman finger at us and takes us to the Peter Ruckman whipping post, you need to know that our research was almost complete before we read his 29 page article titled “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage”. Though we agree with Peter Ruckman on this issue, you need to understand that neither Peter Ruckman or Peter Ruckman’s doctrine on marriage, divorce and remarriage is the standard by which we judge our doctrine. Peter Ruckman is the straw man for all those who hate the King James Bible and those putrid “double married” preachers. They cannot defend their positions on the Bible or marriage so they pull Peter Ruckman out and kick him around for a while hoping that you will not ask them for chapter a verse. This is an issue that we have had serious doubts about ever since we first heard the doctrine propounded that divorced men could not enter the ministry and to our shame and our hurt we did nothing to exhaustively study the issue scripturally. We heard and received that which men taught. The real question is what does the Bible say; not what we think. Our standard is the perfect, inspired King James Bible. Many of those “once married” preachers that we have heard expound their doctrine of exclusion of divorced men over the years accuse those of us who hold to the doctrine that we do that we are responding to the issue emotionally and not doctrinally. Really? When confronted with their doctrine, most of them will run and hide under the emotional coattails of their favorite evangelist, preacher, seminary professor, or Bible Institute teacher. Most of them will respond that they know what they have been taught, or they

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know what so and so says. Really? But what does the Bible say chapter and verse? Most of them will not even attempt to defend their doctrine from the Bible because they have never studied the issue through and through for themselves. We want to thank Brother Karl M. Baker for his excellent book “The Marriage & Divorce Controversy With A Rebuttal Of 1 Timothy 3:2”. It was his book that motivated us to do the most exhaustive study of any subject that we have ever completed other than our study on the King James Bible itself. For many years we were convicted that our doctrine on the subject before us was an affront to the Holy Ghost that dwelt in us, but we “felt like” surely we must be wrong because how can so many good men of God be wrong on this subject and us be right. Besides, we were but the water boy on the doctrine field with all the big players. We are not being sarcastic here, but like most young Christians we held, and should hold, our elders, deacons, pastors, and preachers in high esteem for their work’s sake. First Thessalonians 5:12-13 and 1 Timothy 5:17 tell us:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

¹² And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; ¹³ And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

1 Timothy 5:17

¹⁷ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

We are not making light of those who have been our elders in doctrine over the years. We love them. What we are saying is that our very strong respect for those elders led us to receive and believe some things that we should have checked out for ourselves. Our first mentor has changed his position on whether a divorced man can enter the ministry and no longer holds a position that bans all divorced men from the ministry. It is wrong for us to hold the elders we love responsible for the doctrines we hold to. What we should not do is receive a doctrine without having checked it out in the Scriptures. The charge to be a Berean and to rightly divide the word of truth is a charge given to every believer and not just church leaders. When we receive a doctrine without having checked it out in the Scriptures what we prove is that we love man more than we do God. That is especially true of those who are, and who would be, church leaders. Blindly following church leaders without the informed consent of the Scriptures is ungodly, sloppy, and lazy. If you will believe a man, especially in a controversial doctrine, without having checked his doctrine against the Scriptures, then you are NOT qualified to hold a position of leadership in the church. That is especially true in this issue because much fundamentalist and Baptist doctrine as it relates to marriage, divorce, and remarriage has been corrupted by Roman Catholic theology. This same type of ungodly sloppiness and laziness is exactly why we have so many heretics and apostates in pulpits and behind lecterns trying to correct and overthrow the perfect King James Bible. What we are confronted with on the doctrine of the King James Bible is the very same thing we are confronted with on the doctrine of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and standards for church officers. That is, we have too many preachers, pastors, and

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teachers that are slothful sluggards that parrot the positions of their mentors without having studied the issue through for themselves. If you will not study the issue through for yourself, shame on you. For such a high profile and high impact issue as marriage, divorce, remarriage, and standards for church office, it is unconscionable that a God called pastor would be asleep at the spiritual wheel when at least 50% of the members of most fundamentalist and Baptist congregations have experienced a wreck on the highway of divorce. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.

BAD ATTITUDES, PRIDE, AND ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

If you want to start a stuttering convention all you have to do is ask the average group of assembled Independent Baptist preachers to give scriptural and historical reasons why they hold to the King James Bible; or why they are two, three, or four point Calvinists; or, God forbid, why they condemn “double married” preachers. Hello out there: **“This is a recording from the Independent Baptist glory corner. We only use the King James Bible and we don’t want any double married preachers around here because Doctor So And So said so. And, by the way, divorced man where is the tithing dough bro?”**. We do not know why we hold to the King James Bible or why we detest “double married” preachers. We just do. We just do what we are told to do.

On this issue of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and standards for church office, the preachers are teaching and preaching the commandments and doctrines of men. The pastors are beating the bleating divorced sheep on the anvil of Roman Catholic theology. The teachers are fleecing the bleating sheep through bleeding ears that have been scratched raw with false doctrine. If you will corrupt the Word of God doctrinally because you are too lazy to study this issue through, then you are no better than the heretic who corrupts the Word of God by taking away from or adding to the words of our Bibles. Whether you corrupt it in word, doctrinally, or in application you are equally culpable before God.

Many divorced men show much more of the grace of God in their ministries than many of the “once married” peacocks do. We know many pastors that will not allow a divorced man to teach or preach in “their” church. We also know many pastors and preachers that will break fellowship with a man who will allow a divorced man to preach in their pulpits. We also know preachers that will rant and rave about the wickedness of “double married” preachers, but they will go and preach in a church that allows divorced men to preach in their pulpit. There is a spirit of ungodly pride that lashes out from the heart of this issue and it is not coming from the divorced men. The following has been well said by Agur:

Proverbs 30:12-14¹²

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. ¹³ There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. ¹⁴ There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

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While many will not receive what we are about to say, we do believe that it is an accurate portrayal of the attitude of many preachers that would like us to believe that they are the squeaky clean, anointed ones. Here it is (I can hear the outrage already): The “Once Married Preacher” stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this *divorced man*. (The divorced man was here substituted for the publican. The principle is the same.). Some “once married” preachers cannot even pray that because they are extortioners, unjust, and adulterous, but thank God they are not “double married” divorced preachers even though they have broken their covenant with the wife of their youth. They are as PROUD AS A PEACOCK in all its glory. How many of you self righteous preachers out there have been guilty of allowing a man to stay in the ministry who is an adulterer and has been guilty of violating most of the standards in 1 Timothy 3 for church officers? Our churches are chock full of “once married” preachers and pastors that do not meet the standards of 1 Timothy 3. We could take the rest of the standards in 1 Timothy 3 and disqualify at least 90% of the pastors in Independent Baptist pulpits if we used the same pharisaical, blood thirsty tactics that the “husband of one wife in a lifetime” use. We see nothing of the grace of God in their tactics. It is a voracious cancer that is consuming what were good Bible believing churches. It is one of the major reasons our churches are dead and dying because we will not deal with the sins of our leaders. We will throw holy, divorced men out of our pulpits while we allow fornicators and perverts to devour the sheep that are set before them.

THE ISSUE FROM DOCTRINAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

We will now enter into a discussion of the issue before us from a historical perspective and use the King James Bible to interpret the issue doctrinally. As part of our discussion, we will talk about the practice of polygamy during the time New Testament churches were being formed. Then we will enter into a brief discussion on Jewish marriage customs as they could relate to the Sanhedrin and the apostle Paul. We will follow that by a discussion of what the Holy Ghost has recorded in the Scriptures concerning Paul and the discussion before us. Then we will get into an extended discussion on the standards for those who have been called and choose to serve as bishops and deacons in New Testament churches.

Many of those who enter into this fray do so without trying to interpret the Bible doctrinally in the context of its historical reference. This drives to the question as to what possible circumstances and problems a first century pastor might have had to deal with. One of those problems was the existence of polygamy in the Jewish culture. We dealt quite extensively with this issue in the section called “Multiple Wives” in the chapter in this book titled “A Scriptural Definition and Description of Marriage”. We will deal with it again here. We have read many commentaries that deny that polygamy was a problem in the Jewish culture during the formation of the New Testament church, but that is not true. We will document that shortly. The early New Testament church was made up of mostly Jewish converts for two very good reasons. One of those is rooted in the command from the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve apostles when he stated in Matthew 10:5-6:

Matthew 10:5-6

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⁵ These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: ⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Another reason that most of the converts to the early church were Jews is that commandment to go first to the house of Israel continued to be the pattern for the early disciples and the apostles, including Paul. Wherever Paul went, his first stop was always the synagogues of the Jews. Twenty-three different times the synagogues are mentioned in the book of Acts. For these reasons, it is no small wonder that most of the early churches were made up mostly of Jewish converts.

POLYGAMY

With the Jewish converts came their Jewish customs and the Mosaic Law that had to be dealt with by the Holy Ghost in several of the Pauline Epistles including Romans, Galatians, 1 Timothy, Titus, and the book of Hebrews. The passages that we are concerned with here are 1 Timothy 1:4-7 and Titus 1:10-14 which we quote here:

1 Timothy 1:4-7

⁴ Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. ⁵ Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: ⁶ From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; ⁷ Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Titus 1:10-14

¹⁰ For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹ Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. ¹² One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. ¹³ This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; ¹⁴ Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Both of these passages state strongly that both Timothy and Titus were having trouble with their Jewish converts in the churches they were pastoring. In 1 Timothy chapter 1, the Holy Ghost rebukes those that take heed to fables and endless genealogies and those desiring to be teachers of the law. This is strictly in a Jewish context. In Titus chapter 1 the Holy Ghost rebukes those vain talkers especially those of the circumcision (Jews) and warns that church not to give heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men. This is strictly in a Jewish context. One further indication that these were churches dominated by Jewish converts is that when the Holy Ghost listed the standards required for bishops and deacons some of them mirrored the Jewish laws regulating membership in the Sanhedrin which we here quote:

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There were ten basic qualifications for the eligibility of membership. Each member of the Sanhedrin must be a Hebrew, learned in the law, and possessing judicial experience at lower levels (there were minor Sanhedrins of twenty-three members which tried non-capital offenses in every town of 120 males or more). The member was required also to be learned in science, a linguist, modest, pious but strong and courageous, devoid of physical defects, a qualified tradesman, and, finally, he was required to be married and to be a father. [Liberty In The Balance, Russell and Colin Standish, Hartland Publishing, August 30, 1998]

The special qualifications for the office of Sanhedrist, mentioned in the Rabbinical writings, are such as remind of us of the directions of Paul to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:1-10). A member of the Sanhedrin must be wise, modest, God-fearing, truthful, not greedy of filthy lucre, given to hospitality, kindly, not a gambler, nor a usurer, nor one who traded in the produce of Sabbatical years, nor yet one who indulged in unlawful games (Sanh. iii. 3). They were called “Sekenim,” “elders,” “Memunim,” “rulers,” “Parnasin,” “feeders, overseers, shepherds of the flock”, and “Manhigei,” “guides”. They were under the presidency and supreme rule of an “Archisynagogos,” or “Rosh-ha-Cheneseth,” “head of the synagogue” (Yom. vii. 1; Sot. vii. 7), who sometimes seems to have even exercised sole authority. [From Alfred Edersheim’s work “Sketches Of Jewish Social Life”, Chapter 18, page 257 of the printed edition]

We should not appoint to a Sanhedrin a man of very old age or one who does not possess male physical attributes, for they possess the trait of cruelty, nor a man who is childless, so that the judges should be merciful. [Cited from: Halacha 3: Sanhedrin vha`Onashin haMesurin lahem, Mishneh Torah]

We are not careful to demand that a judge for a court of three possess all these qualities. He must, however, possess seven attributes: wisdom, humility, the fear of God, a loathing for money, a love for truth; he must be a person who is beloved by people at large, and must have a good reputation. [Cited from: Halacha 7: Sanhedrin vha`Onashin haMesurin lahem, Mishneh Torah]

Notice the parallels between these qualifications and the standards given in 1 Timothy 3. Not given to filthy lucre and given to hospitality are identical. Look also at the requirement to be married and a father which run parallel to being a “husband of one wife” and having their children in subjection. Someone who is “learned in the law” would be “apt to teach”. The Sanhedrin requirement to be modest walks hand in hand with First Timothy chapter three’s being sober. The Sanhedrin requirement to be kindly is a parallel to First Timothy chapter three’s charge to not be a brawler. The Sanhedrin requirement to be pious is equivalent to the requirement to be blameless in 1 Timothy 3. The Sanhedrin requirement to be wise is the product of not being a novice as listed in 1 Timothy chapter 3. So, why was the requirement to be “husband of one wife” included in 1 Timothy 3:2 by

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the Holy Ghost? Could it be that there were already problem in the churches pastored by Timothy and Titus with men who had multiple wives wanting to serve as bishops and deacons? As we have already said, We have read many commentaries that deny that polygamy was a problem in the Jewish culture during the formation of the New Testament church, but that just is not true. We have already quoted much of what follows in the previous chapter on Scriptural Marriage, but we again quote it here to refute the idea and the statements that polygamy was not a problem during the formation of the New Testament church. We quote from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, the Works Of Flavius Josephus, and the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Here are the quotes:

Josephus and the Talmud.

