

**DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE:  
A RECENT AND APPEAL**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART001: MARRIAGE & ADULTERY .....	2
PART002A: POLYGAMY .....	8
PART002B: “ONE FLESH” .....	12
PART003A: DEFINING ‘PORNEIA’ .....	19
PART003B: DEFINING ‘RELEASED’ & ‘TO SEND FORTH FROM’ .....	23
PART003C: DEFINING ‘SEPARATE’ .....	26
PART003D: DEFINING ‘BILL OF DIVORCE’ .....	28
PART003E: DEFINING ‘BOUND’ .....	29
PART004: DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE IN THE GOSPELS .....	30
PART005: PAUL ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE .....	41
PART006: SPIRIT OF THE LAW vs. LETTER OF THE LAW .....	52
PART007: GOD COMMANDS DIVORCE.....	64
PART008: COVENANTS.....	67
PART009: JOSEPH & MARY RELEASE .....	74
PART010: HEROD/HERODES REBUKED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST.....	76
PART011: OPINIONS OF THE FATHERS (TIL ~300AD).....	78
PART012: MENNO SIMONS ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE .....	108
PART013: AN EXAMPLE OF A SITUATION.....	111
APPENDIX: HOW LONG TO WAIT BEFORE MARRYING? .....	114

## PART001: MARRIAGE & ADULTERY

Let us begin by first defining what marriage is. Despite how strongly important marriage is, there really is little spoken of about the concept of marriage in all of the holy writings. But let us start, as Jesus instructed us, at the beginning:<sup>1</sup>

And Yahweh God said, “*It is* not good for the human to be in his *state of* loneliness. I shall make for him a helper as his opposite.”

And moreover, out of the ground, Yahweh God\* formed every living-creature of the field and every flying-creature of the heavens, and he brought them to the human to see what he would call it. And whatever the human would call *any* living soul, that was its name. And the human gave names to all of the quadrupeds, and to *the* flying-creatures of the heavens, and to all of the living-creatures of the field. And for the human, a helper was not found as his opposite.

And Yahweh God caused a deep-sleep to fall upon the human, and he slept. And he took one of his sides and shut its place with flesh. And the side which Yahweh God\* had taken from the human, he built into a woman and he brought her to the human.

And the human said:

“This is now bone of my bones,  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one shall be called a woman,  
because she was taken out of her man.”

This-is-why a man shall forsake his father and his mother; and he shall cling to his woman, and the two will be *made* into one flesh. (Genesis 2:18~24)

So marriage, as originally designed by God is the gluing together of two individuals, one man and one woman into one unit. They are not two individuals anymore, but one. So when God brings two people together, he intends for the two to be permanently glued together where they will never cease to be one. As Jesus would later add (In Matthew 19:6), “What God joined-together, let a human not be separating.”<sup>2</sup>

This image of marriage is not only limited to a temporal relationship pertaining to this present age alone, but it is used as a symbol (or allegory) of the Christ’s relationship with his people – a relationship between God and man, as Paul writes:

The women [*are being subjected*] to their own men as to the Lord.

Because a man is a head of the woman as the Anointed-One *is* also a head of the assembly; he *is* a savior of the body. Instead, as the assembly is being subjected to the Anointed-One, also, in this-*same*-manner, the women *ought to be being subjected* to the men in everything.

The men: be loving the women, exactly-as the Anointed-One also loved the assembly and delivered himself *up* in-behalf of her, in order that he might make her holy, after he cleansed *her* with the bath of the water in a word, in order that he might cause the assembly to stand-beside himself glorious, *while* she *is* not having a blot or a wrinkle or any of the *things* such as *this*, *but* instead in order that she might be holy and unblemished.

In this-*same*-manner, the men also are being-indebted to be loving their own women as *they do* their own bodies. The *man who is* loving his own woman is loving himself. For no-one at-any-time hated his own flesh, instead he is nourishing *it* up and is imparting-warmth *to* it, exactly-as the Anointed-One *is* also *doing for* the assembly, because we are members of his body.

In-place-of this, a human will leave-behind his father and his mother and will be-glued to his woman, and the two will be *made* into one flesh. This mystery is great. But **I** am speaking in-reference-to *the* Anointed-One and in-reference-to the assembly. Nevertheless, *all of you\**, *one* by one: Let each *one* be loving his own woman in the-*same*-manner as himself, but the woman in order that she might be filling herself with-fear of the man.

(Ephesians 5:22~33)

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrew and Greek do not have a separate word for ‘husband’ and ‘man’ or for ‘wife’ and ‘woman’. Greek uses only the word “ANAR” (for husband/man) and “GUNE” (for wife/woman). So ‘wife’ and ‘woman’ in English translations are translated from one single word in Greek. In Greek, if a woman was engaged or married to a man, she would literally be called “his woman”. Therefore, for the sake of consistency, and to recognize when the same Greek word is being used, many passages will not be translated with the traditional “husband” and “wife” word, but to “man” and “woman”.

<sup>2</sup> This Greek word for “separate” is the same word which Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 7:10~15, for “If the faithless *partner* is separating himself...”

And again, Paul speaks of this mystery:

For it declares, “The two will be *made* into one flesh.” But the *one* who is being glued to the Lord is one spirit *with him*.  
(1 Corinthians 6:16~17)

This is how we can see that some aspects of marriage (if not all aspects) are symbolic of the relationship between God and man. (This topic will be elaborated further on.)

Furthermore, since not only is marriage instituted directly by God, but also is symbolic, it is an abomination for a man to destroy what has been created and instituted by God. And if God has put something together, the intent is for it to remain together, that is, not to be separated under any conditions.

Despite this, many yet believe that if the partner they have married becomes displeasing to them, that they may ‘dismiss/divorce them/send them out from/release them’ for any reason and replace them with another.

Now this marriage union, or covenant, is very sacred in the eyes of God. And adultery is a type of breaking of this covenant, which is strictly forbidden by God himself:

You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:15 / Deuteronomy 5:18)

You shall not desire your neighbor’s woman. (Exodus 20:17 / Deuteronomy 5:21)

This marriage union was so cherished by God, that the penalty for breaking it was death under the old Mosaic law:

**If a man commits adultery with his neighbor’s woman, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.**

If a man disgraces his father by lying with his father’s woman, both the man and his stepmother shall be put to death; their blood *is* on themselves.

If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall be put to death; since they have committed an abhorrent deed; their blood *is* on themselves.

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them shall be put to death for their abominable deed; their blood *is* on themselves.

If a man marries a woman and her mother also, the man and the two women as well shall be burned to death for their shameful conduct, so that such shamefulness may not be found among you.

If a man has carnal relations with an animal, the man shall be put to death, and the animal shall be slain.

If a woman goes up to any animal to mate with it, the woman and the animal shall be slain; let them both be put to death; their blood *is* on themselves.

You shall not have intercourse with your mother’s sister or your father’s sister; whoever does so shall pay the penalty of incest.

If a man disgraces his uncle by having intercourse with his uncle’s woman, the man and his aunt shall pay the penalty by dying childless.

If a man marries his brother’s woman and thereby disgraces his brother, they shall be childless because of this incest.  
(Leviticus 20:10~16,19~21)

Observe that these commands imply that polygamy is an acceptable practice, especially, “If a man marries a woman and her mother also” *not*, “If a man marries more than one woman.” (This will be dealt with more fully in Part 2, on Polygamy.)

Adultery is defined in the following ways by the various Greek and Hebrew Lexicons.

(Note1: Greek almost always (if not always) translates na’aph to Moichaw/Moicheia)

(Note2: In my definition here, I have not omitted any Lexicons or Dictionaries which conflicted with these definitions; these were the only Lexicons and Dictionaries available to me. If you know of more, I will be happy to include them.)

Hebrew (na’aph, verb)

- to commit adultery, usually of a man, always with the wife of another (*Strong’s*)

- to commit adultery, usually of a man, always with the wife of another (*Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon*)
- a man with a woman (either a wife or fiancée of another man), a woman who engages in adultery (*Holladay*)

Greek (Moicheuw, verb form)

- to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife, to commit adultery with (*Strong's*)
- to commit adultery (*Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon*)
- to cause to commit adultery, to commit adultery (*Gingrich, Greek NT Lexicon*)
- to be put into an adulterous state or condition, to commit adultery" (*Danker, Greek NT Lexicon*)
- to commit adultery with a woman, to debauch her / when passive tense, of the woman (*LSJ*)
- to commit adultery with a woman, to debauch her / when passive tense, of the woman (*Middle Liddell*)

Greek (Moicheia, noun form)

- as an act of sexual intercourse with someone not one's own spouse, adultery (*Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon*)
- adultery (*Gingrich, Greek NT Lexicon*)
- adultery (*Danker, Greek NT Lexicon*)
- adultery (*LSJ*)
- adultery (*Middle Liddell*)
- adultery (*Strong's*)

It should also be noted, that some pre-King James translations translated "moichaw" with the word "avowteria" instead of the normal word for adultery, or used "break marriage." Even the Menno Simons translation (see Part 12) follows this practice when it translates the usual "Whoever looks at a woman to desire her already committed adultery with her in his heart" as "Whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already broken his marriage vow in his heart." Even some current German translations translate 'moichaw' as 'bricht die ehe' which literally means "breaks the marriage." Some further sources even theorize that sexual activity may not necessarily be part of the definition of 'moichaw' (though sexual activity would always be a type of 'moichaw') and that the more narrow English word 'adultery' is too restrictive to the more broad meaning of the Hebrew or Greek word.

However, coming to our definition based on the Hebrew and Greek Lexicons and Dictionaries alone, adultery may be defined as a man who has had sexual relations with a woman who is presently married to another man (or, to say it in other words: a married woman who has had sexual relations with someone other than the man whom she is married to). This term does *not* refer to a woman having sexual relations with a man who is presently married. There is not one place of which I am aware of in all of the holy writings, where a woman is condemned for having sexual relations with a man who is already married, unless she is already presently married to a different one. Therefore, a man is not restricted from being married to multiple women at the same time, but a woman is restricted from having multiple husbands. (Again, see Part 2 for more information on this subject.)

Now sexual intercourse outside of marriage required a less serious punishment than adultery. For example:

If a man has carnal relations with a female-slave who has already been living with another man but has not yet been redeemed or given her freedom, they shall be punished but not put to death, because she is not free.

(Leviticus 19:20)

In this way, it is seen that when a man had sexual relations with a woman who was presently married to another man, the penalty was death; but yet, the penalty was not death for sexual relations with a woman who was not already married. Therefore, it is made manifest that adultery is a most serious sin before the Lord.

Now despite God's intentions for the permanence of marriage, he knew that many would have hard-hearts, and, under the old Mosaic covenant, provided a remedy if the man wanted to divorce ("send out/away from him") his legitimate wife, with the following command:

When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent, and therefore he writes out a bill of divorce and hands it to her, sending her out in this way from his house: if on leaving his house she goes and becomes the woman of another man, and the second man, too, comes to dislike her and sends her out from his house by handing her a written bill of divorce; or if this second man who has married her, dies; then her former man, who sends her out from *him*, may not again take her as his woman after she has become defiled. That would be an abomination before Yahweh, and you shall not bring such guilt upon the land which Yahweh, your God, is giving you as a heritage. (Deuteronomy 24:1~4)

Although God states that elsewhere that he horribly detests divorce, and never intended for it, he himself originally provided this concession for divorce in the Old Covenant. Likewise, God never intended for death, but under the old Mosaic covenant he provided a concession by allowing the shedding of blood to rid the nation of evil. And because the penalty of adultery was death, we know that this verse is allowing divorce for reasons other than adultery and various sexual sins.

Although we shall not press this topic too hard here (it will be further elaborated in more detail below), Jesus explains that even anyone "who looks at a woman to desire her already committed adultery with her in his heart." Jesus, as usual, dictates the *spirit* of the law rather than the *letter* of the law, and even constrains many concessions which were made in the Mosaic law.

For example, he goes on elsewhere to limit this particular concession:

But I myself say to *all of you*, that every *man* who releases his woman (except for an account of sexual-immorality), makes her to have adultery committed *to her*; and *whichever man*, if he may marry a *woman* who has been released from *her man*, is put into an adulterous-condition with *her*. (Matthew 5:32)

We shall return to these passages in the coming sections. In the meantime, let us list some passages which pertain to what God expects in marriage (in addition to the Ephesians quotation listed above):

The women: Be being subject to the men, as was being fit in *the Lord*.

The men: Be loving the women and do not be being made bitter toward them. (Colossians 3:18~19)

Similarly, the women: Be being subject to your own men, in order that even if certain *ones of them* are being disobedient to the account of *God*, they will be gained *over* without a word through the conduct of the women, **2** after they spectate the pure conduct *which you have* in fear. Do not be having the ornamentation which is outwardly: of braiding of hairs, and of adornment of gold-pieces or of dressing of robes. Instead, *let it be* the secret human of the heart, *expressed* in the indestructible *beauty* of the gentle and calm spirit which is very-expensive before *the face* of God. For this is also how, at any time, the holy women, the *women* who are hoping into God, were ornamenting themselves, while being subjected to their own men, **6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, while calling him 'lord'. You\* became her children, while doing what is good and while not fearing any intimidation for yourselves.

Similarly the men: While dwelling-together with *them* according to knowledge as *with* a weaker vessel (the womanly *vessel*), while rendering-due honor as also being fellow-heirs of a favor of life, *so* that your prayers *may* not *be* being impeded by anything. (1 Peter 3:1~7)

These are serious commandments, both to married men and women, which are essential to the marriage union. And this practice goes far beyond merely fulfilling these legalistically, for God wants hearts which desire to uphold these principles well-beyond what is merely written. He wants people whose hearts are ready to lay their lives down for one another in every means possible.

In this, we are coming-to-know the love, because he [Jesus] laid-down his soul for us. And we also ought to have laid-down our souls for the brothers. (1 John 3:16)

For:

Every one who is looking at a woman to desire her, already committed-adultery with her in his heart.  
(Matthew 5:28)

And, therefore, without taking the time to delve into lengthy explanations of the passages, here is a compilation of other passages in under the old Mosaic law/covenant related to marriage permissions:

When you go out to war against your enemies and Yahweh, your God, delivers them into your hand, so that you take captives, if you see an attractive woman among the captives and become so enamored of her that you wish to have her as a woman, you may take her home to your house. But before she may live there, she must shave her head and pare her nails and lay aside her captive's garb. After she has mourned her father and mother for a full month, you may have relations with her, and you shall be her man and she shall be your woman. However, if later on you lose your liking for her, you shall give her her freedom, if she wishes it; but you shall not sell her or enslave her, since she was married to you under compulsion.  
(Deuteronomy 21:10~14)

A priest shall not marry a woman who has been a whore or has lost her honor, nor a woman who has been thrown out by her man; for the priest is sacred to his God. The priest shall marry a virgin. He shall not marry a widow or a woman who has been thrown out or a woman who has lost her honor as a whore, but a virgin, taken from his own people; otherwise he will have base offspring among his people. I, Yahweh, have made him sacred."  
(Leviticus 21:7,13~15)

When Yahweh, your God, brings you into the land which you are to enter and occupy, and dislodges great nations before you -- the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites: seven nations more numerous and powerful than you -- and when Yahweh, your God, delivers them up to you and you defeat them, you shall doom them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. You shall not intermarry with them, neither giving your daughters to their sons nor taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn your sons from following me to serving other gods, and then the wrath of Yahweh would flare up against you and quickly destroy you.  
(Deuteronomy 7:1~4)

When you have come into the land which Yahweh, your God, is giving you, and have occupied it and settled in it, should you then decide to have a king over you like all the surrounding nations, you shall set that man over you as your king whom Yahweh, your God, chooses. He whom you set over you as king must be your kinsman; a foreigner, who is no kin of yours, you may not set over you.

But he shall not have a great number of horses; nor shall he make his people go back again to Egypt to acquire them, against Yahweh's warning that you must never go back that way again. **Neither shall he have a great number of women, lest his heart be estranged**, nor shall he accumulate a vast amount of silver and gold.  
(Deuteronomy 17:14~17)

Passages from the old Mosaic law relating to adultery:

Speak to the Israelites and tell them:

If a man's woman goes astray and becomes unfaithful to him by having intercourse with another man, though her man has not sufficient evidence of the fact, so that her impurity remains unproved for lack of a witness who might have caught her in the act; or if a man is overcome by a feeling of jealousy that makes him suspect his woman, whether she was actually impure or not: he shall bring his woman to the priest and shall take along as an offering for her a tenth of an ephah of barley meal. However, he shall not pour oil on it nor put frankincense over it, since it is a cereal offering of jealousy, a cereal offering for an appeal in a question of guilt.

The priest shall first have the woman come forward and stand before Yahweh. In an earthen vessel he shall meanwhile put some holy water, as well as some dust that he has taken from the floor of the Dwelling. Then, as the woman stands before Yahweh, the priest shall uncover her head and place in her hands the cereal offering of her appeal, that is, the cereal offering of jealousy, while he himself shall hold the bitter water that brings a curse.

Then he shall adjure the woman, saying to her, 'If no other man has had intercourse with you, and you have not gone astray by impurity while under the authority of your man, be immune to the curse brought by this bitter water. But if you have gone astray while under the authority of your man and have acted impurely by letting a man other than your man have intercourse with you' -- so shall the priest adjure the woman with this oath of imprecation -- 'may Yahweh make you an example of malediction and imprecation among your people by causing your thighs to

waste away and your belly to swell! May this water, then, that brings a curse, enter your body to make your belly swell and your thighs waste away!’

And the woman shall say, ‘Amen, amen!’

The priest shall put these imprecations in writing and shall then wash them off into the bitter water, which he is to have the woman drink, so that it may go into her with all its bitter curse.

But first he shall take the cereal offering of jealousy from the woman’s hand, and having waved this offering before Yahweh, shall put it near the altar, where he shall take a handful of the cereal offering as its token offering and burn it on the altar. Only then shall he have the woman drink the water.

Once she has done so, if she has been impure and unfaithful to her man, this bitter water that brings a curse will go into her, and her belly will swell and her thighs will waste away, so that she will become an example of imprecation among her people.

If, however, the woman has not defiled herself, but is still pure, she will be immune and will still be able to bear children.

This, then, is the law for jealousy:

When a woman goes astray while under the authority of her man and acts impurely, or when such a feeling of jealousy comes over a man that he becomes suspicious of his woman, he shall have her stand before Yahweh and the priest shall apply this law in full to her. The man shall be free from guilt, but the woman shall bear such guilt as she may have.”  
(Numbers 5:12~31)

If a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, comes to dislike her, and makes monstrous charges against her and defames her by saying, ‘I married this woman, but when I first had relations with her I did not find her a virgin,’ the father and mother of the girl shall take the evidence of her virginity and bring it to the elders at the city gate.

There the father of the girl shall say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man in marriage, but he has come to dislike her, and now brings monstrous charges against her, saying: I did not find your daughter a virgin. But here is the evidence of my daughter’s virginity!’ And they shall spread out the cloth before the elders of the city.

Then these city elders shall take the man and chastise him, besides fining him one hundred silver shekels, which they shall give to the girl’s father, because the man defamed a virgin in Israel. Moreover, she shall remain his woman, **and he may not send her away from *him* as long as he lives.**

But if this charge is true, and evidence of the girl’s virginity is not found, they shall bring the girl to the entrance of her father’s house and there her townsmen shall stone her to death, because she committed a crime against Israel by her unchasteness in her father’s house. This is how shall you purge the evil from your midst.

**If a man is discovered having relations with a woman who is married to another**, both the man and the woman with whom he has had relations shall die. Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst.

If within the city a man comes upon a maiden *who is* a betrothed virgin, and has relations with her, you shall bring them both out to the gate of the city and there stone them to death: the maiden because she did not cry out for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor’s woman. This is how you shall purge the evil from your midst.

If, however, it is in the open fields that a man comes upon such a betrothed maiden, seizes her and has relations with her, the man alone shall die. You shall do nothing to the maiden, since she is not guilty of a capital offense. This case is like that of a man who rises up against his neighbor and murders him: it was in the open fields that he came upon her, and though the betrothed maiden may have cried out for help, there was no one to come to her aid.