That polygamy survived into the Christian era is, however, asserted by Josephus ("Ant." xvii. 1, § 2); and he himself ("Vita," § 75) seems to have had one wife in Palestine and another in Egypt (comp. Löw, "Gesammelte Schriften," iii. 47). Such a practise is forbidden by a baraita in Yeb. 37a; and this prohibition is (with certain limitations) introduced into the Shulh.an 'Aruk (Eben ha-'Ezer, ii. 11). The Talmud certainly does not enact monogamy (see Bigamy); and as far as the Law is, concerned, Justin Martyr ("Dial. cum Tryph." § 134) is not wrong in asserting that in his time (2d cent. C.E.) Jews were permitted to have four or five wives. (Cited from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia article on Monogamy: Internet Edition located at: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10949-monogamy>)

Nevertheless, having the advantage of precedent, it was long before polygamy fell into disuse in Hebrew society. Herod had nine wives at one time (Josephus, Ant, XVII, I, 2). Justin Martyr (Dial., 134, 141) reproaches Jews of his day with having "four or even five wives," and for "marrying as many as they wish" (compare Talm). It was not definitely and formally forbidden among Jews until circa 1000 AD. It exists still among Jews in Moslem lands. [Cited from page 634 of the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE) from the article "Marriage"; James Orr, General Editor]

He also allotted one of Aristobulus's daughters to Antipater's son, and Aristobulus's other daughter to Herod, a son of his own, who was born to him by the high priest's daughter; for it is the ancient practice among us to have many wives at the same time. [Josephus, Book 17, Chapter 1, Section 2 (14)]

Now Herod the king had at this time nine wives; one of them, Antipater's mother, and another the high priest's daughter, by whom he had a son of his own name. He had also one who was his brother's daughter, and another his sister's daughter; which two had no children. [The Works Of Flavius Josephus, Book 17, chapter 1, section 3(19), page 452]

She also frequently reproached Herod's sister and wives with the ignobility of their descent; and that they were every one chosen by him for their beauty, but not for their

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family. Now those wives of his were not a few; it being of old permitted to the Jews to marry many wives, — and this king delighting in many; all whom hated Alexander, on account of Glaphyria’s boasting and reproaches. [Josephus, War Of The Jews, Chapter 24, page 1351]

Now Herod the king had at this time nine wives; one of them, Antipater’s mother, and another the high priest’s daughter, by whom he had a son of his own name. He had also one who was his brother’s daughter, and another his sister’s daughter; which two had no children. [The Works Of Flavius Josephus, Book 17, chapter 1, section 3(19), page 452]

We would remind our readers that the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia and the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus are independent witnesses that have no stake in the subject before us. They were not Christians. That being the case, they do not have a New Testament agenda to promote that would put them on one side or the other of this argument. Flavius Josephus was born in 37 A. D. into a family of Jewish priests and was alive to witness the development of the New Testament church first hand though he was not a part of it. **From the resources just quoted, we would have to conclude that polygamy was being practiced by the Jews at the time 1 Timothy and Titus were written somewhere between 63-66 A. D and that it was a problem in the churches that Timothy and Titus pastored.** If you scream that “you are reading into the Scriptures that which is not there”, then you are being hypocritical because you read “divorce” into 1 Timothy 3:2 when it is not there. Your insertion of the word “divorce” in 1 Timothy 3:2 comes with a whole lot less plausible support than what we have provided here. At least we have proven from the secular historical record that polygamy was commonly practiced by the Jews both during and after the time when New Testament churches were being established. We have also proven from the Old Testament that polygamy was an accepted practice among the Jewish people. We have also proven that Epistles of 1 Timothy and Titus were written to churches that had a problem with Judaizers. Some would complain, “but what about those countries where polygamy is practiced and is allowed under the laws of the land and the men already have multiple wives when they get saved”. We already have scriptural precedent for that when Ezra forced the priests to put away their unscriptural wives requiring them to provide the necessary support for those that had been put away. We will deal with the phrase “the husband of one wife” in a lot more detail later. In closing this section on polygamy, our readers should know that all but two of the following believed that 1 Timothy 3:2 was to be interpreted of polygamy and had no reference to divorce: Harry Ironside, M.R. Dehaan, J Vernon McGee, John R. Rice, Dwight L. Moody, C. I. Scofield, Charles Hodge, Theodoret, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Daniel Whedon, Charles Spurgeon, John Trapp, A. T. Robertson, Frederick B. Meyer, Matthew Poole, Jerome, W. B. Godby, Arno C. Gaebelein, John Gill (polygamy and unscriptural divorce), Thomas Coke (polygamy and causeless divorce), Adam Clarke, Joseph Benson, John Calvin, and Albert Barnes.

THE MARITAL STATUS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

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Was Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ qualified to pastor churches? How should, and how does, Paul's marital status affect the interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:2? While we do not believe the marital status of Paul makes one bit of difference as to how 1 Timothy 3:2 **should** be interpreted, we realize that because of the way many fundamentalists and Baptists interpret the phrase "husband of one wife" from 1 Timothy 3:2 that it is an issue that must be dealt with if for no other reason than building a foundation to destroy the heresy that says that a divorced man is permanently disqualified from entering the ministry.

Reading "divorced" and "double married" into 1 Timothy 3:2 is the seed bed of much endless speculation and confusion in the interpretation of the standards for church office. Here, we will do some "speculation". If the same hermeneutical standard that is applied to the interpretation of the phrase "husband of one wife" by those who advocate "one living wife for one lifetime" is applied to the rest of the standards listed in 1 Timothy 3, then we have ourselves a huge doctrinal mess that butchers the English language leaving no one qualified for church office. Not only does it butcher the English language, it breaks the rules of English grammar in an in your face manner. If many so-called conservative commentators and preachers would just interpret 1 Timothy 3:2 in the normal, literal, grammatical sense, we would not have all the hurt and confusion caused by their breaking every hermeneutical standard for interpreting the English Bible. But the "once married" stallions with their blinders on can only see the "once married" preachers that are dead ahead. The rest of the standards in the passage are but hurdles they must jump to get past those "double married" preachers. They cannot interpret properly in context because their doctrinal blinders will not let them see the plain English that is on all sides of them. "Must be" is a present tense phrase. "Must be" is a present tense phrase. For the third time, "must be" is a present tense phrase. Furthermore, all of the standards for church service in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are given in the present tense. In other words they are looking at present conduct: at the present qualifications for the man being considered for the office of bishop or deacon. For you Greek scholars, you will smother to death if your breath of life is one of the Greek words for divorce (apostasion and apoluo) because they are found no where in the context of 1 Timothy 3:2 or Titus 1. Do you think that the Holy Ghost did not know what the Greek word for divorce was? He used them in Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:7, and Mark 10:4. If the Greek words for divorce were in 1 Timothy 3:2 do you not think the King James translators would have supplied it as they did in Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:7, and Mark 10:4.

What about the phrase "must be...husband of one wife" used in 1 Timothy 3:2? Remember, we are "speculating" here just as those who speculate that Paul meant divorced in this passage. The big difference is that our "speculation" has much support from the context, both doctrinal and historical as we will prove in the following pages. If we assume that Paul was a virgin, a widower, or divorced, then what the Holy Ghost said about "the husband of one wife" in 1 Timothy 3:2 does not make sense if we apply it in an absolute sense to Paul since Paul had to be put into a position where he temporarily assumed the role of a pastor in the churches he established on the mission field. If being the husband of one wife was a "must be" qualification for a church leader, then Paul was not "qualified" to pastor the churches he started on the mission field. If your doctrine interprets "husband of one wife" as "not ever having been divorced", then if Paul was divorced, then he was not qualified to temporarily assume the position of pastor in the churches he established on the mission field. The Scriptures do not specifically state that Paul was not a widower or was not divorced. However, the

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Bible does plainly state that Paul was unmarried. That the term “unmarried” applies to both virgins and the divorced is proven in 1 Corinthians 7:11 which reads:

1 Corinthians 7:11

¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

So, was Paul’s state of being unmarried that of being widowed, or divorced, or virgin. We believe that Paul was married at one time. Are we to assume that since the only apostle who was identified as having a wife was Peter that none of the others were married? That is highly unlikely since it was an affront and even unlawful in most instances for Jewish men not to be married. That some of the other apostles were married in addition to Peter is indicated in 1 Corinthians 9:5 which states:

1 Corinthians 9:5

⁵ Have we not power to lead about a sister, **a wife, as well as other apostles,** and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

Note that the word “apostles” is plural. The point being that though there were other apostles who were married, their marital status is not specifically identified in the Scriptures. This passage of Scripture also puts the Roman Catholic doctrine of celibacy back into the theological crypt that it came slithering forth from. There is also proof from Matthew 19:27-29 that some of the apostles had forsaken their wives and yet the continued in the ministry. These verses state:

Matthew 19:27-29

²⁷ Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? ²⁸ And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, **or wife,** or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Note that the Holy Ghost is quoting the Lord Jesus Christ as having said that those who had forsaken their wives for his name sake would receive an hundredfold and eternal life. Yet all the apostles continued in the ministry until well after the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are they that made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. Now what of the possible marital status of the apostle Paul. Let’s look at some documents to ascertain whether Paul could have been married. From the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia we read:

The first positive commandment of the Bible, according to rabbinic interpretation

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(Maimonides, “Minyan ha-Miz.wot,” 212), is that concerning the propagation of the human species (Gen. I. 28). It is thus considered the duty of every Israelite to marry as early in life as possible. Eighteen years is the age set by the Rabbis (Ab. v. 24); and any one remaining unmarried after his twentieth year is said to be cursed by God Himself (K.id. 29b). Some urge that children should marry as soon as they reach the age of puberty, i.e., the fourteenth year (Sanh. 76b); and R. H.isda attributed his mental superiority to the fact that he was married when he was but sixteen years old (K.id. l.c.). It was, however, strictly forbidden for parents to give their children in marriage before they had reached the age of puberty (Sanh. 76b). **A man who, without any reason, refused to marry after he had passed his twentieth year was frequently compelled to do so by the court.** To be occupied with the study of the Torah was regarded as a plausible reason for delaying marriage; but only in very rare instances was a man permitted to remain in celibacy all his life (Yeb. 63b; Maimonides, “Yad,” Ishut, xv. 2, 3; Shulh.an ‘Aruk, Eben ha-‘Ezer, 1, 1-4; see Celibacy)....