If a man comes upon a maiden *who is* a virgin that is not betrothed, takes her and has relations with her, and their deed is discovered, the man who had relations with her shall pay the maiden’s father fifty silver shekels and take her as his woman, because he has deflowered her. Moreover, he may not send her away from *him* as long as he lives.  
(Deuteronomy 22:13~29)

When a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall pay her marriage price and marry her. If her father refuses to give her to him, he must still pay him the customary marriage price for virgins.  
(Exodus 22:16~17)



## PART002A: POLYGAMY

From the account in creation some believe that God's original intention was for marriage to be monogamous – one man and one woman. Some also believe that this mystery of monogamy may be further demonstrated through God's commissioning of the ark of Noah, when only two of every sort of animal (save for some), including man himself, only boarded in pairs:

Together with his sons, his woman, and his sons' women, Noah went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of the clean animals and the unclean, of the birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, (two by two) male and female entered the ark with Noah, just as Yahweh had commanded him. (Genesis 7:7~9)

It is evident from the following passages that each of Noah's sons only had one wife each

When Noah was five hundred years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Genesis 5:32)

And:

And Noah (and his sons and his woman and his sons' women with him) came-in to the ark from *the* face\* of<sup>3</sup> the flood's waters. (Genesis 7:7)

And:

when the longsuffering of God was eagerly-waiting on behalf of itself in *the* days of Noah, while an ark was being furnished, into which a few, that is, eight souls, were brought-safely-through by water. (1 Peter 3:20)

It is possible that there is a mystery demonstrated here of having both the animals and humans enter in with only one mate. However, this is far from conclusive, as two is the mere minimal which is required for repopulating the earth. But regardless if God is alluding to monogamy being the ideal situation by these passages, or if he is merely using the minimal due to the circumstances, there is no passage throughout the holy writings in which polygamy is condemned, either directly or indirectly, even under the New Covenant; although it is strongly discouraged under the New Covenant, and singleness seems to be the ideal; monogamy is even a requirement for eldership. (These things shall be explained below.)

As seen in the previous section, adultery is defined as a *married* woman having relations with a man whom she is *not* married to, but *not* an unmarried woman having sexual relations with a married man. If this was not the case, and adultery did in fact include the instance of an unmarried woman having sexual relations with a married man, then the holy writings would have some considerable irreconcilable contradictions.

First, let us observe a list of the types of sexual unions that are forbidden by God at the time of the Mosaic law. (These restrictions are also enforced under the New Covenant, but this will not be fully discussed in this treatise. See all of Acts 15 regarding sexual-immorality, and 1 Corinthians 5; as well as Leviticus 18:24 below.)

None of you shall approach a close relative to have sexual intercourse with her. I am Yahweh.

You shall not disgrace your father by having intercourse with your mother. Besides, since she is your own mother, you shall not have intercourse with her.

You shall not have intercourse with your father's woman, for that would be a disgrace to your father.

You shall not have intercourse with your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in your own household or born elsewhere.

You shall not have intercourse with your son's daughter or with your daughter's daughter, for that would be a disgrace to your own family.

You shall not have intercourse with the daughter whom your father's woman bore to him, since she, too, is your sister.

You shall not have intercourse with your father's sister, since she is your father's relative.

You shall not have intercourse with your mother's sister, since she is your mother's relative.

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<sup>3</sup> [7:7] MT / LXX, Vul "ark due to"

You shall not disgrace your father's brother by being intimate with his woman, since she, too, is your aunt.

You shall not have intercourse with your daughter-in-law; she is your son's woman, and therefore you shall not disgrace her.

You shall not have intercourse with your brother's woman, for that would be a disgrace to your brother.

You shall not have intercourse with a woman and also with her daughter, nor shall you marry and have intercourse with her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; this would be shameful, because they are related to her.

**While your woman is still living, you shall not marry her sister as her rival; for in this way you would disgrace your first woman.**

You shall not approach a woman to have intercourse with her while she is unclean from menstruation.

You shall not have carnal relations with your neighbor's woman, defiling yourself with her.

You shall not offer any of your offspring to be immolated to Molech, thus profaning the name of your God. I am Yahweh.

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; such a thing is an abomination.

You shall not have carnal relations with an animal, defiling yourself with it; nor shall a woman set herself in front of an animal to mate with it; such things are abhorrent.

Do not defile yourselves by any of these things by which the nations whom I am driving out of your way have defiled themselves. (Leviticus 18:7~24)

And:

A man shall not marry his father's woman, nor shall he dishonor his father's bed. (Deuteronomy 23:1)

And we will also restate:

If a man commits adultery with his neighbor's woman, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.

If a man disgraces his father by lying with his father's woman, both the man and his stepmother shall be put to death; their blood *is* on themselves.

If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall be put to death; since they have committed an abhorrent deed; their blood *is* on themselves.

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them shall be put to death for their abominable deed; their blood *is* on themselves.

If a man marries a woman and her mother also, the man and the two women as well shall be burned to death for their shameful conduct, so that such shamefulness may not be found among you.

If a man has carnal relations with an animal, the man shall be put to death, and the animal shall be slain.

If a woman goes up to any animal to mate with it, the woman and the animal shall be slain; let them both be put to death; their blood *is* on themselves.

You shall not have intercourse with your mother's sister or your father's sister; whoever does so shall pay the penalty of incest.

If a man disgraces his uncle by having intercourse with his uncle's woman, the man and his aunt shall pay the penalty by dying childless.

If a man marries his brother's woman and thus disgraces his brother, they shall be childless because of this incest. (Leviticus 20:10~16,19~21)

Cursed be he who has relations with his father's woman, for he dishonors his father's bed!' And all the people shall answer, 'Let it be!'

Cursed be he who has relations with any animal!' And all the people shall answer, 'Let it be!'

Cursed be he who has relations with his sister or his half-sister!' And all the people shall answer, 'Let it be!'

Cursed be he who has relations with his mother-in-law!' And all the people shall answer, 'Let it be!'

(Deuteronomy 27:20~23)

Let us note here that not once is there any restriction against polygamy. The only restriction in this manner (which would imply the acceptance of polygamy), is "While your woman is still living you shall not marry her sister as her rival." Why would there be a specific instruction for a sister? If polygamy was completely prohibited and considered adultery, it would have read, "While your woman is still living, you shall not marry another woman."

And let us observe the following commandment:

When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go free as male slaves do. But if her master, who had destined her for himself, dislikes her, he shall let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to a foreigner, since he has broken faith with her.

If he destines her for his son, he shall treat her like a daughter.

If he takes another woman, he shall not withhold her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights.

If he does not grant her these three things, she shall be given her freedom absolutely, without cost to her.

(Exodus 21:7~11)

This commandment again, demonstrates that it is lawful to be married to more than one woman simultaneously, otherwise, in light of the previous excerpts from the holy writings, this practice would have been warned against like the former.

Now let us bring forth yet another example:

If a man with two women loves one and dislikes the other; and if both bear him sons, but the first-born is of her whom he dislikes: when he comes to bequeath his property to his sons he may not consider as his first-born the son of the woman he loves, in preference to his true first-born, the son of the woman whom he dislikes. On the contrary, he shall recognize as his first-born the son of her whom he dislikes, giving him a double share of whatever he happens to own, since he is the first fruits of his virility, and to him belong the rights of the first-born.

(Deuteronomy 21:15~17)

There is also a unique situation under the old covenant in which the establishment of polygamy is necessary for its fulfillment. That is the situation in which a man's brother's wife dies without them having had any children:

When brothers shall dwell together, and one of them shall die, and he shall not *have had* a son, *the* woman of the *man who* died shall not become *married* outside *the family* to a strange man; her man's brother shall come in upon her and he shall take her for him for a woman, and he shall consummate the marriage of a brother-in-law. And it shall come to pass, *that* the firstborn which she shall birth shall raise up the dead brother's name, and his name shall not be wiped from Israel. And if the man shall not delight in *the act* to take his brother's woman, then his brother's woman shall ascend *to* the gate to the elders, and she shall say, "My man's-brother refused to raise up for his brother a name in Israel; he has not been willing to consummate the marriage of a brother-in-law."

And *the* elders of a city shall call for him, and they shall speak to him. And *if* he shall say, "I do not delight in *the act* to take her," then his brother's woman shall draw near to him, before *the* eyes of the elders. And she shall draw his sandal from off his foot, and she shall spit in his face\*, and she shall say, "This is what shall be done to the man who shall not build his brother's house."

And his name shall be called in Israel, "*The* house of the *one* whose sandal *is* drawn off."

(Deuteronomy 25:5~10)

Clearly, there are many times in which polygamy would be the only means by which this commandment could be fulfilled.

Let us now turn to a list of polygamists who lived prior to the New Covenant, and keep in mind that none of these men were rebuked at any point on the charge of polygamy:

## **ABRAHAM**

Abram's woman Sarai had borne him no children. However, she had an Egyptian servant-girl named Hagar.

Sarai said to Abram, "Yahweh has kept me from bearing children. Therefore, have intercourse with my servant-girl; perhaps I shall have sons through her."

Abram heeded Sarai's request. This was how, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, his woman Sarai took her servant-girl, Hagar the Egyptian, and gave her to her man Abram to be his woman. He had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant.

(Genesis 16:1~3)

## **JACOB/ISRAEL**

And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he had intercourse with her. (Genesis 29:23)  
 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter as a woman as well. (Genesis 29:28)  
 And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to woman: and Jacob had intercourse with her. (Genesis 30:4)  
 When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob as a woman. (Genesis 30:9)  
 May Yahweh make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and like Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel. (Ruth 4:11)

Even if one may conclude that the multiplication of wives brings many unnecessary trials in this present life, even in all of these situations, it is never condemned, either by God or any righteous man, or even hinted that such a practice is immoral. Here, Jacob has both sisters<sup>4</sup> as well as their handmaids for wives at the same time. He had four wives simultaneously. And God used this family as the example of Israel, and the foundation for his entire chosen nation. And never once did he condemn any of these tribes as having been the offspring from adulterous or sinful relationships. The entire nation of Israel is a byproduct of polygamy.

God himself blessed both of them with children! He himself opened their wombs, whereas elsewhere in the holy writings he plagued people for unrighteous unions:

When Yahweh saw that Leah was hated, he made her fruitful, while Rachel remained barren. (Genesis 29:31)

Then God remembered Rachel; he heard her prayer and made her fruitful. (Genesis 30:22)

### DAVID (see also 2 Samuel 3:1~5)

Then Saul gave him [David] Michal his daughter as a woman. (1 Samuel 18:27)

Then David sent and wooed Abigail, to make her his woman. (1 Samuel 25:39)

And David also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. This was how both of them were his women; but Saul gave David's woman Michal, Saul's own daughter, to Palti, son of Laish, who was from Gallim. (1 Samuel 25:43)

David took more concubines and women in Jerusalem after he had come from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to him in Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 5:13)

David took other women in Jerusalem and became the father of more sons and daughters. (1 Chronicles 14:3)

This is what Yahweh God of Israel says: 'I anointed you [David] king of Israel. I rescued you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your lord's house and your lord's women for your own. I gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were not enough, I could count up for you still more.' (2 Samuel 12:7~8)

Then the king set out, accompanied by his entire household, except for ten concubines whom he left behind to take care of the palace. (2 Samuel 16:21~23)

Not only does God take credit for providing these wives for David, but in another instance, that of Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, God punishes David severely for having committed adultery, because she was already married to another man. This was sin, the other unions were not punished. If polygamy was a sin, then this statement would be a lie:

David did what *is* right in Yahweh's eyes, and he did not turn aside from all that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. (1 Kings 15:5)

So we clearly see that not only did not God permit, but he even provided, polygamy for David.

### SOLOMON

When Yahweh, your God, brings you into the land which you are to enter and occupy, and dislodges great nations before you -- the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites: seven nations more

<sup>4</sup> Though it must be noted that the old Mosaic law forbidding a man from marrying two sisters at the same time was introduced hundreds of years after this event.

numerous and powerful than you – and when Yahweh, your God, delivers them up to you and you defeat them, you shall doom them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. You shall not intermarry with them, neither giving your daughters to their sons nor taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn your sons from following me to serving other gods, and then the wrath of Yahweh would flare up against you and quickly destroy you. (Deuteronomy 7:1~4)

When you have come into the land which Yahweh, your God, is giving you, and have occupied it and settled in it, should you then decide to have a king over you like all the surrounding nations, you shall set that man over you as your king whom Yahweh, your God, chooses. He whom you set over you as king must be your kinsman; a foreigner, who is no kin of yours, you may not set over you.

But he shall not have a great number of horses; nor shall he make his people go back again to Egypt to acquire them, against Yahweh's warning that you must never go back that way again. **Neither shall he have a great number of women, lest his heart be estranged**, nor shall he accumulate a vast amount of silver and gold.

(Deuteronomy 17:14~17)

First, notice that this commandment does not restrict the king to one wife alone, otherwise it would have been worded, "Neither shall he have more than one woman." Despite this command, the women whom David was married to were not problematic, and even God himself takes credit for providing them for him. It may be possible, though not conclusive, to conjecture that David did not exceed this "great number" of wives. But that certainly is not the case with Solomon:

King Solomon loved many foreign women besides the daughter of Pharaoh (Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites), from nations with which Yahweh had forbidden the Israelites to intermarry, "because," he said, "they will turn your hearts to their gods." But Solomon fell in love with them. He had 700 women of princely rank and 300 concubines, and his women turned his heart. When Solomon was old his women had turned his heart to strange gods, and his heart was not entirely with Yahweh, his God, as the heart of his father David had been.

(1 Kings 11:1~4)

However, despite the commandment in Deuteronomy for a king not to have a great number of women, the primary sin which is addressed here is *not* the many woman which he was married to, but that his heart was led away by them to serve foreign gods.

Other polygamists include Gideon (Judges 8:30), Abijah (2 Chronicles 13:21), Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:15), Caleb (1 Chronicles 2:18~19,46,48), Joash (2 Chronicles 24:3), Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 11:18~23).

Josephus, a reliable Judean historian who wrote around 90AD, states the following in his Judean Antiquities (referring to King Herod, the man who tried to kill Jesus when he was a baby):

Now his [Herod's] *women* were numerous, since it was permitted by the Judean fathers to marry many women; and the king was glad to have many. (Judean War 1:477)

And by the same historian:

For it is a *practice handed down by* our fathers to live with multiple women at the same time. (Antiquities 17:14)

With an exception of Solomon, whose case was that the women whom he was married to were snatching his heart away to serve other Gods, there does not appear to be a case in which God directly condemns someone for being married to more than one woman at the same time. And in at least one instance, it can be seen that polygamy is actually blessed by God, and even provided by God as a blessing.

So from these quotations, it can be clearly concluded that the definition of adultery was definitely not understood to have included a man being married to more than one woman at the same time; otherwise many of these men would have been adulterers, and God would be guilty of having uttered contradictory commands.

## PART002B: "ONE FLESH"

Now some refute the concept of polygamy, especially under the New Covenant, by limiting the concept of ‘one flesh’ to only one man and one woman. They point to the passage in Genesis:

That is why a human leaves his father and mother and is glued to his woman, and the two of them become one body.  
(Genesis 2:24)

And they conclude from the following passage that Jesus defined such as adultery:

And *some* Pharisees came to him, while trying him and saying, “Is it allowable for a human to RELEASE his woman from *him* for every cause?”

But he replied, speaking, “Did you not read-aloud, that the *one* who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female, and spoke, ‘For this sake, a human will leave his father and his mother and will be glued to his woman, and the two will be *made* into one flesh’, so that they are no longer two, *but* instead *are* one flesh? Therefore, what God joined-together, *let* a human not be SEPARATING.”

They were saying to him, “Why then did Moses instruct *us* to give a book of a BILL-OF-DIVORCE and to RELEASE her from *himself*?”

He was saying to them, “Because of your hardness-of-heart Moses permitted you to RELEASE your women from *yourselves*, but from *the* beginning it has not been like this. But I say to *all of* you: that whoever may RELEASE his woman from *himself* (not on *account of* sexual-immorality) and may marry another is being put into an adulterous-condition.<sup>5</sup>  
(Matthew 19:3~9)

To refute this faulty presumption, let us first review Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians:

Have you not known, that your bodies are members of Christ? Therefore, after I picked-up the members of the Christ may I make them members of a whore? May it never come to pass! Or have you not known, that the *man* is being glued to the whore is one body *with her*? For it declares, “The two will be *made* into one flesh.” But the *one* who is being glued to the Lord is one spirit *with him*.  
(1 Corinthians 6:15~17)

First, Paul states clearly that in be glued to a whore (PORNES), you make yourself one flesh with that person. This is a relationship outside of marriage. From this, it can be firmly concluded that the joining together into one flesh is not completely synonymous with marriage, but refers to a state which occurs during any sort of sexual relationship between a man and a woman. There is no place in the holy writings (of which I am aware of) in which sexual relations between a man and a whore is considered anything but sin; and such an immoral union is certainly never referred to as marriage, nor did the offending woman automatically become married to the man simply because this interaction had taken place. However, this does show the incredible seriousness of having sexual relations with a woman whom a man does not intend to marry. For sexual relations, which result in the man and woman becoming one flesh, was something which God restricted as behavior only to be permissible between a man and a woman who were married.

But because of the detrimental affects this type of sexual intercourse, under the Old Covenant, God dictates how serious an act it is in the following command:

If a man comes upon a girl *who is* a virgin who is not betrothed, takes her and has relations with her, and their deed is discovered, the man who had relations with her shall pay the girl’s father fifty silver shekels and take her as his woman, because he has deflowered her. Moreover, he may not send her away from *him* as long as he lives.  
(Deuteronomy 22:13~29)

Sexual acts were only permitted between a man and a woman who were married. And, in the above situation, this virgin had been deflowered (and, therefore, defiled) through an act which God instituted to be limited to marriage. Because of this, the man was required to married her. These passages demonstrate that the joining of one flesh is not the same thing as marriage.

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<sup>5</sup> Late Greek manuscripts (which, unfortunately, were the only ones present during the time of the KJV translation) include another clause to this verse. “and the *man* who married a *woman* who has been released from *her man* is committing adultery with *her* for himself.” It is nearly word for word the same as the Matthew 5:32 clause. As it does not appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts, it is most likely not original. But since the exact same information is portrayed in Matthew 5:32, there is no reason to make any sort of contention about any information which it contains.

Now that it has been proven that polygamy was never condemned as sin in all the holy writings, and that the mere act of sexual intercourse is declared as a man and woman becoming one flesh, then we must assume that the man was able to become one flesh with each woman whom he was married to. So when a married man has already become one flesh with the first woman whom he is married to, and then has sexual relations with another woman, that does not dissolve his one flesh with the first.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, it is evident that a man becomes one flesh with each woman with whom he has had sexual relations with, whether in marriage or in sexual-immorality. This is evident by Paul's letter to the Corinthians in the joining of a man to a whore. So, if this joining of one flesh happens for every sexual relationship, then it is possible to be joined together as one flesh with more than one woman at a time, without nullifying his being one flesh with his wife. Otherwise something would be seriously incompatible with God's permitting of polygamy.

Also Moses (who may have possibly been married two wives at the same time, though this can only be speculated, and it is equally plausible that one died before he took the second),<sup>7</sup> who dictated God's commands to the Israelites, records the following verses:

If he takes another woman, he shall not withhold her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. (Exodus 21:10)

If a man with two women loves one and dislikes the other... (Deuteronomy 21:15)

Now both of these verses are direct commands from God through Moses. He would likely have been well-aware of the book of Genesis in which Adam and Eve are stated to have become one flesh. So in giving these commands, it would be understood that 'one flesh' was not limited to monogamy, but would also include polygamy without violating the first union of the flesh.