(Cited from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia article “Marriage Laws” located at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10435-marriage-laws>)

We should not appoint to a Sanhedrin a man of very old age or one who does not possess male physical attributes, for they possess the trait of cruelty, **nor a man who is childless**, so that the judges should be merciful. [Cited from: Halacha 3: Sanhedrin vaha`Onashin haMesurin lahem, Mishneh Torah]

There were ten basic qualifications for the eligibility of membership. Each member of the Sanhedrin must be a Hebrew, learned in the law, and possessing judicial experience at lower levels (there were minor Sanhedrins of twenty-three members which tried non-capital offenses in every town of 120 males or more). The member was required also to be learned in science, a linguist, modest, pious but strong and courageous, devoid of physical defects, a qualified tradesman, and, finally, he was required to be married and to be a father. [Liberty In The Balance, Russell and Colin Standish, Hartland Publishing, August 30, 1998]

If Paul was never married, he was in a very difficult position in a Jewish culture that would force a man to get married by court order if he had not married before the age of 20. It must also be noted that the Talmud specifically stated: “Any Jew who has not a wife is no man” [Babylonian Talmud, Yebamoth 63a]. There is also a very strong possibility that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin because he **consented** unto the stoning death of Stephen (Acts 7:58-8:1). Only the Sanhedrin could authorize the death penalty for religious offenses; in this case, the false accusation of blasphemy. We have already proven that members of the Sanhedrin had to be married. Many **ASSUME** that Paul was never married because he says in 1 Corinthians 7:8 that he is unmarried. We have already proven in the chapter “Adultery, Fornication, Desertion, Divorce And Remarriage” that the term unmarried applies to widows/widowers, virgins, and those who are divorced. It is no more

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a stretch for us to believe that Paul was once married, but now unmarried through divorce or death, than it is for you to believe that he was never married because he is unmarried. It could well be that Paul was one of the men that was made a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matthew 19:12) or one of those who had forsaken their wives for the sake of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:29). In closing this topic, we go back to the statement that we introduced this topic with. How should, and how does, Paul's marital status affect the interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:2? We do not believe the marital status of Paul makes one bit of difference as to how 1 Timothy 3:2 **should** be interpreted, but it must be dealt with because of the way some preachers and pastors interpret the phrase “husband of one wife”. Furthermore, if we take the interpretation by some preachers and pastors of the phrase “husband of one wife” to its logical conclusion, then Paul could not be a missionary or pastor because he was not the husband of one wife, the Lord Jesus Christ could not be the pastor of His church because He was not the husband of one wife, and neither could God of the Old Testament qualify because He was divorced and unmarried and therefore not the husband of one wife. Now let's take a look at the scriptural standards for church service.

STANDARDS FOR BISHOPS AND DEACONS

In 1Thessalonians 5:12-13, 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Hebrews 13:7, and Hebrews 13:17, we have God's charge to the congregations concerning those he has set in positions of responsibility and authority in the churches. The Holy Ghost tells us:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

¹²And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; ¹³And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

1 Timothy 5:17-18

¹⁷Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. ¹⁸For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

Hebrews 13:7

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation.

Hebrews 13:17

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

It is very important that a church latch onto the passages of Scripture just quoted if they expect

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God to bless them and use them for the glory of God. We are to esteem and love those that God has put over us in the Lord. In context, the phrase “double honour” means that we are to take the best possible financial care of the pastors that labour in the word and doctrine. A pastor that will not labour in the word and doctrine is not worthy of the time of day. We are to follow, obey, and submit to those that God has given the rule over us as long as they are in obedience to the Scriptures. That does not mean that we are to blindly follow a man. We are to be a Berean when it comes to doctrine. It is no shepherd who will abuse the sheep. We have already discussed Acts 6:1-7 in the context of standards for deacons. In 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, and Titus we have God’s charge to those he places in the offices of elder, bishop and deacon. In these passages the Holy Ghost says:

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over *God’s* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

1 Timothy 3:1-13

1 This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. 11 Even so *must their* wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:5-16

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover

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of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. 12 One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. 13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. 15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. 16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

First Peter 5:1-4 is one of the most ignored passages in Independent Baptist churches. We have too many dictators in Independent Baptist churches who abuse the flocks that God has given them to shepherd. They demand that their “authority” is not to be challenged in any way. They rule as absolute despots. The charge to the pastor is not to Lord his position and scriptural authority over the congregation that he pastors. We are to respect the office, but if you as the pastor have to constantly demand respect then you are already in trouble because you have not earned the congregation's respect. We are told: “Touch not God's anointed”. Yeh, that is especially true if it applies to him if he is stealing from the church or a whoring around on his wife. Some pastors are more like unto the fallen anointed cherub. We have already stated that pastors are to be followed, to be obeyed, and to be submitted to. If you as a pastor have to constantly badger a congregation, then one or both of you is not yielded to the Holy Ghost.

One of the most neglected passages of scripture in fundamentalist and Baptist churches is the front end and the last half of 1 Timothy 3:2 and also verses 3-7 of the same chapter. It is amazing to us that God did not take husband of one wife out and make it a separate book! It is also amazing that many Baptist churches can maintain such high and holy standards for their pastors and preachers while the green fruits of their ministry rot in the pews and live like the Devil himself. They will put an innocent divorced man out of the ministry while they allow a whore and a whoremonger to continue in full fellowship with the “church”. They will allow a child molester, an adulterer, a thief, a liar, a heretic, an apostate, and so forth to continue in the pulpit and the pastorate. Most pastors today would choke to death on their own hypocrisy if they were required to exercise church discipline. How about you pastor? What I am talking about here is the toleration of the open sin of men and women sitting in the pews and the pastors who lead them. God is no respecter of persons when it comes to the judgment of sin. Judgment will start at the house of God and that does not exclude the congregation. If you as a congregation refuse to exercise righteous discipline over a pastor who is in open sin, you are asking God to kill your church. Most Independent Baptist churches will not deal with the sins of their pastors because they have been threatened and beaten with the fully loaded “touch not God's anointed” pistol. Not only do many Independent Baptist pastors get blind loyalty, they demand it. It is a malignant cancer. If you as a pastor go a whoring around on your wife, then you

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have also gone a whoring around on the Bride Of Christ. If you as a pastor refuse to exercise righteous judgment in the house of God, you will lose the anointing of the Holy Ghost of God. Your preaching will have no power in it. You may as well take a knife to the congregation. The pastor's charge is to feed and edify the sheep and not to go howling and ravening after the divorced sheep seeking who he may devour. This is an issue that is also very unscripturally hurtful to the wives of men who have been divorced. An unscriptural attack upon her husband is an attack upon her also.

Most pastors in the pulpits of Independent Baptist churches cannot preach all the qualifications of 1 Timothy chapter 3 with any authority and under the anointing of the Holy Ghost of God because they are grossly guilty of not meeting many of the standards themselves. Many of them use their pulpits to be strikers of divorced people. Using the same corrupt hermeneutics that the "once married" preachers and pastors use, we can throw out the clause "husband of one wife" and take the rest of the qualifications for bishops (pastors) and deacons in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and disqualify at least 90% of the men occupying pulpits in fundamentalist churches. Soon, we will do just that by using an extended parody in the pages of this chapter. What this will prove is that the "once married" preachers and pastors already have an unscriptural and theologically corrupt hermeneutic that is filtered through their own prejudices and self-righteousness. We Independent Baptists are quick to publicly expose the "sin" of divorced men while we allow the vilest of undivorced men, many of them unsaved, to occupy our pulpits and pastorates. The three biggest qualifications we miss when considering whether to put a man into a pastor's position or a deacon's position, or to keep them there, is whether he is of honest report AND full of faith AND full of the Holy Ghost (You do remember that Acts 6:1-7 is still in the Bible, don't you?). By the way, these were the only three scriptural standards for the first seven deacons. Now let's take a look at 1 Timothy 3.

Do you believe that the so-called qualifications for church office are absolute standards or are they intended to be a general standard by which the overall present character and conduct of a man may be judged to determine his suitability to serve in the offices of bishop and deacon? Sadly, in application, most "once married" preachers have but one absolute "qualification" in 1 Timothy 3 and that is "the husband of one wife". Most "once married" preachers interpret "husband of one wife" as meaning a divorced man is permanently disqualified from the ministry. They consistently read divorce into this passage. While they preach absolute qualifications for the remainder of 1 Timothy 3, you will not catch them living by them. But, if you let a divorced man step into a pulpit, it is like the abomination of desolation has appeared in the congregation. When is the last time you heard some preacher say: You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher if you do not pay your bills; or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because you cannot teach; or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because your children are out of control; or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because you are a lazy bum (striker); or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because you are too focused on money; or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because you have been guilty of fornication and adultery. If your hermeneutic is going to be consistent in interpreting this passage, then why isn't someone who will not pay their bills permanently disqualified; or, why is someone who commits adultery and fornication not permanently disqualified. To be consistent, let's extend your ludicrous hermeneutic for "husband of one wife" to the rest of this passage.

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By your reasoning, if there ever was a time when you were not blameless then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were not vigilant, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were not patient, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were not in control of your children, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were greedy of filthy lucre, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were not apt to teach, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were covetous, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you committed adultery or fornication, then you are permanently disqualified and so forth. All of us know how ridiculous all this sounds, but that is exactly where your method of interpretation leads us. Contending for absolute qualifications leads us into yet another trap especially in dealing with the “husband of one wife”. If a man must be the husband of one wife, then no man who is single either because he has never been married or because his wife has died is qualified for the ministry. If “the husband of one wife” qualification applies to missionaries, preachers, and evangelists then neither Paul or those that he recommended staying unmarried would ever be qualified for the ministry. Then, what of Timothy and Titus who were obviously at least church planters and more likely pastors of churches. There is no mention of either of them being married. If a husband and wife cannot have children, then the husband cannot have his children in subjection to him. A lot of the problem before us is rooted in the uncanny ability of many pastors and preachers to read the word divorced into 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6.

The question arises: “Is there a Greek word used for divorce?”. The answer is of course because the Lord Jesus Christ Himself used it in Matthew 5:31, Matthew 19:7, and Mark 10:4. If the Holy Ghost intended that husband of one wife in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 be interpreted of divorce, then why did He not use the Greek word for divorce which is “*apostasion*” in the context. Since every standard for bishops and deacons in these passages is in the present tense, then we must assume, that in the context, the Holy Ghost is interested in the present conduct of the individual under consideration to become or continue to be a bishop or deacon. That has to be the case because if it were not then NO man would ever be qualified to be a bishop or deacon. The problem with making divorce the only sin that permanently disqualifies a man from the ministry is that it makes divorce an unforgivable sin only in the context of a man’s ministry. It makes the Church and God a respecter of persons. In context, the most natural sense of the phrase “husband of one wife” is having one wife, but not more than one. That is the most logical interpretation when it is read and interpreted literally. There is no mention of the word “divorced” or “widower” in the context of 1 Timothy 3. Nor can the words “divorced” or “widower” be implied from the context when it is read in its most natural sense. The words come from speculating: “Well did he mean this, or did he mean that”. The answer to that question is, no, the Holy Ghost meant exactly what He said. For the words “divorced” and “widower” to appear there they have to be read into it through the prism of somebody’s false doctrine. Some folks try to add the word living to 1 Timothy 3:2 to make it read “HUSBAND OF ONE LIVING WIFE”. They do this because they know the implications of their doctrine for a widower. Their doctrine disqualifies a widower from the ministry. We do not for a minute believe that a widower is disqualified from being in the ministry. Neither do we believe that a divorced man is permanently disqualified from being in the ministry. Many, in a vain attempt to disqualify a divorced man, read

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“husband of one wife” as “having had only one wife”. That is a gross misinterpretation also because it changes the Bible’s present tense “must be...the husband of one wife” to the man pleasing, past tense “having had only one wife”.

Furthermore, you will not find the phrases “double married”, “widower”, or “divorced” anywhere in either First and Second Timothy or in Titus. For you to put those words into those Scriptures, you have to read them into it because of your doctrinal bias. If you do not believe it, ask the average unsaved, Biblically illiterate person on the street what is meant by the phrase “husband of one wife” and it is doubtful they will ever say it means “the husband of one living wife” or “a man that has never been divorced”. What they will tell you is that it means “a man does not have more than one wife”. What we are saying is that they will **literally** assume that it means not having more than one wife at the present time. If you took the average Biblically, literate Christian who had never been taught the doctrines of “double married preachers” and “no divorced preachers” and asked them what “husband of one wife” means to them, they would tell you that it means that a husband does not currently have two or more wives or that he must be married to serve as a bishop or deacon. The word “divorce” would not occur to most folks without having been read into the passages we are discussing. You could try taking your rules for grammar to your favorite English teacher and see how fast they would run you out of their class.