So, when Jesus was speaking of the topic of RELEASING (DIMISSING/DIVORCING/SENDING-AWAY) in the Good-Messages<sup>8</sup> according to Matthew and Mark, he was not teaching on the restriction of polygamy. For polygamy was in practice during his days, and would have been directly condemned had it been sin (not vaguely mentioned in passing or left to interpretation), a thing which did not happen. And since adultery was never defined as including polygamy under the Old Covenant, and the Israelites in Jesus' days were still following the Old Covenant, Jesus would have had to specifically alter the definition of the word 'adultery' to include the concept of polygamy, a thing which he never did.

So in the following passage, Jesus is *only* dealing with the issue of unlawful RELEASING, when he spoke:

And *some* Pharisees came to him, while trying him and saying, "Is it allowable for a human to RELEASE his woman from *him* for every cause?"

But he replied, speaking, "Did you not read-aloud, that the *one* who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female, and spoke, 'For this sake, a human will leave his father and his mother and will be glued to his woman, and the two will be *made* into one flesh', so that they are no longer two, *but* instead *are* one flesh? Therefore, what God joined-together, *let* a human not be SEPARATING."

They were saying to him, "Why then did Moses instruct *us* to give a book of a NOTICE-OF-SECESSION and to RELEASE her from *himself*?"

He was saying to them, "Because of your hardness-of-heart Moses permitted you to RELEASE your women from *yourselves*, but from *the* beginning it has not been like this. But I say to *all of* you: that whoever may RELEASE his woman from *himself* (not on *account of* sexual-immorality) and may marry another is being put into an adulterous-condition. (Matthew 19:3~9)

Now, what is not clear is how exactly the one flesh is dissolved. However, it seems likely that the one flesh is dissolved through divorce/separation:

Therefore, what God joined-together, *let* a human not be SEPARATING." (Matthew 19:6)

And later in the writings of Paul:

<sup>6</sup> Another interpretation is that the man is only one flesh with the woman during the actual act of sexual intercourse. However, I believe that this can be countered with Jesus' words, which state: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, a human must not separate." (Matthew 19:6)

<sup>7</sup> Zipporah the Midianite (Exodus 2:16~21; 18:1~16) & a Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1)

<sup>8</sup> This is what the otherwise meaningless word 'gospel' means.

To those who have been married, I am transmitting-a-message (not I, *but* instead the Lord): a woman *is* not to be SEPARATED from a man. But and if she might be SEPARATED, *let* her be remaining unmarried or *let* her be reconciled to the man. And a man *is* not to be DISMISSING a woman. (1 Corinthians 7:10~11)

And a few verses later:

But if the faithless *partner* is being SEPARATED, let him be being SEPARATED. The brother or the sister has not been enslaved in the case such as this; but God has called you in peace. (1 Corinthians 7:15)

Furthermore, marriage is an image of Christ and the Assembly.

For it declares, “The two will be *made* into one flesh.” But the *one* who is being glued to the Lord is one spirit *with him*. (1 Corinthians 6:16~17)

And as the Christ himself teaches:

At that time, the kingdom of the heavens will be similar to ten virgins, whoever, while taking their torches, came-out for an encounter with the bridegroom. Now five of them were stupid and five sensible. For the stupid-ones, after they took their torches, did not take olive-oil with themselves. But the sensible-ones took olive-oil in the containers *along* with their torches. But while the bridegroom was taking-time, they became-drowsy and were fast-asleep.

But *in the* middle of the night, *there* has been an outcry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come-out for yourselves into an encounter with him.’

At that time, all those virgins were awakened, and they drenched their torches *with olive-oil*.

But the stupid-ones spoke to the sensible-ones, ‘Give us *some* of your olive-oil, because our torches are being extinguished.’

But the sensible-ones replied, saying, ‘*No*, lest-perhaps there may not be enough for us and *for* you. Rather be going to the sellers, and buy *some* for yourselves.’

But while they were going-off to buy *it*, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready entered with him into the marriage, and the door was shut.

But afterward, the remaining virgins also *were* coming, saying, “Lord, lord, open to us.”

But he replied *and* spoke, “Truly, I say to *all of* you: I have not known you’

Therefore, be being fully-awake, because you have not known the day nor the hour. (Matthew 25:1~13)

Were each of these ten virgins waiting for ten different bridegrooms? No. That Christ will be married to each Christians when we returns, is supported by a literal Greek translation when he himself teaches (note the correctly translated plural “marriages”):

The kingdom of the heavens was likened to a human, a king, whichever *one* made marriages for his son. And he commissioned his slaves to call the *ones* having been called into the marriages, and they were not wanting to come. Again he commissioned other slaves, saying, ‘Speak to the *ones who* have been called: Behold, I have made-ready my lunch; my bulls and my grain-fattened-animals have been sacrificed, and all *things* are ready. Come into the marriages.’

“But the *men*, after they were unconcerned *about it*, went-off: indeed *one of* which *went* into his own field; but *another of* which *went* to his merchandise. But the rest, after they grabbed his slaves, outraged *them* and killed *them* off. But the king was angered. And after he sent his troops, he caused those murderers to-lose *their lives*, and he set their city on fire.

“Then he says to his slaves, ‘Indeed the marriage is ready, but the *ones who* have been called were not worthy. Therefore, be going to the exits of the ways; and as-many-as you\*, if-at-any-time, might find, call *them* into the marriages.’” (Matthew 22:2~9)

So, if marriage is to be a symbol of the Christ and the Assembly, and the Assembly is made up of a host of brides, and God becomes one spirit with each of his brides; is he then also limited to only one person? Absolutely not. For God, like many of the holy men of old, are polygamists. Therefore, polygamy is an additional symbol of the Christ and his many brides.

Now the same way that the concept of marriage as found in the Mosaic law, the husband (the Christ) is able to be married to more than one woman (believers), yet a woman (believer) is only able to be married to one man



(the Christ). As it is not adultery for a man to marry another woman, likewise, it is not adultery for the Christ to have many virgins. And too, while it is adultery for a man to be married to a woman who is already married to another man, likewise, it is adultery for any of the Christ's brides to be married to the Slanderer<sup>9</sup> while they have been already married to him. So, if marriage is a symbol of the Christ and the virgins who are waiting to be married to him, then the allegory fails unless polygamy is permitted before God.

However, it must not be neglected, that monogamy, at the same time, is also a symbol of the Christ and the Assembly singularly.

And one of the seven messengers (the *messengers* who have the seven bowls, the *messengers* who are filling *the bowls with* the seven last plagues), came and uttered with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the woman of the lamb." And he carried me away in a spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the city, the holy *city*, Jerusalem, descending out of the heaven from God. (Revelation 21:9~10)

At any rate, the image of RELEASING is also paralleled in this allegory between the Christ and the Assembly. For while we are betrothed to the Christ, awaiting our marriage to him, should we depart from him, committing spiritual adultery with other gods (and sin, which would stem from other gods), then the Christ gives us a bill of divorce and gives us over to our depravity, and cuts us off from himself.

I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:27)

For some have already turned away to follow the Adversary. (1 Timothy 5:15)

O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid profane babbling and the absurdities of so-called knowledge. By professing it, some people have deviated from the faith. (1 Timothy 6:20~21)

If we persevere we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. (2 Timothy 2:12)

See to it that no one be deprived of the grace of God, that no bitter root spring up and cause trouble, through which many may become defiled, that no one be an immoral or profane person like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that later, when he wanted to inherit his father's blessing, he was rejected because he found no opportunity to change his mind, even though he sought the blessing with tears. (Hebrews 12:15~17)

And as it was never God's plan from the beginning for men to become unfaithful to him and for him to have to cut them off, likewise, it was never God's plan for a spouse to be unfaithful and have to be cut off. And if God can dissolve a union of one spirit with his people, why cannot a lesser union, that of one flesh not be dissolved in the same manner? Why would a union of one flesh be permanent whereas the more intimate union between God as one spirit can be broken?

However, before we praise polygamy, it is also clear that polygamy is not God's ideal for mankind, especially under the New Covenant. But again, neither is being married God's ideal. As we can see from Paul's plea in 1 Corinthians 7, being unmarried is more beneficial than being married. And do we not want the best for our lives? Certainly. But Paul stresses, that we do not sin by getting married, even though it is not God's best for the Christian. We have no right to condemn someone for something which God has not declared to be a sin, especially when he has permitted something, even if it is not God's best. Are we to set ourselves up as judges over one another, when God has shown pity for the weakness of men? For how are we to know that God, in his great all-surpassing wisdom, did not create such methods to prevent people from falling away from him? Or how do we know if God did not create such non-sinful alternatives for glorifying his name in a way that we cannot understand?

Even the Christ himself said:

The disciples said to him, "If that is the case of the human with the woman, it is better not to marry."  
But he spoke to them, "Not all can accept the account, *but* instead *only* those to whom it has been granted.

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<sup>9</sup> This is what the otherwise meaningless word 'devil' means.

”For some are eunuchs because they were born so; and some, because they were made so by the humans; and some, because they have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of the heaven. Whoever is able to accept this ought to accept it.”  
(Matthew 19:10~12)

And Paul who states that it is better to be unmarried than married, in order for more devotion to God:

Indeed, I wish everyone to be as I am, but each has a particular gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.  
(1 Corinthians 7:7)

But, if polygamy is an acceptable non-sinful activity, it is certainly discouraged. The elders (overseers and ministers) are commanded to be monogamous in order to be an example to God’s people:

Now an overseer must be... a man of one woman... (1 Timothy 3:2)

Let ministers be men of one woman... (1 Timothy 3:12)

Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been a woman of one man...<sup>10</sup>  
(1 Timothy 5:9)

This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you, if any man is blameless, a man of one woman.... (Titus 1:6)

It would be obvious that God’s preference was for his people to return to monogamy. But at the same time, those who were already engaged in such a situation were never once condemned for their situation nor did Jesus or the apostles ever command that such unions be broken; but such individuals were merely restricted from being in an exemplar, namely an overseer, or elder, or minister. By observing the restrictions placed upon the heads of the assembly, it would appear that monogamy was to be the encouraged route. And if Paul appealed that even be married to one woman is to be hindering to the life of a Christian to be fully devoted to God, how much more being married to multiple women at the same time?