We have heard the argument time and again that “husband of one wife” disqualifies a divorced man because he has set a bad example to the flock when it comes to the home. What that argument does is set up divorce as a special class of unforgivable sin. What about the other standards in the list?? For those who say “but the divorce cannot be repented of or restored”, what about the guy who has murdered a man or a woman, or beat up his wife, or committed adultery, or has molested a child, or has raped a woman, or being guilty of sodomy, or filed a bankruptcy, or been guilty of public drunkenness. You cannot unmurder someone (the apostle Paul was a murderer), or unbeat up a wife, or uncommit adultery, or unmolest a child, or unrape someone, or unsodomize someone, or unfile a bankruptcy, or undo a conviction for public drunkenness. If a man cannot be an effective marriage counsellor because he has had a divorce, can he be an effective financial counsellor if he has filed a bankruptcy? If a man cannot be an effective marriage counsellor because he has had a divorce, then can he be an effective marriage counsellor when he is an unrepentant, undivorced adulterer? Facts are stubborn things. We could go on and on, but we have made our point.

Do you believe the timing of a man’s salvation has any effect on whether he is qualified for the offices of bishop or deacon? Do you believe that if a man gets a divorce after he is saved, that he is permanently disqualified from any position of leadership in the church including bishop and deacon? Do you believe that a man who was divorced “before” he was saved is qualified for positions of church leadership including bishop and deacon? Do you believe you have the discernment to determine whether anyone is/was saved at a particular point in time? We do not believe that the timing of a divorce, saved or unsaved, has any effect on the standards in 1 Timothy 3. Divorce is not the issue in 1 Timothy 3. Furthermore, if you try to hold an unsaved man’s past against him you run into the wall set up by the Holy Ghost in 1 Corinthians 6:6-11 where He said:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

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⁹ 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, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ **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.

The key here is **such were some of you.** If you will not let a divorced man minister in all ministries of the church, whether his divorce took place before or after he was saved, then what you are saying is that the blood of Jesus cannot cleanse a man from the potential sins of divorce. The reason some of you will allow a divorced man to be a preacher or pastor if his divorce took place prior to his salvation is that the Holy Ghost has convicted you of your false doctrine. You also put yourself in a very dangerous position of determining when a man was saved. There is no way you can make that decision because you are not the Holy Ghost. When you will not let any divorced man into the ministry you promote the Devil’s lie that all parties to a divorce are guilty of sin. When you will not let a divorced man into the ministry you are making divorce the unforgivable sin. When you will not let divorced men into the ministry then you are saying that you would not let God minister in your churches because he has been divorced! What complicates the matter before us even more is that most “once married” preachers will not accept the scriptural fact that a divorce scripturally ends a marriage. That is our next topic.

Do you believe that divorce ends a marriage in the eyes of God so that a former spouse is no longer scripturally a spouse in any sense of the word? Your answer to that question will reveal your prejudices. Another prejudice that enters into interpreting the phrase “husband of one wife” is the stubborn insistence by many that divorce does not end a marriage. According to this false doctrine, even if you have been divorced from someone, you will always be married to them in the eyes of God. The doctrine also states that if you divorce and remarry you are living in perpetual adultery because you cannot divorce anyone for any reason. We dealt with the issue of perpetual adultery in the chapter on “Adultery, Fornication, Desertion, Divorce And Remarriage”. Let us allow the Lord Jesus Christ to interpret whether a divorced person is any longer a husband or wife to the person from whom they are divorced. The Lord Jesus Christ in dealing with the woman at the well had this to say in John 4:16-18:

John 4:16-18

¹⁶ Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. ¹⁷ The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: ¹⁸ For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

Here we will repeat our discussion on this issue from the chapter on “Adultery, Fornication, Desertion, Divorce and Remarriage”. According to the Lord Jesus Christ, divorce does end a marriage. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ say to the woman at the well in John 4: “thou HAST HAD

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five husbands”. What was her sin? She was obviously having sex with a man who was not her husband because he was married to another woman! She was guilty of fornication and adultery and he was guilty of adultery and fornication. Also, the clear implication of this passage is that she has been divorced five times. Why would the Lord hold it against her that she had been married five times, if those men had simply died? The Lord Jesus Christ showed us that she was a sexually promiscuous woman, living with a man who was not her husband. Notice that he does not say that she is married to all five of those men. He says that she “*hast had*” (past-tense) five husbands. She is no longer married to those men. Therefore, it is inaccurate to speak of a divorced person as having multiple living spouses because of the divorces. If her previous divorces had not dissolved those previous marriages, the Lord Jesus Christ would have said that “*thou hast* (present tense) five husbands”. So much for those preachers, pastors, and teachers that state that a divorced man has more than one wife if he remarries. That whole theory is blown out of the water with this one passage of Scripture! Do you actually think the Lord Jesus Christ would change his wording if it was a man at the well who “*hast had*” five wives? Based upon what the Lord Jesus Christ said here, you cannot say that a lawfully divorced man or woman who is married now has more than one husband or wife. When a person is divorced from a spouse, that person is no longer their spouse in any sense of the word. Otherwise, the Lord Jesus Christ would have used the present tense to indicate that the five men were still her husbands. Divorce unequivocally and permanently ends a marriage. We have stated that all the standards for bishops and deacons are in the present tense. What does that mean?

If we take all the standards and look at them, we would have to say that all men have been guilty of not meeting at least one of them in their past before they were saved. In fact, most men are guilty of not having met many of these standards. Most saved men are guilty of not meeting all the standards at least some of the time even in the present tense. The passage is not to be interpreted as if the candidate for bishop or deacon must **HAVE ALWAYS** been blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, hospitable, in control of his house and his children, and patient. Neither is the passage to be interpreted in the sense that a man has never been guilty of being a drunk, a striker, greedy of filthy lucre, a brawler, or covetous. What we are interested in is, what is the man’s proven general conduct and character today. No one meets all the standards all the time. There are a lot of the pastors in our Baptist pulpits that are not apt to teach and the proof of it is in their interpretation of this passage.

The standards given for elders, bishops, and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are **NOT** absolute standards because if they are, they become a farce when we try to apply them. Using them as absolute standards would result in no one ever being qualified for the offices of bishop elder, or deacon. Yet, that is the way the phrase “*husband of one wife*” is used to the exclusion of **EVERY** other standard in this passage. We have already proven that if you try to interpret every standard in the present tense but then interpret “*husband of one wife*” in the past tense, you create an interpretive mess. All of the standards address the **present conduct** of an individual. The phrase “*must be*” is the key to interpreting this passage. It is an English verb form that is strictly in the present tense. It cannot be read “*must have been*” because that would be in the past tense. Yet, that is exactly the way it is interpreted by those “*once married*” preachers that want to hold a man’s divorce against him. In application, they do not believe God ever forgives a man of a divorce even if he was innocent. They will forgive a reprehensible, fornicating, whoremongering, adulterer who is guilty of multiple acts of

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fornication with several different women and either leave him in the pulpit with no church discipline being exercised or immediately restore him to the ministry after a few crocodile tears and then turn right around and throw a divorced man out of the ministry whose obviously devil possessed wife and Satan conspired to destroy his ministry. Then Satan recruits some fundamentalist “once married” peacocks to rubber stamp the Devil’s Satanic destruction of a really good man of God and the ministry God has called him into. What sheer and utterly wicked hypocrisy all this is. **Which leads us to the conclusion that all manner of sin shall be forgiven a man except the sin of divorce and blasphemy of the Holy Ghost.** The phrase “husband of one wife” should be interpreted as follows: “If a man is married, then he can have but one wife at a time”. The phrase “husband of one wife” cuts off polygamists from serving in the ministry: nothing more, nothing less. We have also heard the phrase “husband of one wife” interpreted of so-called serial polygamy. That interpretation denies that divorce ends a marriage. In the eyes of God, when a man or woman commits adultery they have broken the marital bond with (divorced) their mate. That is why God said to kill adulterers and adulteresses in the Old Testament under the law (That was the divorce). Do you think for a minute that a priest was kicked out of the priesthood if his wife left him, or if he was divorced? The following quote is from an email inquiry that we sent out to a rabbi:

A divorced and remarried priest can serve – the only restriction we find is that he may not marry a divorcee. A priest does not have to be married except for the High Priest on the Yom Kippur service. This is derived from Leviticus 16:6: "He shall atone for himself and his home" - where 'home' implies he has a family (see Mishna Yoma 1;1). They also could have multiple wives since this is forbidden only rabbinically. Ezekiel 44 contains more of the basic laws of priests - prophetically described in the Third Temple, but Leviticus 21 is the main source. [From Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld aishrabbi@aish.edu]

If the priest’s wife committed adultery, the problem was resolved in a pile of stones with her at the bottom of it. We have heard of cases where women have actually threatened to destroy their husband’s ministry by divorcing them. Furthermore, how many times have you heard of a man’s ministry being destroyed at the hands of some “once married” fundamentalists because his wife committed adultery and left him. Yet, these fundamentalist hypocrites will allow a fornicating, whoremongering (whore hopping if you prefer) adulterous preacher to continue in the ministry while kicking an innocent divorced man out of the ministry. We are sending some very ,very wrong signals to the lost and to young Christians from our fundamentalist and Independent Baptist churches when we will not put a fornicating adulterer out of our pulpits, but we will put an innocent divorced man out of our pulpits. We are telling the world that we are incapable of exercising righteous and just judgment. Who do you think the young Christian will think is guilty of sin when comparing a proven fornicating, adulterous preacher with an innocent divorced man who was deserted by his adulterous wife?? You do believe that a divorced man can be innocent don’t you? Or, are you one of the promoters of the false doctrine that states that all parties to a divorce are always guilty of sin? **When an individual has scriptural grounds for divorce, they are not guilty of sin in the divorce action.**

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You may think that the issue before us is not as serious as we make it out to be, but lets take a look at some shocking statistics from seven years ago (this is 2014) written by Richard J. Krejcir:

Here is research that we distilled from Barna, Focus on the Family, and Fuller Seminary, all of which backed up our findings, and additional information from reviewing others' research: Almost forty percent polled said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry. ["Statistics on Pastors, © 2007 (research from 1989 to 2006) R. J. Krejcir Ph.D. Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development; cited from

<http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=36562>]

Did you catch that? A whopping forty percent admitted to extra-marital sexual affairs! Note that these men were still in the ministry when the research was conducted. What that indicates to us is that most churches in America refuse to deal with the issue of pastoral adultery because if they dealt with it scripturally, many of these sexually promiscuous, wicked, sinister ministers would not be in our pulpits. What about some specific cases from some very high profile Independent Baptist Churches?

It is okay for the pastor that is an adulterer and fornicator to go a whoring around on his wife just so he remains undivorced. Touched not God's anointed no matter how wickedly he behaves. Many pastors and preachers use "touch not God's anointed" to hide the vilest of sins. Some cases in point include the unholy trinity from First Baptist Hammond, Indiana, namely Joe Combs, Jack Hyles, and Jack Schaap. To that we can add Bob Grey of the then unholy Trinity Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida who was guilty of molesting children and yet remained in the ministry with the knowledge of some of his church leaders. But at least these four men were not divorced. God forbid that they should be divorced! The consequence of tolerating such conduct is that we have lost the anointing of the Holy Ghost of God in most of our Independent Baptist churches. This is what happens when so-called "men of God" will not rebuke the sin of man's anointed (wrongfully called God's anointed), but will instead let them continue in their sin bringing shame and reproach upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church. What a bane to the Independent Baptist movement! Many churches will put a man out of the ministry who divorces through no fault of his own, but they will not put a fornicating pastor, preacher, or deacon out of their pulpits or their churches. Many churches will not put an adulterer, adulteress, fornicator, or sodomite out from the membership of their church, but they go into a mad rush to get rid of that wicked and ungodly divorced man whose only sin was to be married to a woman who turned into an adulteress and a whore. Many fornicating "once married" preachers wickedly think they are still qualified to preach and pastor because they have not been given divorce papers or do not possess a second marriage license. We have news for you boys. You are a whole lot less qualified to be in the ministry than that innocent divorced man whose adulterous wife divorced him.

Let me state this unequivocally, if you have ever had any kind of sexual relationship with a woman other than the woman you are married to now, you are guilty of being at least "double married" in God's eyes under both the Old Testament law and under New Testament Scriptures. What that means is this. If you had sex with any woman other than the woman you are married to now, and you preach against "double married" preachers and pastors, then **YOU** have permanently disqualified

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yourself from the ministry out of your own mouth. The Holy Ghost plainly teaches in 1 Corinthians 6:16 that if you join your body to an harlot, then you and the harlot become one flesh. The “one flesh” statement is God’s requirement from Genesis 2:24 for a man and a woman to become husband and wife. The whole idea of a sexual relationship with an harlot constituting a marriage is also addressed by Josephus when he said:

And further, no one ought to marry a harlot, whose matrimonial oblations, arising from the prostitution of her body, God will not receive; for by these means the dispositions of the children will be liberal and virtuous; I mean, when they are not born of base parents, and of the lustful conjunction of such as marry women that are not free. [Josephus, Book 4, Chapter 8, Section 23 (245) page 119)]

That was the whole idea that the Holy Ghost was presenting in 1 Corinthians 6:16 when Paul said that if you join yourself to an harlot you have married her (became one flesh). There is no ceremony, no marriage license, no priest, or no pastor there. None is required in the eyes of God or the eyes of the Scriptures. Nor was there a justice of the peace or a magistrate in 1 Corinthians 6:16. Neither is any required in the eyes of God or in the eyes of the Scriptures. Read it for yourself. You will not find a scriptural mandate or commandment in either Testament that requires a marriage ceremony in order for a couple to be married in the eyes of God. Again, the reason that the interpretation that becoming one flesh constitutes a marriage does not sit well with a lot of our preachers and pastors is because many of them are guilty of adultery and fornication. If they are guilty of adultery and fornication, then they are guilty of becoming one flesh with multiple women thereby making themselves husbands of multiple wives. If they are husbands of multiple wives, then they are disqualified from the ministry by their own preaching and teaching of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It never ceases to amaze us how we can leave an adulterer, child molester, and a fornicator in the pulpit and permanently disqualify a man who has had a divorce.

A woman is guilty of being a whore and a harlot when she commits her first act of fornication and/or adultery. A man is guilty of being a whoremonger when he commits his first act of fornication and/or adultery. What that means is that if you come together sexually with multiple partners, then you have had, or do have, multiple (living) spouses. Many pastors scream against acts of fornication being called marriages because they are guilty of fornication and/or adultery after their marriages. The act of adultery also constitutes an act of fornication. If the sexual act(s) constitute a marriage (and it does), then they are guilty of having multiple wives which by their own twisted interpretation and application would permanently disqualify them from the ministry. Again, the Holy Ghost plainly states in 1 Corinthians 6:16 that when a man joins himself unto an harlot that they become one flesh. That is the definition of a scriptural marriage. Some of the men we are talking about here were guilty of fornication before they were saved and some of them were guilty of fornication after they were saved. Many were guilty of both. God does not give a different set of qualifications for the ministry based upon whether a man was saved or lost. When a mere man tries to make that judgment, then they are trying to judge that which only the Holy Ghost is capable of judging. Many self-righteous “once-married” peacocks take what they consider to be the “safe” route by not allowing anyone who has

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ever been divorced, saved or lost, to enter into the ministry. While we partially agree with that interpretation that salvation is not the issue, we totally disagree that divorce is the disqualifying issue. The issue is how many scriptural living wives does a man have in the present tense. If a man is scripturally divorced from a woman, that woman is no longer his wife.

Fornication and adultery make a “fundamentalist” pastor and preacher no less disqualified to be in the pulpit than a man who has had a divorce that his sin caused. However, we do believe that the Devil has taken many innocent men from our pulpits whose divorces were no fault of their own. We also believe that the Devil has used many “fundamentalist”, self-righteous hypocrites to accomplish that which rightly dividing the Scriptures could not have done. We also believe that the “fundamentalist” doctrine of throwing divorced men out of the pulpits has allowed the Devil to use many ungodly pastor’s and preacher’s wives to control and destroy many thriving ministries. Many ungodly, high profile preachers and pastors have set themselves above rebuke because they believe they are untouchable.

The phrases “husband of one wife” and “touch not God’s anointed” are the two most abused phrases in the Independent Baptist movement. The two unforgivable sins in the Independent Baptist movement is divorce and touching God’s anointed. The phrase “touch not God’s anointed” in 1 Chronicles 16:22 and Psalm 105:15 is almost always preached and taught from the wrong context. The context is to touch not God’s anointed people. In other words, in context, its emphasis is on God’s chosen people. God the Holy Ghost added the phrase “and do my prophets no harm” almost as an after thought, but the emphasis was on the PEOPLE. If we wanted to attempt to make a New Testament application of the passage it would be much more true to context if we applied it to the CONGREGATION (the spiritual seed of Abraham) rather than to some unscriptural dictator whose sin cannot be questioned and who openly mocks the men that God has put there to support the ministry. We are not advocating rebellion against a **holy** man of God that has been called of God to pastor, but we are calling for him to be held to the same standard of holiness that God holds the congregation to. God said in 1 Peter 5:1-4:

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over *God’s* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

We see it all over the internet where unholy, blind loyalty leads deceived church members to defend the wicked conduct of unholy preachers and pastors who have violated the trust that God and their congregation has placed in them. We have heard of and read many cases where blind church members and church leaders will wickedly defend unholy, fornicating, adulterous, once married pastors while condemning a divorced man who, both before and after his divorce, has lived a model Christ honoring Christian life. Some of these unholy Baptist popes are even guilty of child molestation and yet they continue in the ministry. The scriptures do not teach blind loyalty, but rather a loyalty that is enlightened by the scriptures and the Holy Ghost of God. When pastors and other

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church officers will not repent of their sin they are just as subject to rebuke and church discipline as other church members. If you are deacon, or a church member, that will allow a pastor to continue in known sin, then you become a partaker in that sin. If you are a pastor that goes a whoring around on your wife then you are guilty of prostituting the mercy and grace of God to feed your flesh. We believe that God calls that presumptuous sin. Let me say this. If an innocent divorced man can be permanently put out of the ministry, then a once married pastor that is guilty of fornication, or adultery, or child molestation must be permanently put out of the ministry. In fact, that once married whoremongering preacher and pastor is much more deserving of being permanently put out of the ministry than that innocent divorced man. You do believe that a divorced man can be innocent don't you? Or, are you one of those that believe he must have done something wrong too or God would have protected him and the ministry from his wife's ungodly conduct? Really!? Will you also deny freewill?

MEN PLEASERS, FLATTERING TITLES, AND DOCTORS OF THE LAW

The biggest problem in the issue before us is pride. We are not going to give up on what we have been taught because we would have to admit we are wrong. All the wimpy men followers would have to took their tails under and run from their doctrinal dictators and taskmasters like scalded dogs. God forbid they should study this issue through for themselves! We have also seen pastors that not only reject counsel, but also openly rebuke counsel. **A man that will not take counsel is a fool that is right in his own eyes (Proverbs 12:15).** Most men openly reject the whole counsel of God on the issue before us choosing instead to take the counsel of great men. The fear of men bringeth a snare. Great men are not always wise. In many of our Independent Baptist churches, we have become promoters of men instead of promoters of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many Independent Baptist pastors have taken a peacock's stroll down lover's lane walking hand-in-hand with themselves. We have put unholy and wicked Doctors into our pulpits who are into self exaltation and consider themselves to be above rebuke and all the while forgetting the warning and counsel of Job and Jeremiah:

Job 32:21-22

21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. 22 For I know not to give flattering titles; *in so doing* my maker would soon take me away.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

What that tells us is that we are to neither give flattering titles or receive flattering titles. To do either

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is SIN. Many of these doctors have become the priest class in our Baptist churches who seek the highest seats and honours in the synagogues. A case in point is the following advertisement quoted verbatim from the back page of the August 31, 2012 edition of that Independent Baptist bastion of humility, the “Sword Of The Lord”:

*There is not a man alive who has personally won more souls to Christ than **DOCTOR** Bob Gray, Sr. He has been in the ministry for 39 years and daily wins souls. Last year he personally led 404 souls to Christ, with 107 of those following the Lord in baptism. He has been used of God to see 1,116,887 souls come to Christ while pastoring the Longview Baptist Temple of Longview, Texas. It grew from a low of 159 to averaging 2,046 the last year he was pastor, with high days over 10,000. They ran 40 bus routes and had a large Sunday School program. He led the church to give \$9,328,835.69 to missions. I want you to come hear this man of God who can help you.*

DOCTOR Russell Anderson

Wow, what vainglory! There is nothing like a vain attempt to steal the glory from God! That is enough to make us want to puke! Bob Gray has received his reward in the praise of men. We would be ashamed to have such unadulterated worship published concerning us. Not only would we be ashamed, we would not allow it. Shame on the “Sword Of The Lord”. We cannot believe that the “conservative, fundamentalist” “Sword Of The Lord” would publish such vainglory! Uh, uh, uh we retract that statement. A search of the August 2012 issue of “The Sword” reveals that Independent Baptists are very fond of the title DOCTOR. It appears no less than 105 times in the 24 pages of “The Sword”. Just in case you have forgotten the sinner’s prayer they also include it with a copy of a decision form that may put your converts on the road to confirmation. There is also an equally effusive trip down glory road in the endorsement given to “Pastor” Terrell Hopkins on the back page. This whole paper reeks of the filthiness of the flesh and the vileness of self-esteem and self-exaltation. There is definitely no glory left there for the Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe they need to rename their newspaper “The Independent Baptist Glory Corner”. It is definitely not the sword of the Lord because in its pages man is high and lifted up. **God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

DIVORCE COMMANDED UPON THE PRIESTHOOD

The next to the last issue we will deal with in this chapter is the situation where God commanded the Levitical priests to put away their pagan wives. This drives to the issue of whether divorce disqualifies men from ministering in the service of God. In Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13 we have the record of the cleansing of the priesthood that included putting away their strange (pagan) wives. These events are recorded in Ezra 10:2-3, Ezra 10:10-11, Ezra 10:18-19, and Nehemiah 13:27-30. These Scriptures state:

Ezra 10:2-3

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2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. 3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

Ezra 10:10-11

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. 11 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.

Ezra 10:18-19

18 And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. 19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and *being guilty, they offered* a ram of the flock for their trespass.

Nehemiah 13:27-30

²⁷ Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? ²⁸ And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. ²⁹ Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. ³⁰ Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

What about that?! A commandment from God to the people and the priesthood to divorce (put away) their pagan, unbelieving wives. If you study all of Ezra chapter 10, you will find that not only had the people corrupted themselves with pagan wives but that priesthood had also. When the priests defiled themselves by taking profane (strange or pagan) wives they disqualified themselves from the priesthood according to Leviticus 21:7 which says:

Leviticus 21:7

⁷ They [the priests] 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.

It was therefore necessary that they put away (divorce) their pagan wives so that they might be ceremonially clean for service in offering up sacrifices unto the LORD. Nehemiah makes it plain that the priests were cleansed “**from all strangers**” before they were appointed into wards. This

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cleansing was the subject of all of Ezra chapter 10 where the divorces were commanded and carried out. So, if divorce disqualifies a man from service unto God, then why did God command the divorces of the priests and then return them unto service in the Temple? If you teach that divorce disqualifies a man from the ministry, then you are going to have a hard time reconciling that doctrine with Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13. You cannot explain it away dispensationally. You cannot explain it away as being a difference between law and grace. We close this section with a statement that we quoted earlier:

A divorced and remarried priest can serve - the only restriction we find is that he may not marry a divorcee. A priest does not have to be married except for the High Priest on the Yom Kippur service. This is derived from Leviticus 16:6: "He shall atone for himself and his home" - where 'home' implies he has a family (see Mishna Yoma 1;1). They also could have multiple wives since this is forbidden only rabbinically. Ezekiel 44 contains more of the basic laws of priests - prophetically described in the Third Temple, but Leviticus 21 is the main source. [From Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld aishrabbi@aish.edu]

Note that the priests in this quote were allowed to have multiple wives. Could that give us some insight into the necessity for the use of the phrase "husband of one wife" by the Holy Ghost in 1 Timothy 3:2?