At any rate, polygamy itself is not condemned, and since God hates divorce, this situation (which is not condemned) cannot be solved through a series of divorces between each of the members. If the elders are to be examples to the flock, but that not all Christians meet these conditions of qualification, than it is obvious that God definitely did not encourage polygamy, but permitted it; but at the same time, intended for the practice of polygamy to gradually fade away and be replaced with monogamy as the generations of his people spread abroad throughout the world.

But again, Paul encouraged *celibacy* above getting married:

“Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE. Are you RELEASED from a woman? Then do not seek for a woman. But and if you marry, you do not sin, and if the virgin marries, she does not sin; but such people will experience a tribulation in the flesh, and I would like to spare you that.” (1 Corinthians 7:27~28)

Clearly, if at some point, one had been released from being married to a woman, he should not seek for one; yet, if he does marry, he does not sin. Now some would make a rebuttal, stating that only death can cause one to be released. I beg to differ.

First, this is the same Greek word (LUO, meaning ‘RELEASE’) which Jesus uses in the following passage:

He said to them, “Because of your hardness-of-heart Moses allowed you to RELEASE your women from *you*, but from *the* beginning it was not so. But I say to you, if anyone RELEASES his woman from *him* (not on *grounds of* sexual-immorality) and marries another he commits adultery (Matthew 19:9)

When Paul is asking, “Are you bound to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE.” It is obvious that the one bound is *not* seeking for a way to murder his woman/wife. And if death is the only way to be RELEASED, then

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<sup>10</sup> literally “

Paul's instruction is a bit vain, and it also fails to incorporate several of Jesus' statements and others of Paul (see further).

Paul's desire for a man to not seek to be RELEASED, shows that it is a possibility for a man to be RELEASED. Now, since this makes it obvious that one can be RELEASED from a wife in a way other than death, then in the very next statement, it would also be known that the one already "RELEASED from a woman" would include those who have been RELEASED from their spouse through means other than death (though it would seem to also include those who had been RELEASED from their spouse through death).

And in the very next sentence he states, that those who have been RELEASED (although he does not encourage this, Paul encourages celibacy) does *not* sin. And even if this is not God's ideal, this is *not* sin. Therefore, we cannot condemn anyone who would choose this route, nor should we even make such a person uneasy and uncomfortable by even trying to prevent such an activity which would wound their conscious into believing that such is a sin. All Paul wants to do is spare some earthly affliction.

According to Paul's exhortation, failure to engage in celibacy (which would seem to be God's preference), is not sin. And it is a blessing that Paul made that statement that clear, because I know that without that small statement, many would seek to wound many souls by convicting them that failure to strive for celibacy is sin. And since we would not do that, we also should not do the same in other marital situations which are not considered sin by God.

And before we make any judgments upon polygamists, when this practice itself is never once condemned, although it is to be strongly discouraged and eventually overshadowed by monogamy, as it is today in most countries, we must be warned:

Who are you to pass judgment on someone else's domestic-*slave*? Before his own master he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. (Romans 14:4)

And now, let us turn to the passages in the New Covenant on divorce and remarriage, keeping all of these principles in mind; for Jesus' audience were Israelites who adhered to these Old Covenant laws, understanding that polygamy was not a sinful practice. But, for the sake of those who are entirely against polygamy, we shall not forsake an explanation of these passages, as if it were entirely prohibited.

## PART003A: DEFINING ‘PORNEIA’ (SEXUAL-IMMORALITY)

Before we turn to the passages in the holy writings relating to divorce and remarriage, I think it is most profitable to define each of the Greek terms present in this passages, and also to translate each Greek word consistently to prevent any doctrinal errors which may possibly arise when English translations translate a single Greek word into multiple English words at different times; or with those who seek to be contentious over differing English words, which are the same word in the original Greek text. (The definition for ‘adultery’ (MOICHEIA) has already been dealt with in Part 001.)

The first Greek word to be dealt with is “PORNEIA”, which in the King James Version is usually translated to “fornication”, while modern translations usually translate to something like “immorality” or “sexual-immorality” (though some others translate to “whoredom” or “unchastity”, etc).

Now this word PORNEIA is where the modern English word “pornography” is derived from. PORNEIA, according to all of the Greek scholars means *every kind* of unlawful sexual intercourse, whether it be fornication, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, (and would even include adultery according to some, but not all Greek lexicons); any sexual sin, whether before, during, or after marriage. Here are how all of the Greek Lexicons and Dictionaries available to me translate this word (and I am not aware of any which translate the word any differently):

- “illicit sexual intercourse,” including “adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals, intercourse with close relatives, etc.” (*Strong’s*)
- generally, of every kind of extramarital, unlawful, or unnatural sexual intercourse fornication, sexual immorality, prostitution (*Friberg: Analytical Greek Lexicon*)
- unchastity, prostitution, fornication, of various kinds of unlawful sexual intercourse (*Gingrich: Greek NT Lexicon*)
- sexual immorality, fornication, unchastity (*Danker, Greek NT Lexicon*)
- fornication, prostitution (*Middle Liddell*)
- prostitution (of a man), fornication, unchastity (*LSJ*)

A slightly different form of the Greek word (PORNEUO), is a noun. It is usually translated to “harlot” or “whore”, but more specifically is someone who practices PORNEIA (“a woman who practices sexual immorality”).

PORNEIA is a much broader term than ADULTERY, including an unlawful sexual relationship with anyone, be it man or animal, and includes adultery as merely one of the possible sexual sins. But ADULTERY (as defined in a section above) refers specifically to a *man* who has had relations with a *woman* who is already married to someone else (and does not include polygamy).

The Greek word PORNEIA usually translates the Hebrew ZANAH, which, according to the Strong’s and other Hebrew Lexicons has the same meaning as the Greek PORNEIA. (Likewise, both the Greek and Hebrew word for ‘adultery’ both mean the same as well.) (See Jeremiah 3:1, Amos 7:17).

The full definition of PORNEIA in the eyes of God may be summed up in Leviticus Chapter 18, which would include, “incest (your mother; your step-mother; your sister; your step-sister; your son’s daughter; your daughter’s daughter; your step-daughter; your aunt, either side of family; your father’s brother’s wife; your daughter-in-law; your brother’s wife; with a woman and also with her daughter, nor shall you marry and have intercourse with her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter; while your wife is still living, her sister), a women unclean from menstruation, your neighbor’s wife, homosexuality, bestiality, etc. In the Mosaic law, the penalty for most of these acts was death (see Leviticus 20:10~16,19~21 for the penalties; also Acts 15, 1 Corinthians 5 for evidence that these immoral acts were still condemned under the New Covenant).

Then Balaam set out on his journey home; and Balak also went his way. While Israel was living at Shittim, the people degraded themselves by committing sexual-immorality (Hebrew “ZANAH”) with the Moabite women.

These then invited the people to the sacrifices of their god, and the people ate of the sacrifices and worshiped their god.

When Israel submitted in this way to the rites of Baal of Peor, Yahweh's anger flared up against Israel, and he said to Moses, "Gather all the leaders of the people, and hold a public execution of the guilty ones before Yahweh, that his blazing wrath may be turned away from Israel."

So Moses told the Israelite judges, "Each of you shall kill those of his men who have submitted to the rites of Baal of Peor."

Yet a certain Israelite came and brought in a Midianite woman to his clansmen in the view of Moses and of the whole Israelite community, while they were weeping at the entrance of the meeting tent. When Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, and taking a lance in hand, followed the Israelite into his retreat where he pierced the pair of them, the Israelite and the woman. Thus the slaughter of Israelites was checked; but only after 24,000 had died.

It would be absurd to suppose that all of these thousands Israelites in Numbers 25:1+, who committed sin with the daughters of Moab, only committed sin with unmarried women. And when Paul refers to this event, he says:

Let us not indulge in sexual-immorality as some of them did, and 23,000 fell within a single day.  
(1 Corinthians 10:8)

Now when Paul states this in his letter, is he *only* referring to unmarried Corinthians? I think not. Again, in Revelation, the Christ himself refers to the same instance when he rebukes the Pergamum assembly:

Instead, I have a few things against you, because you have *some* there who are grasping the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to throw a stumbling-block in front of the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual-immorality.  
(Revelation 2:14)

Now, coming to another example. In Hosea, after he has taken Gomer for his own wife, we read:

The beginning of the word of Yahweh by Hosea. And the Lord said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a woman of sexual-immorality, and children of sexual-immorality: for the land will surely indulge in sexual-immorality in departing from the Lord." So he went and took Gomer, daughter of Debelaim; and she conceived, and bore him a son. And she conceived again, and bore a daughter. And he said to him, "Call her name, Unpitied: for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, but will surely set myself in array against them." (Hosea 1:2~3,6)

Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my woman, and I am not her man: and I will remove her sexual-immorality out of my presence, and her adultery from between her breasts (Hosea 2:2)

Yes, their mother [Gomer] has committed sexual-immorality (Hebrew "ZANAH"); she who conceived them has acted shamefully. "I will go after my lovers," she said, "who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink." I will have no pity on her children, for they are the children of sexual-immorality.  
(Hosea 2:5)

This clearly shows that sexual-immorality (PORNEIA) is not limited to premarital relationships, but includes adultery, since this sin of sexual-immorality happened to Hosea while she was married to him.

Now in the following passage, God, who was married to both Israel and Judah at the same time, had SENT Israel AWAY from *him* because she committed sexual-immorality and issued her a BILL OF DIVORCE. But Judah was not frightened because of this, and she also did the same:

...that for all the adulteries rebellious Israel had committed, I SENT her AWAY from me and gave her a BILL OF DIVORCE, nevertheless her traitor sister Judah was not frightened; she too went off and committed sexual-immorality.  
(Jeremiah 3:8)

Therefore, it can clearly be seen, that sexual-immorality (PORNEIA) includes sexual sin which occurs while one individual is currently married.

Now this can also clearly be demonstrated in the early Christian writing known as the Shepherd of Hermas. (I merely cite this writing as an example of the use of the word, not based on its authority, although many members of the first few centuries of the church considered it to be a holy writing equal to the rest of the holy writings). Now in this scene, Hermas already is married to a woman, and a heavenly messenger is instructing him.