DIVORCED HUSBANDS AS PASTORS OF THEIR HOMES

Our final question is: Is a divorced and remarried man disqualified from being the pastor of his home? While on the surface this might seem to be a ridiculous question, it really is not because many men have been put in situations where they are in remote locations where there is no established church and they must pastor their families. Are you going to try to tell us that they should forego any assembly for the purpose of worship, preaching, and teaching because the father in the family has been divorced. The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". That is given in the context of a church. As a reminder, a church is an organized assembly of baptized believers. That assembly does not have to take place in a church building. That is a definition that applies to families in locations where there are no churches or no scriptural churches. Are you going to tell us that a family cannot meet the commandment "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together"? The charge has been given to the husband to be the spiritual leader in the home regardless of whether he is divorced. Are you going to tell us that that divorced man cannot preach to and teach the members of his family? Are the family members any less church members because they are not assembled in a church building? The rate at which the wicked, apostate, heretical church is falling away there will come a time when people will have to hold church in their homes. In many locations, that is already an absolute necessity. We would remind you that many of the early churches were organized in homes. We are not here advocating families pulling out of good Bible believing churches. This paragraph is yet another illustration of how utterly unscriptural the doctrine is that permanently disqualifies a divorced

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man from being a preacher, pastor, evangelist, missionary, or deacon. That doctrine is an affront to “rightly dividing the word of truth”. Put bluntly, it is heresy.

APPENDIX I QUOTES FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS AND COMMENTARIES

We strongly state the following disclaimer on the quotes that follow: We in no way endorse the doctrine or theology of most of the individuals we quote below. Many of them are Calvinists and Roman Catholics. In fact, most of them we would disagree with on some major point of doctrine. They are only quoted here to show the breadth of opinion and interpretation of the phrase “husband of one wife”.

QUOTES FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS

Albert Barnes: (Presbyterian; born 1798): Polygamy: (1) It is the most obvious meaning of the language, and it would doubtless be thus understood by those to whom it was addressed. At a time when polygamy was not uncommon, to say that a man should “have but one wife” would be naturally understood as prohibiting polygamy. [Albert Barnes, Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Epistles of Paul: To the Thessalonians, To Timothy, To Titus, and to Philemon, Harper & Brothers, 1845, Page 162]

Ambrose: And the Apostle has established a law, saying: “If any man be without reproach the husband of one wife.” So then he who is without blame the husband of one wife comes within the rule for undertaking the priestly office; he, however, who has married again has no guilt of pollution, but is disqualified for the priestly prerogative. [Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Ambrose: Select Works And Letters. Christian Literature Company, 1896, Page 466]

Joseph Benson: (Methodist; born 1748): Polygamy: The apostle’s meaning, therefore, in these canons, is, that such persons only were to be intrusted with sacred offices who in their married state had contented themselves with one wife, and with one husband at a time; because thereby they had showed themselves temperate in the use of sensual pleasures; through the immoderate love of which the Asiatic nations universally practised polygamy. [No Locate On Reference]

William Burkitt: (Anglican; born 1650): Polygamy And Divorce: The husband of one wife; that is, one at a time; not guilty of the sin of having many wives, or of putting away the wife by divorce, as the Jews frequently did for frivolous causes. [William Burkitt, Expository notes, with practical observations, on the New Testament, Volume 2 ,1832, Page 522]

John Calvin: (Calvinist; born 1509): Polygamy: The only true exposition, therefore, is that of

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Chrysostom, that in a bishop he expressly condemns polygamy, (50) which at that time the Jews almost reckoned to be lawful. [John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, Calvin Translation Society, 1856, Page 77]

John Chrysostom: “A Bishop then,” he says, “must be blameless, the husband of one wife.” This he does not lay down as a rule, as if he must not be without one, but as prohibiting his having more than one. For even the Jews were allowed to contract second marriages, and even to have two wives at one time. [John Chrysostom, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Christian literature Company, 1889, Page 438]

Adam Clarke: (Methodist; born 1760): Polygamy: Second - must be the husband of one wife. He should be a married man, but he should be no polygamist; and have only one wife, i.e. one at a time. [Adam Clarke, The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Volume 2, Peter C. Smith, 1831, Page 612]

Thomas Coke: (Methodist; born 1747): Polygamy And Causeless Divorce) the husband of one wife; that is, “one who has not causelessly divorced his wife, and married another;” much less ought he to have more than one wife at a time. [No Locate On Reference]

Stanley L. Derickson: A Divorced Man Is Disqualified: One other possibility has been taught in recent years. “Not a loose type man,” or “a one woman at a time man,” which of course allows for divorce and remarriage of elders. This is a recent addition to the menu of excuses to skirt Scripture and allow people the freedom to do as they please rather than as the Lord directs. [Stanley L. Derickson, Derickson’s Notes On Theology, Copyright 1992, Page 1061]

Jameson, Fausett, and Brown: (published 1871): No Divorced Men: Though the Jews practiced polygamy, yet as he is writing as to a Gentile Church, and as polygamy was never allowed among even laymen in the Church, the ancient interpretation that the prohibition here is against polygamy in a candidate bishop is not correct. It must, therefore, mean that, though laymen might lawfully marry again, candidates for the episcopate or presbytery were better to have been married only once. [Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, David Brown J. B. A Commentary, Critical, Practical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments, Volume 2, Names & Company, 1882, Page 434]

Arno C. Gaebelein: (Methodist; born 1861) Polygamy: “He must be the husband of one wife.” This has been explained as excluding all who had been married twice. This is incorrect. It may refer to those who were as pagans married to more than one woman, for polygamy was practiced among the heathen in that day, as it is still. [Arno C. Gaebelein, The Annotated Bible, Publication Office “Our Hope”, 1917, Page 162]

John Gill: (Baptist; born 1697): Polygamy And Unscriptural Divorce: The husband of one wife; which is not to be understood in a mystical and allegorical sense of his being the pastor of one church, since the apostle afterwards speaks of his house and children, that are to be ruled and kept in good

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order by him, in distinction from the church of God; but in a literal sense of his conjugal estate; though this rule does not make it necessary that he should have a wife; or that he should not marry, or not have married a second wife, after the death of the first; only if he marries or is married, that he should have but one wife at a time; so that this rule excludes all such persons from being elders, or pastors, or overseers of churches, that were “polygamists”; who had more wives than one at a time, or had divorced their wives, and not for adultery, and had married others. [John Gill, Exposition of the Old and New Testament]

W. B. Godbey: “The husband of one wife;” i.e., polygamy prohibited. [W. B. Godbey, Commentary On The New Testament, Volume 3, Ephesians-Philemon, Page 190]

Matthew Henry: (Presbyterian; born 1662): No Polygamy And No Divorce: He must be the husband of one wife; not having given a bill of divorce to one, and then taken another, or not having many wives at once, as at that time was too common both among Jews and Gentiles, especially among the Gentiles. [Matthew Henry, An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, Volume 6, Bell and Bradfute, J. Dickson, and J. McCliesh, 1791, Page 674]

Jerome: (Roman Catholic): To what does all this tend, you ask. I reply; you remember the question that you proposed. It was this. A Spanish bishop named Carterius, old in years and in the priesthood has married two wives, one before he was baptized, and, she having died, another since he has passed through the laver; and you are of opinion that he has violated the precept of the apostle, who in his list of episcopal qualifications commands that a bishop shall be “the husband of one wife.” I am surprised that you have pilloried an individual when the whole world is filled with persons ordained in similar circumstances; I do not mean presbyters or clergy of lower rank, but speak only of bishops of whom if I were to enumerate them all one by one I should gather a sufficient number to surpass the crowd which attended the synod of Ariminum. [Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Jerome, Christian Literature Company, 1893, Page 142]

Jerome: (Roman Catholic): The text quoted by the objector, “a bishop must be the husband of one wife,” admits of quite another explanation. The apostle came of the Jews and the primitive Christian church was gathered out of the remnants of Israel. Paul knew that the Law allowed men to have children by several wives, and was aware that the example of the patriarchs had made polygamy familiar to the people. Even the very priests might at their own discretion enjoy the same license. He gave commandment therefore that the priests of the church should not claim this liberty, that they should not take two wives or three together, but that they should each have but one wife at one time. [Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Jerome, Christian Literature Company, 1893, Page 144]

Jerome: (Roman Catholic): “The husband of one wife.” Concerning this requirement I have spoken

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above. I will now only warn you that If monogamy is insisted on before baptism the other conditions laid down must be insisted on before baptism too. For it is impossible to regard the remaining obligations as binding only on the baptized and this alone as binding also on the unbaptized. [Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Jerome, Christian Literature Company, 1893, Page 147]

Leo The Great: [Caution: this was the first Roman Pope!]: A man who has married twice or a widow is not eligible as a priest....For it is well known that the husbands of widows have attained to the priesthood: certain, too, who have had several wives, and have led a life given up to all licentiousness, have had all facilities put in their way, and been admitted to the Sacred Order, contrary to that utterance of the blessed Apostle, in which he proclaims and says to such, “the husband of one wife,” and contrary to that precept of the ancient law which says by way of caution: “Let the priest take a virgin to wife, not a widow, not a divorced woman.” All such persons, therefore, who have been admitted we order to be put out of their offices in the church and from the title of priest by the authority of the Apostolic See....But if all the requirements of the holy Fathers are found in them, and if they have observed all that we read the blessed Apostle Paul to have enjoined on such, viz., that he be the husband of one wife, and that she was a virgin when he married her, as the authority of GOD’s law requires, [then ordain them]. [Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series, Volume XII Leo the Great, Cosimo, Inc., Jun 1, 2007, Page 3]

Frederick B. Meyer : (Baptist; first pastorate 1870): Polygamy And Unscriptural Divorce: Such was the facility of divorce among the Jews that it was a common thing for a man to have more than one woman living who had been his wife: but by Paul’s ruling this would debar him from holding office, unless his divorce be for cause as provided in Matthew 19:9. [Meyer, Frederick Brotherton, Commentary on 1 Timothy 3, Through the Bible Commentary, 1914]

Matthew Poole: (Presbyterian; born 1624): Polygamy: The husband of one wife; none who at the same time hath more wives than one, as many of the Jews had; nor was polygamy only common amongst the Jews, but amongst the other Eastern nations; but this was contrary to the institution of marriage. [Matthew Poole, Annotations Upon the Holy Bible, R. Carter and Brothers, 1852, Page 779]

Pulpit Commentary: (Published 1890): Polygamy And No Divorce: It seems, then, to mean that the pastor was to be “the husband of one wife,” avoiding the polygamy that was then so common among the Jews, and the system of divorce still so common in that age, and remaining faithful to the wife of his choice. [H.D.M. Spence and J.S. Exell, Henry Donald M. The Pulpit Commentary, 1 Timothy, ed. by Spence- Jones 1887, Page 58]

A. T. Robertson: (Southern Baptist, born 1863): Polygamy: Of one wife [mias gunaikos]. One at a time, clearly. [A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume 4, CCEL, 1930, Page 659]

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Charles C. Ryrie: Interprets No Divorced Pastors: “husband of one wife (may mean only one wife ever, since the Greek is the same as in 1 Ti 5:9 and since polygamy was unknown among the Greeks and Romans, or it may bar those who remarry after divorce)”. [Charles C. Ryrie, A Survey of Bible Doctrine, Moody Publishers, June 8, 1989, Page 88]

C.I. Scofield: (Congregationalist; Published The Scofield Bible in 1909): He avoids the issue of “the husband of one wife” entirely in his notes. It is important to note that he was a divorced pastor and that he was Dwight L Moody’s pastor and Moody knew he was divorced.

Charles Spurgeon: (Baptist; born 1834): Seemed To Interpret of Polygamy: “For there were many converts there who had two or three wives. Whatever position they might be permitted to occupy in the church, they could not become officers, they must keep in the rear rank”. [Charles Spurgeon, Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 41, Page 728, Exposition of Titus 1 and 2) The phrase “husband of one wife” occurs but twice in all of Spurgeon’s published works: the one in Volume 41 and the one Sword And Trowel, Volume 5, Page 138].

John Trapp: (Anglican; born 1601): Polygamy: The husband of one wife] sc. At once. The Egyptian priests were forbidden also polygamy. [John Trapp, Commentary on 1 Timothy 3, Trapp Complete Commentary, 1865-1868]

John Wesley: (Methodist): Polygamy And Divorce: This neither means that a bishop must be married, nor that he may not marry a second wife; which it is just as lawful for him to do as to marry a first, and may in some cases be his bounden duty. But whereas polygamy and divorce on slight occasions were common both among the Jews and heathens, it teaches us that ministers, of all others, ought to stand clear of those sins. [John Wesley, Notes On The Whole Bible, The New Testament, Page 693]

Daniel Whedon: (Methodist; born 1808): Polygamy: Polygamy, in St. Paul’s time, was usual with both Jews and Gentiles. It was demoralizing both races. Rabbis had four and five wives. Converts to Christianity involved in polygamy would often present themselves for admission to the Church, and the peculiarities of their case might be considered in the instance of private Christians; but Paul forbids any such entanglement for an elder. Alford admits that the early commentators, Theodoret, Chrysostom, Theophylact, each made the text forbid only polygamy. [Daniel Denison Whedon, Commentary on the New Testament, Volume 4, Hunt & Eaton, 1903, Page 423]

Wayne Gruden: However, the following reasons cause most interpreters to reject this view. First, this view ignores the over all context of 1 Tim 3, which emphasizes post conversion character rather than preconversion sins. “All the other qualifications listed by Paul refer to a man’s present status, not his entire past life. For example, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 does not mean ‘one who has never been violent’ but ‘one who is not now violent, but gentle.’ It does not mean ‘one who has never been a lover of

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money' but 'one who is not now a lover of money.' It does not mean 'one who has been above reproach his whole life' but one who is now above reproach.'" If we made these qualifications apply to one's entire past life, then we would exclude from office almost everyone who became a Christian as an adult, for it is doubtful that any non-Christian could meet these qualifications." [Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine Zondervan, 1994, Page 917]

John Rice says in his Book, DR. RICE HERE ARE MORE QUESTIONS, pgs. 339-340;

"I believe that any of these major sins (wrong divorce, drunkenness, murder, etc.) can be forgiven and are forgiven when there is honest repentance. Then when God has forgiven and when one has done all he can do to repudiate and undo the sins of the past (which of course, can never be undone entirely and sometimes not at all), and when he has taken time to live it down and proved himself a dependable, trustworthy Christian so that his usefulness is not hindered by the past, then he might do whatever God calls him to do and whatever God's people trust him to do....I do not believe in passing a rule that one who has ever been drunk can never be a deacon or preacher; likewise, I do not believe in passing a rule that one who has ever been divorced cannot be a deacon or preacher. And my reason is very simple; there is no such rule in the Bible." [John R. Rice, Dr. Rice, Here are More Questions ..., Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1973, Pages 339-340]

Stanley A. Ellisen gives a few good thoughts from his book DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE:

"..One's past history may not necessarily portray his present character. It is possible to have a good marital history of single marriage and have a 'cat-calling' character of wandering affections at the same time...On the other hand, it is also possible to have a sorrowful marital history of a broken marriage while having a personal character that is above reproach. The tragedy may not have been of his own making, as noted with the prophet Hosea...The passage in 1 Timothy 3:2....puts the emphasis where Jesus put it, on the heart and present character, rather than on outward record of marital history. The emphasis is not so much on what a man ONCE was, but what he NOW is.... [Stanley A. Ellisen, Divorce and Remarriage in the Church (Grand Rapids, 1980), p. 83]

J. Vernon McGee says in his book QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

"Can a man who is divorced and remarried still be eligible for a position, such as deacon or pastor?" Answer: "...If the deacon (or pastor) has scriptural grounds on which he got a divorce, and the circumstances are pretty generally known, then I see no reason for his not occupying the office of deacon (or pastor)." [J. Vernon McGee, Questions and Answers, Published by Thomas Nelson Inc, 1991]

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M.R. Dehaan says in his book, DEAR DOCTOR, I HAVE A PROBLEM, pg. 109);

“If a man is saved after making the mistake, and sees and confesses his fault, I would be the last one to put up a hindrance to his ministry.” [M. R. DeHaan, Dear Doctor: I Have a Problem, Answers to Bible Questions Volume Two, Published by Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI, 1961, Page 109]

H.A. Ironside says in his book WHAT IS THE ANSWER? (question 36);

Is it permissible for a man who has been twice married, the first wife having been divorced because of immorality....to hold the office of a deacon (or pastor)?” Answer: “...in the case such as you mention, the first wife has been divorced both legally and scripturally,the man is qualified for the office of a deacon if the life is otherwise right.” [H.A. Ironside, What Is The Answer? (Question 36), Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervon, 1944]

QUOTES FROM COMMENTARIES

Husband of one wife. (On Titus 1:6) The traditional and most widely accepted view of Bible-believing, soul-winning preachers has been that a pastor must not be divorced and remarried. History has shown it almost never works for a pastor to be divorced. If he cannot rule his own house how can he rule the church? [Ed Hindson, King James Version Commentary Thomas Nelson Inc, Sept. 20, 2005] [**Note from the author of this book:** So, if you think that it is okay for a divorced man to be a pastor, then you are not a soul winning preacher?? Incredible !!]

Polygamy was not practiced in the Roman world outside Palestine, though illegal bigamy and certainly adultery were. “Husband of one wife” no doubt means a faithful husband and presupposes marriage; such a man would be helpful in standing against the false teachers who opposed marriage (4:3). (The injunction that married leaders be used would not apply to all situations; cf. comment on 1 Cor 7:8.) “Husband of one wife” refers to one’s current marital status and behavior; validly divorced people who remarried were considered married to one spouse, the second one, not to two spouses. [The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament on 1 Timothy 3:2]

husband of one wife — confuting the celibacy of Rome’s priesthood. Though the Jews practiced polygamy, yet as he is writing as to a Gentile Church, and as polygamy was never allowed among even laymen in the Church, the ancient interpretation that the prohibition here is against polygamy

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in a candidate bishop is not correct. It must, therefore, mean that, though laymen might lawfully marry again, candidates for the episcopate or presbytery were better to have been married only *once*. [Jamieson, Robert; Fausset, Andrew Robert ; Brown, David J. B. A Commentary, Critical, Practical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments, Volume 4, page 200]

The husband of one wife (v. 2b). All of the qualifying adjectives in this passage are masculine. While there is ample scope for feminine ministry in a local assembly, the office of elder is not given to women. However, a pastor's home life is very important, and especially his marital status. (This same requirement applies to deacons, according to 1 Tim. 3:12.) It means that a pastor must not be divorced and remarried. Paul was certainly not referring to polygamy, since no church member, let alone a pastor, would be accepted if he had more than one wife. Nor is he referring to remarriage after the death of the wife; for why would a pastor be prohibited from marrying again, in the light of Genesis 2:18 and 1 Timothy 4:3? Certainly the members of the church who had lost mates could marry again; so why penalize the pastor?

It's clear that a man's ability to manage his own marriage and home indicate ability to oversee a local church (1 Tim. 3:4–5). A pastor who has been divorced opens himself and the church to criticism from outsiders, and it is not likely that people with marital difficulties would consult a man who could not keep his own marriage together. I see no reason why *dedicated* Christians who have been divorced and remarried cannot serve in other offices in the church, but they are disqualified from being elders or deacons. [Be Faithful (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon): Warren W. Wiersbe, Jan 1, 2009 Page 48]

Husband of but one wife, literally, a “one-woman man.” This ambiguous but important phrase is subject to several interpretations. The question is, how stringent a standard was Paul erecting for overseers? Virtually all commentators agree that this phrase prohibits both polygamy and promiscuity, which are unthinkable for spiritual leaders in the church. Many Bible students say the words a “one-woman man” are saying that the affections of an elder must be centered exclusively on his wife. Many others hold, however, that the phrase further prohibits any who have been divorced and remarried from becoming overseers. The reasoning behind this view is usually that divorce represents a failure in the home, so that even though a man may be forgiven for any sin involved, he remains permanently disqualified for leadership in the congregation (cf. vv. 4-5; 1 Cor. 9:24-27). The most strict interpretation and the one common among the earliest commentators (second and third centuries) includes each of the above but extends the prohibition to *any* second marriage, even by widowers. [Roy B. Zuck David C. Cook, The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, Volume 1, 1983 on 1 Timothy 3:2, Page 736]

Husband of one wife: it does not mean “one at a time” (polygamy was unknown among Greeks and Romans); he has not been divorced and remarried. [Paul P Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology,

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Moody Publishers, Feb 1, 2008, Page 367] (**Note from this author:** That this statement from the Moody Handbook Of Theology is not accurate can be ascertained from statements by the Jewish historian Josephus, from statements by Jerome rebuking the Jews for having multiple wives, and by the fact that multiple wives for Jewish men did not become formally prohibited until about 1,000 A. D.)

* See the important discussion by Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1982), pp. 122–26. Kent discusses the variant views and concludes Paul is prohibiting remarriage after divorce. The argument on divorce usually centers on the exceptive clause of Matt. 19:9. For a careful, biblical study of the entire subject of divorce see J. Carl Laney, *The Divorce Myth* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1981). Perhaps the most important book that has been recently written on the subject is William A. Heth and Gordon J. Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce: The Problem with the Evangelical Consensus* (Nashville: Nelson, 1984). They conclude that the common suggestion that Jesus allowed the “innocent party” to remarry after divorce is a recent view first espoused by Erasmus and is biblically deficient and erroneous. No study of the subject will be complete without consulting this important work. [Paul P Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Moody Publishers, Feb 1, 2008, Page 380, on 1 Timothy 3:2] (**Note from this author:** This is inconsistent with the fact that D.L. Moody’s pastor, C.I. Scofield, was a divorced man. We have no idea who Homer A. Kent is, but Paul nowhere mentions divorce in 1 Timothy and Titus. It is once again read into the passage by someone who has an unscriptural agenda]

The qualifications for the elders are spelled out in great detail in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9. The former passage (which is the more detailed one) lists them as follows: blameless (not open to criticism), husband of one wife (may mean only one wife ever, since the Greek is the same as in 1 Ti 5:9 and since polygamy was unknown among the Greeks and Romans, or it may bar those who remarry after divorce) [Charles C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, Moody Publishers, June 8, 1989] (**Note from this author:** That this statement from “A Survey Of Bible Doctrine is not accurate can be ascertained from statements by the Jewish historian Josephus, from statements by Jerome rebuking the Jews for having multiple wives, and by the fact that multiple wives for Jewish men did not become formally prohibited until about 1,000 A. D.)

It has, indeed, been inferred from 1 Timothy iii. 2, where the Apostle says, a bishop must be “the husband of one wife,” that a private member of the Church might have more wives than one. But this is in itself a very precarious inference; and being inconsistent with Christ’s express prohibition, it is altogether inadmissible. The meaning of the passage has been much disputed. What the Apostle requires is that a bishop should be in all respects an exemplary man: not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; the husband of one wife, *I. e.*, not a polygamist. This no more implies that other men may be polygamists, than his saying that a bishop must not be greedy of filthy lucre and not a brawler, implies that other men may be covetous or contentious. According to another and widely

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accepted interpretation of the passage in 1 Timothy iii. 2, and the corresponding passage in Titus I. 6, the injunction of the Apostle is that a man who has been married more than once, must not be appointed a bishop or presbyter. If this be the true meaning of the Apostle, his language affords still less ground for the argument drawn from it in favour of the lawfulness of polygamy in church members. If even second marriage was forbidden to presbyters, *a fortiori* must polygamy be regarded as inconsistent with the law of Christ. [Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, 1871, Page 388]

Husband of one wife: A one-wife kind of man, not a philanderer (doesn't necessarily rule out widowers or divorced men). [Lawrence O. Richards, David C Cook, Bible Teacher's Commentary, 2002, Page 973]

“The husband of one wife.” This can be interpreted two ways. It could mean that he ought to be married. I feel that Paul had this in mind. You may say, “Well, Paul was not married.” I take the position that Paul had been married and his wife had died. He could not have been a member of the Sanhedrin without being married. He simply had not married again, perhaps because of his travels as an apostle.