He [the messenger] declared *to Hermas*, “I instruct you to guard your purity. And do not let it ascend upon your heart *to think* about another *man’s* woman, nor about sexual-immorality, nor about any similar wicked *things*. For if you do, you are working a great sin. While you are always remembering your *own* woman, you will never fall into sin.  
(Hermas 29:1)

Since Hermas is presently married, it shows that sexual-immorality (PORNEIA) may be committed by a married man, and it not limited to premarital sex.

And again in the Shepherd of Hermas:

“Lord,” I declared, “if a man might be having a woman who is faithful in the Lord and *he* should find her in some adultery, is he then sinning if he continues to live with her?”

“As long as *he remains* in his ignorance, he is not sinning,” he declared. “But if her man should come-to-know *about* the sin, and the woman may not change-her-mind, *but* instead might be persisting in her sexual-immorality and *yet* the man should continue to be living with her, he becomes liable for himself of her sin, and a companion to her adultery.”  
(Hermas 29:5)

Here, it is plainly obvious that sexual-immorality (PORNEIA) would include adultery, since the woman is committing both the adultery and the sexual-immorality while she is currently married to a man and they seem to be part of the same instance.

Another example includes Paul’s writing to the Corinthians assembly:

Sexual-immorality is actually being heard *of being committed* among you, and sexual-immorality of such *a kind* which is not *even* among the nations, so that a certain *man* is having a woman of his father.  
(1 Corinthians 5:1)

Here, Paul gives an illustration within a marriage. So this word cannot be limited to premarital sexual activity, and cannot be forced to exclude the meaning of adultery. This word includes every kind of unlawful sexual activity, including adultery. Therefore, PORNEIA will be translated to ‘sexual-immorality’ in every occurrence.

Here is a list of every passage that uses either ZANAH (Hebrew Old Testament) or PORNEIA (Greek Old Testament/New Testament):

Genesis 34:31, 38:15,21,22,24	Ezekiel 6:9,16:15~17,20,22,24~26,28,30,31,33~36,41,
Exodus 34:15~16	20:30, 23:3,5,7,8,11,14,17~19,27,29,30,35,43, 44,
Leviticus 17:7, 19:29, 20:5,6,21:7,14	43:7,9
Numbers 14:33, 15:39, 25:1	Hosea 1:2, 2:2,4~6, 4:10~15,18, 5:3~4, 6:10, 9:1
Deuteronomy 22:21, 23:3, 23:18, 31:16	Joel 3:3
Joshua 2:1, 6:17, 6:22,23,25	Amos 7:17
Judges 2:17, 8:27,33, 11:1, 16:1, 19:2	Micah 1:7
1 Kings 3:16, 12:24, 20:19, 22:38 / 2 Kings 9:22	Nahum 3:4
2 Chronicles 21:11,13	Matthew 5:32, 15:19, 19:9
Tobit 4:12, 8:7	Mark 7:21
Psalms 73:27, 106:39	Luke 15:30
Proverbs 5:3, 6:26, 7:10, 23:27, 29:3	John 8:41
Wisdom 14:12	Acts 15:20,29, 21:25
Sirach 9:6, 19:2, 23:17,23, 26:9, 41:17, 46:11	1 Corinthians 5:1,9~11, 6:13,15,16,18, 7:2, 10:8
Enoch 8:2, 10:9	2 Corinthians 12:21
Isaiah 1:21, 23:15~17, 47:10, 57:3,9	Galatians 5:19
Jeremiah 2:20, 3:1~3,6,8,9, 5:7, 13:27	Ephesians 5:3,5
Letter of Jeremiah 1:9	Colossians 3:5

1 Thessalonians 4:3  
1 Timothy 1:10  
Hebrews 11:31, 12:16, 13:4  
James 2:25  
Jude 1:7  
Revelation 2:14,20,21, 9:21, 14:8, 17:1,2,4,5,15,16,  
18:3,9, 19:2, 21:9, 22:15  
Barnabas 19:4  
Clement 12:1  
Hermas 29:1,5, 38:3

## PART003B: DEFINING ‘RELEASED’ & ‘TO SEND FORTH FROM’

The next Greek word, which will be consistently rendered as “RELEASED” is the Greek word APOLUO, or LUO, depending on the grammatical context. According to Friberg’s Greek Lexicon, this word is defined as, “to free, release, send away, dismiss, let go / “literally, freeing someone or something that is tied or bound; loose, set free, release”. Other lexicons define it as “to loose, set free, dismiss”. It is used in many contexts, including setting a prisoner free, dismissing or sending away or releasing a wife, dismissing a crowd or assembly, and even related to being released from this present life. Also in the context of physical bondage; a legal obligation, free, release; spiritual bondage, set free; breaking something up into its component parts, tear down, break up; breaking up a crowd, disperse; bringing something to an end, away with, undo; of commandments or laws, set aside, annul, invalidate.

The Strong’s defines this word as “to set free, to let go, dismiss (to detain no longer), to send away, which would be used in the following contexts: loosing the bonds of a captive and setting them free, to acquit one accused of a crime and set him at liberty, indulgently to grant a prisoner leave to depart, to divorce a spouse.

This is an active deed, where one party releases the other. The jailer would RELEASE the prisoner, the husband would RELEASE the wife. The captive does *not* RELEASE themselves, nor does the wife RELEASE herself.

Despite this proper use of who RELEASES who, during the time of Jesus, women were sinfully RELEASING their husbands without permission in the law to do so, as may be seen from the Judean historian Josephus, who wrote about 90AD (though the customs of the Judeans, whom Jesus rebuked, should not be used in making any conclusive doctrinal decisions):

But some time afterward, Shelome happened to quarrel with Kostobar, and straightaway she indeed sent him a *bill of secession*, RELEASING herself from the marriage, a practice which was not in accordance with the Judean laws. For it is indeed permitted by us for only a man to do this. But a woman, if she SEPARATES, may not marry another, unless her previous man sets her aside. (Antiquities 15:259)

Now there is only a slight difference between LUO and APOLUO. LUO means “to release”, whereas APOLUO means “to release from” (the APO prefix in Greek means “from”).

Here is a list of passages where either of these Greek words are used (both in the OT Greek, and the NT):

### APOLUO/LUO:

Genesis 15:2 / 42:27	Mark 1:7 / 6:36,45 / 7:35 / 8:3,9 / 10:2,4,11,12 / 11:2,4,5 / 15:6,9,11,15
Exodus 3:5 / 33:11	Luke 2:29 / 3:16 / 6:37 / 8:38 / 9:12 / 13:12,15,16 / 14:4 / 16:18 /
Numbers 20:29	19:30,31,33 / 23:16,18,20,22,25
Joshua 5:15	John 1:27 / 2:19 / 5:18 / 7:23 / 10:35 / 11:44 / 18:39 / 19:10,12
1 Ezra 1:52 / 9:13,36,46	Acts 2:24 / 3:13 / 4:21,23 / 5:40 / 7:33 / 13:3,25,43 / 15:30,33,35,36 /
Judith 6:14 / 9:2	17:9 / 19:40 / 22:30 / 23:22 / 26:32 / 27:41 / 28:18,25
Tobit 3:6,13,17(x2)	1 Corinthians 7:27(x2)
1 Maccabees 10:29,43 / 11:38	Ephesians 2:14
2 Maccabees 4:47 / 6:22,30 / 7:9 / 10:21,25,45 / 14:23	2 Peter 3:10-12
3 Maccabees 1:4 / 5:34 / 6:27,28,29 / 7:7	1 John 3:8
Psalms 33:1 / 101:21 / 104:20 / 145:7	Hebrews 13:23
Job 5:20 / 39:2,5 / 42:9	Revelation 1:5 / 5:2 / 9:14,15 / 20:3,7
Ecclesiastes 8:1	Josephus: Antiquities & Judean War & Life (too many to list)
Wisdom 8:8	Barnabas 3:3
Sirach 27:19 / 28:2	Clement 56:9
Aristeas 15,17,22,24,139,174,175,202,268,303,304	Ignatius: Ephesians 13:1, 19:3 / Magensians 12:1 / Philadelphians 8:1 /
Isaiah 5:27 / 14:17 / 40:2 / 58:6	Smyreans 6:2 / Polycarp 1:2
Jeremiah 47:4	Martyrdom of Polycarp 9:3 / 13:2
Daniel 3:92 / 5:12 / 12:8 / 13:36,53	Shepherd of Hermas 68:1,4,5(x2) / 69:5 / 71:2 / 86:5 / 90:8
Matthew 1:19 / 5:19,31,32 / 14:15,22,23 / 15:23,32,39 / 16:19 / 18:18,27	
/ 19:3,7,8,9 / 21:2 / 27:15,17,21,26	

It is interesting to note that much of the terminology used in a marriage situation are parallel to terms used by slaves/masters and prisoners, releasing tied up animals, etc. For example:



[Yahweh] secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. Yahweh RELEASES prisoners.  
(Psalm 145:7)

He said, "Go into the village opposite you, and as you enter it you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. RELEASE it and bring it here."  
(Luke 19:30)

Overall, 'APOLUO/LUO' is a rare word, especially in the Old Testament, mainly occurring in the writings of the New Covenant and the most recent Old Testament books, such as Maccabees; and almost every occurrence in the books of the New Covenant are in the context of divorce.

However, in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the primary Greek word which is used for the concept of divorce (and which, by context, is seen as synoptic with APOLUO/LUO), is 'EXAPOSTELLO', which literally means 'to send out from', or, more pleasant sounding in English, 'to send away from'. It is not the primary Greek word used in the New Covenant for divorce, but is the primary word used in the Old Testament for this concept. Despite that they are synoptic words, I will be using 'send-away' or 'send-out' to denote EXAPOSTELLO from APOLUO/LUO.