When I first became a pastor I was not married and I was frequently kidded by a friend who said I had no right to be a pastor if I wasn't married. Using this verse, he would say, “You should be the husband of one wife.” However, I think that the primary meaning here is that the bishop or elder should not have *two* wives. Polygamy was common in Paul's day, and bigamy was certainly prevalent. The officer in the church should be the husband of one wife. [J. Vernon McGee, 1 Corinthians through Revelation, J. Vernon McGee, Thomas Nelson Inc, Jan 6, 1984, Page 441-442 on 1 Timothy 3:2]

A. T. Robertson on Matthew 19:9: Except for fornication.... Those who deny Matthew's report are those who are opposed to remarriage at all. Jesus by implication, as in 5:31, does allow remarriage of the innocent party, but not of the guilty one. Certainly Jesus has lifted the whole subject of marriage and divorce to a new level, far beyond the petty contentions of the schools of Hillel and Shammai. [A. T. Robertson, The Gospel According to Matthew and the Gospel According to Mark, Kregel Academic, April 1, 2003, Page 163]

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Adulterer:**
1. A man guilty of adultery; a man who has sexual commerce with any married woman, except his wife.
 2. In scripture, an idolater. Ezek 23.
 3. An apostate from the true faith, or one who violates his covenant engagements; a very wicked person. Jer 9 and 23.
 4. One devoted to earthly things. James 4.
- Adulteress:** A married woman guilty of incontinence.
- Adultery:**
1. Violation of the marriage bed; a crime, or a civil injury, which introduces, or may introduce, into a family, a spurious offspring.
By the laws of Connecticut, the sexual intercourse of any man, with a married woman, is the crime of adultery in both: such intercourse of a married man, with an unmarried woman, is fornication in both, and adultery of the man, within the meaning of the law respecting divorce; but not a felonious adultery in either, or the crime of adultery at common law, or by statute. This latter offense is, in England, proceeded with only in the ecclesiastical courts.
In common usage, adultery means the unfaithfulness of any married person to the marriage bed. In England, Parliament grant absolute divorces for infidelity to the marriage bed in either party; and the spiritual courts divorce a mensa et thoro.
 2. In a scriptural sense, all manner of lewdness or unchastity, as in the seventh commandment.
 3. In scripture, idolatry, or apostasy from the true God. Jer 3.
- Betroth:**
1. To contract to any one, in order to a future marriage; to promise or pledge one to be the future spouse of another; to affianc; used of either sex. "'The father betroths his daughter.'
 2. To contract with one for a future spouse; to espouse; as, a man betroths a lady.
 3. The definition of betroth from Easton's Bible Dictionary: to promise "by one's truth." Men and women were betrothed when they were engaged to be married. This usually took place a year or more before marriage. From the time of betrothal the woman was regarded as the lawful wife of the man to whom she was betrothed (Deuteronomy 28:30; Judges 14:2, 8; Matthew 1:18-21). The term is figuratively employed of the spiritual connection between God and his people (Hos. 2:19, 20).

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- Bride:**
1. A woman new married.
But the name is applied to a woman at the marriage festival, before she is married, as well as after the ceremony.
 2. A woman espoused, or contracted to be married. The case of Lewellyn, prince of Wales. Henry's Hist. of Britain, B.iv.ch.i.,sect.2. [This is the true original sense of the word.]
- Bridegroom:** A man newly married; or a man about to be married. The passage of Shakespeare cited by Johnson proves that the last definition is just.
- Concubine:**
1. A woman who cohabits with a man, without the authority of a legal marriage; a woman kept for lewd purposes; a kept mistress.
 2. A wife of inferior condition; a lawful wife, but not united to the man by the usual ceremonies, and of inferior condition. Such were Hagar and Keturah , the concubines of Abraham; and such concubines were allowed by the Roman laws.
 3. The definition of concubine from **Easton’s Bible Dictionary**: Concubine in the Bible denotes a female conjugally united to a man, but in a relation inferior to that of a wife. Among the early Jews, from various causes, the difference between a wife and a concubine was less marked than it would be amongst us. The concubine was a wife of secondary rank. There are various laws recorded providing for their protection (Exodus 21:7; Deuteronomy 21:10-14), and setting limits to the relation they sustained to the household to which they belonged (Genesis 21:14; 25:6). They had no authority in the family, nor could they share in the household government. The immediate cause of concubinage might be gathered from the conjugal histories of Abraham and Jacob (Genesis 16;30). But in process of time the custom of concubinage degenerated, and laws were made to restrain and regulate it (Exodus 21:7-9).
 4. The definition of a concubine from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED): In reference to polygamous peoples, as the ancient Hebrews and the Mohammedans: A secondary wife whose position is recognized by law, but is inferior to that of a wife. The OED goes on to give a 1563 contextual definition that states: After the phrase of the Scripture a concubine is an honest name; for every concubine is a lawful wife, but every wife is not a concubine. An 1807 entry in the OED states: The most essential difference between a wife and a concubine consisted in the wife having a dowry and the concubine having no dowry.
 5. Pilegish is the Hebrew term for a concubine with similar social and legal standing to a recognized wife, often for the purpose of producing offspring.

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A pilegish was recognized among the ancient Hebrews and enjoyed the same rights in the house as the legitimate wife. Since it was regarded as the highest blessing to have many children, while the greatest curse was childlessness, legitimate wives often gave their maids to their husbands to atone, at least in part, for their own barrenness. The concubine commanded the same respect and inviolability as the wife, and it was regarded as the deepest dishonor for the man to whom she belonged if hands were laid upon her.

According to the Babylonian Talmud (Sanh. 21a), the difference between a pilegish and a full wife was that the latter received a ketubah [dowry] and her marriage was preceded by a formal betrothal (kiddushin), which was not the case with the pilegish. However, any offspring created as a result of a union between a pilegish and a man were on equal legal footing with children of the man and his wife. [Concubinage. (2013, June 12). New World Encyclopedia, Retrieved 15:09, January 31, 2014 from <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Concubinage&ol did=969990>.]

Concupiscence: Lust; unlawful or irregular desire of sexual pleasure. In a more general sense, the coveting of carnal things, or an irregular appetite for worldly good; inclination for unlawful enjoyments. We know even secret concupiscence to be sin. Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. Rom 7.

Divorce: A legal dissolution of the bonds of matrimony, or the separation of husband and wife by a judicial sentence. This is properly called a divorce, and called technically, divorce a vinculo matrimonii. [Webster's 1828 Dictionary]

Effeminate:

1. Having the qualities of the female sex; soft or delicate to an unmanly degree; tender; womanish; voluptuous. The king, by his voluptuous life and mean marriage, became effeminate, and less sensible of honor.
2. Womanish; weak; resembling the practice or qualities of the sex; as an effeminate peace; an effeminate life.
3. Note from the author: This phrase also applies to a boy kept for sodomite relations with a man, a man who submits himself to unnatural lewdness, and a male to male prostitute.

Espouse:

1. To betroth.
When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph. Mat 1.
2. To betroth; to promise or engage in marriage, by contract in writing, or by some pledge; as, the king espoused his daughter to a foreign prince. Usually and properly followed by to, rather than with.

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3. To marry; to wed.
4. To unite intimately or indissolubly.
5. The definition of espouse from Easton’s Bible Dictionary: (2 Samuel 3:14), to betroth. The espousal was a ceremony of betrothing, a formal agreement between the parties then coming under obligation for the purpose of marriage. Espousals are in the East frequently contracted years before the marriage is celebrated. It is referred to as figuratively illustrating the relations between God and his people (Jeremiah 2:2; Matthew 1:18; 2 Corinthians 11:2). (See BETROTH.)

- Fornication:**
1. The incontinence or lewdness of unmarried persons, male or female; also, the criminal conversation of a married man with an unmarried woman.
 2. Adultery. Mat 5.
 3. Incest. 1 Cor 5.
 4. Idolatry; a forsaking of the true God, and worshipping of idols. 2 Chr 21. Rev 19.

- Fornicator:**
1. An unmarried person, male or female, who has criminal conversation with the other sex; also, a married man who has sexual commerce with an unmarried woman. (Note from the author: Matthew 19:9 says that a wife can be a fornicator. Furthermore, if a wife can, so can a husband)

- Harlot:**
1. A woman who prostitutes her body for hire; a prostitute; a common woman.
 2. In Scripture, one who forsakes the true God and worships idols. Isa 1.

- Husband:**
1. A man contracted or joined to a woman by marriage. A man to whom a woman is betrothed, as well as one actually united by marriage, is called a husband. Lev 19. Deu 22.

- Lasciviousness:**
1. Looseness; irregular indulgence of animal desires; wantonness; lustfulness. Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness. Eph 4.
 2. Tendency to excite lust, and promote irregular indulgences.

- Marry:**
1. To unite in wedlock or matrimony; to join a man and woman for life, and constitute them man and wife according to the laws or customs of a nation. By the laws, ordained clergymen have a right to marry persons within certain limits prescribed. Tell him he shall marry the couple himself.
 2. To dispose of in wedlock. Mecaenas told Augustus he must either marry his daughter Julia to Agrippa,

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- or take away his life. [In this sense, it is properly applicable to females only.]
3. To take for husband or wife. We say, a man marries a woman; or a woman marries a man. The first was the original sense, but both are now well authorized.
 4. In Scripture, to unite in covenant, or in the closest connection. Turn, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah, for I am married to you. Jer 3.

Marry, v.i. To enter into the conjugal state; to unite as husband and wife; to take a husband or a wife. If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. Mat 19. I will therefore that the younger women marry. 1 Tim 5.

Polyandry: The practice of females' having more husbands than one at the same time; plurality of husbands.

Polygamy: A plurality of wives or husbands at the same time; or the having of such plurality. When a man has more wives than one, or a woman more husbands than one, at the same time, the offender is punishable for polygamy. Such is the fact in Christian countries. But polygamy is allowed in some countries, as in Turkey.

Polygyny: The practice of having more wives than one at the same time.

Sodomite: A man who has sexual relations with men.

Sodomitess: A woman who has sexual relations with women. She is called a whore in Deuteronomy 23:17.

Spouse: One engaged or joined in wedlock; a married person, husband or wife. We say of a man, that he is the spouse of such a woman; or of a woman, she is the spouse of such a man.

Uncleanness:

1. Foulness; dirtiness; filthiness. Be not troublesome to thyself or to others by uncleanness.
2. Want of ritual or ceremonial purity. Lev 15.
3. Moral impurity; defilement by sin; sinfulness. I will save you from all your uncleanness. Ezek 36.
4. Lewdness; incontinence. Col 3. 2 Pet 2.
5. Note from the author: In Deuteronomy 24:1 the word uncleanness refers to something that is not revealed until nakedness occurs. It has to do with a physical deformity.

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- Unmarried:** Used in scripture of having never been married and also of having been married but now divorced.
- Unmarry:**
1. To divorce. [Webster’s 1828 Dictionary]
 2. To dissolve the marriage of; to free from the marriage-tie; to divorce. To put away, to divorce (a wife). Contextual definition: He doth unmarry them, and setteth her at liberty that she may marry with another. [1588 from Mendoza's History of China 401][All from the Oxford English Dictionary]
- Whore:** A harlot; a courtesan; a concubine; a prostitute.
- Whoredom:**
1. Lewdness; fornication; practice of unlawful commerce with the other sex. It is applied to either sex, and to any kind of illicit commerce.
 2. In Scripture, idolatry; the desertion of the worship of the true God, for the worship of idols.
- Whoremonger:** The same as whoremaster. One who practices lewdness. (Note from the author: this is applied to a man who uses and consorts with whores.
- Wife:** The lawful consort of man; a woman who is united to man in the lawful bonds of wedlock; the correlative of husband. The husband of one wife. 1 Tim 3. Let every one of you in particular, so love his wife even as himself, and let the wife See that she reverence her husband. Eph 5.

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