From the following two passages, we can clearly see that APOLUO/LUO and EXAPOSTELLO are synoptic terms and refer to the exact same situation:

When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent, and therefore he writes out a book of a NOTICE-OF-SECESSION and hands it to her, thus SENDING her OUT from his house.  
(Deuteronomy 24:1; also see 24:3)

They said to him, "Then why did Moses instruct *us* to give a book of a NOTICE-OF-SECESSION and RELEASE *her* from *him*?"  
(Matthew 19:7; also see Mark 10:4)

## EXAPOSTELLO

Genesis 3:23 / 8:10,12 / 19:29 / 25:6,29,31 / 31:27,42 / 32:14 / 45:1,24	Wisdom 9:10
Exodus 3:12,20 / 4:21,23 / 5:1,2 / 6:1,11,13 / 7:2,14,16,26,27 / 8:4,16,17,25,28 / 9:1,2,7,13,14,17,28,35 / 10:3,4,7,20,27 / 11:1,10 / 13:15,17 / 14:5 / 18:27 / 21:26,27 / 24:5	Aristeas 1:13,126
Leviticus 14:7,53 / 16:21,22,26 / 18:24 / 20:23 / 26:25	Hosea 8:14
Numbers 5:2,3,4 / 13:3	Amos 1:4,7,10,12 / 2:2,5 / 4:10 / 7:10 / 8:11
Deuteronomy 9:23 / 15:12,13,18 / 21:14 / 22:19,29 / 24:1,3,4 / 28:20	Micah 1:14 / 6:4
Joshua 2:21 / 22:6,7 / 24:12	Joel 2:19,25 / 4:13
Judges 1:25 / 2:6 / 3:15,18,19 / 5:15 / 6:8,14,35 / 7:8,24 / 9:23 / 11:7,17,38 / 12:9 / 15:5 / 18:2 / 19:25,29,30 / 20:6,12,48	Obadiah 1:1,7
1 Samuel 5:10,11 / 6:3,6,8 / 9:19,26 / 10:25 / 13:2 / 16:20 / 19:17 / 20:5,13,22,29	Haggai 1:12
2 Samuel 3:14,24 / 10:4 / 11:12 / 13:16,17	Zechariah 1:10 / 2:15 / 4:9 / 7:2,12 / 8:10 / 9:11
1 Kings 2:25 / 8:66 / 11:21,22 / 12:24 / 15:12,18,19 / 16:28 / 21:34	Malachi 2:2,4,16 / 3:1
2 Kings 3:7 / 5:5,24 / 8:12 / 11:12 / 15:37 / 24:2	Isaiah 27:8 / 50:1 / 66:19
2 Chronicles 36:15	Jeremiah 1:7 / 3:1,8 / 7:25 / 8:17 / 15:1 / 24:5 / 25:18 / 27:33 / 28:2 / 33:22 / 35:16 / 41:9,14,16
1 Ezra 1:25 / 3:14 / 4:4,44,57	1 Baruch 4:11,37
Esther 4:15 / 8:10 / 9:19,20,22	Letter of Jeremiah 1:61
Tobit 5:18 / 10:8,9,11	Ezekiel 2:3 / 3:5,6 / 5:16,17 / 13:20 / 14:13,21 / 17:7,15 / 23:16,40 / 31:4
1 Maccabees 6:12 / 11:62 / 12:46	Daniel 13:21
2 Maccabees 6:1 / 14:12, 27	Mark 16:8
3 Maccabees 4:4 / 6:27	Luke 1:53 / 20:10
Psalm 17:15,17 / 19:3 / 42:3 / 56:4 / 77:45,49 / 80:13 / 103:10,30 / 104:26,28 / 105:15 / 109:2 / 134:9 / 143:6,7 / 151:4	Acts 7:12 / 9:30 / 11:22 / 12:11 / 13:26 / 17:14 / 22:21
Job 12:19 / 14:20 / 22:9 / 30:11 / 39:3	Galatians 4:4,6
	Shepherd of Hermas 23:6 / 91:3
	Josephus: Antiquities 1:245 / 3:1 / 9:51,264 / 13:225,278 / 18:176,201
	Josephus: Judean War 7:59,205
	Josephus: Life 1:57,147

Now a few Old Testament passages in relationship to marriage:

Moreover, she shall remain his woman, and he may not SEND her AWAY from *him* as long as he lives.  
(Deuteronomy 22:21)

When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent, and therefore he writes out a BILL OF DIVORCE and hands it to her, thus SENDING HER AWAY from his house: if on leaving his house she goes and becomes the woman of another man, and the second man, too, comes to dislike her and SEND her AWAY from his house by handing her a BILL OF DIVORCE; or if

this second man who has married her, dies; then her former man, who SENT her AWAY from *him*, may not again take her as his woman after she has become defiled. That would be an abomination before Yahweh, and you shall not bring such guilt upon the land which Yahweh, your God, is giving you as a heritage. (Deuteronomy 24:1~4)

Thus says Yahweh: Where is the BILL OF DIVORCE with which I SENT-AWAY your mother from *me*? Or to which of my creditors have I sold you? It was for your sins that you were sold, for your crimes that your mother was SENT AWAY from *me*. (Isaiah 50:1)

If a man SENT AWAY his woman from *him* and, after leaving him, she marries another man, does the first man come back to her? Would not the land be wholly defiled? But you have sinned with many lovers, and yet you would return to me! says Yahweh. (Jeremiah 3:1)

...that for all the adulteries rebellious Israel had committed, I SENT her AWAY from *me* and gave her a BILL OF DIVORCE, nevertheless her traitor sister Judah was not frightened; she too went off and committed sexual-immorality. (Jeremiah 3:8)

Malachi 2:16 (Hebrew MT)	Malachi 2:16 (Greek)
For I hate SENDING-AWAY, says Yahweh, the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with injustice, says Yahweh of hosts; you must then safeguard life that is your own, and not break faith.	But if you hate <i>your woman</i> and SEND her AWAY from <i>you</i> , says the Lord God of Israel, then ungodliness shall cover your thoughts, say the Lord Almighty: therefore take heed to your spirit, and do not forsake <i>them</i> ,

Every passage in the Old Testament, when this word is used in conjunction with marriage, always refers to the dissolving of a marriage covenant. Notice how, even here, in Jeremiah 3:8, God SENT Israel AWAY from *him* on account of sexual-immorality, which is the only reason that Jesus would give for such activity.

Also, in the context of Matthew 19, we can see that RELEASING equals (or is the same) as a SEPARATION – they both divide what God has joined together:

Therefore, what God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE.

I say to you, he who RELEASES his woman (not on *grounds of* sexual-immorality), and marries another commits adultery.

## PART003C: DEFINING ‘SEPARATE’

The Greek word CHORIZO is used both in the passage “What God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE” as well as the passages in 1 Corinthians (such as “If the unbeliever SEPARATES...”)

According to Friberg’s Lexicon, CHORIZO is defined as “to separate oneself, be separated, be divorced; be separated from, depart from a place; be separate from, be different from; be at a distance from, be separate from a person.” Strong’s defines CHORIZO as “to separate, divide, part, put asunder, to separate one’s self from, to depart” which is used in the context of leaving a husband or wife, of divorce, or departing to go away.

This is a common word used within the context of marriage and divorce. CHORIZO and APOLUO (RELEASE)/EXAPOSTELLO(SEND-AWAY) are both representatives of divorce, in that (as we will see below) both cause a marriage to end, though each contains some slight differences. As stated above. APOLUO (RELEASE)/EXAPOSTELLO(SEND-AWAY) would be the action of the master. A master would RELEASE/SEND-AWAY their slave from them. A master would not SEPARATE from their slave. The slave would be the one to SEPARATE from the master, the slave does not RELEASE/SEND-AWAY the master. And this same concept is true both in marriage. How the two words are used, seeks to show which party is the cause. In most cases, the husband RELEASES/SENDS-AWAY the wife, whereas the wife would SEPARATE from the husband. The difference between these two terms is incredibly important in determining who is responsible for what actions in a divorce situation.

This Greek word does translate the Hebrew word BADAL, which also means, “to divide, separate.”

Here is a list of passages where this word is used in Greek (in this particular form):

Leviticus 13:46

Judges 4:11, 6:18

1 Chronicles 12:9

1 Ezra 5:39, 7:13, 8:54,66, 9:9

Nehemiah 9:2, 13:3

1 Maccabees 1:11

2 Maccabees 5:21, 10:19, 12:12

3 Maccabees 2:25, 5:50

Proverbs 18:1

Wisdom 1:3

Ezekiel 46:19

Matthew 19:6

Mark 10:9

Acts 1:4

Acts 18:1,2

Romans 8:35,39

1 Corinthians 7:10,11,15

Philemon 1:15

Hebrews 7:26

One example of using this word in the context of marriage in the Old Testament (we shall see how it is used in the New Testament later on) is during the periods of Nehemiah (this also will be described in more detail further on). For the Israelites had married foreign women against God’s commandments. In response, Ezra dealt with this:

Then Ezra rose and said to them, “You have broken the law and married foreign women, and so have increased the sin of Israel. Now then make confession and give glory to the Lord the God of our fathers, and do his will; SEPARATE yourselves from the peoples of the land and from your foreign women.”

(1Ezra 9:7~9)

1Ezra is one Greek translation of a slightly different book of Ezra (although it is almost the same), while in the regular Greek translation of Ezra does not directly use the word CHORIZO, instead translating to a word meaning “DIVIDE”, which most translators do translate here to ‘separate’.

Now therefore give praise to the Lord God of our fathers, and do that which is pleasing in his sight: and DIVIDE yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the foreign woman. (Ezra10:11)

Some people believe that CHORIZO only means a physical separation. They do not want to see a divorce here at all. But the most common meaning, especially in light of Jesus: “What God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE” shows that this word, in the context of marriage, is used to divide this marriage that God has joined together. Also, Paul clearly shows this as well:

But to the married I give this instruction (not I, *but* instead the Lord): a woman should not SEPARATE from a man – but and if she does SEPARATE, she must either remain unmarried or become reconciled to the man – and a man should not DISMISS a woman. (1 Corinthians 7:10~11)

If the woman separates, she must remain *unmarried*. Since he is specifically addressing the married here, this shows that a SEPERATION actually causes her to become unmarried. That means she is not married anymore; an entire dissolving of the marriage. Also the examples from Ezra show that this is a dissolving of marriage. Therefore, both SEPARATE and RELEASE/SEND-AWAY/DISMISS have to do with ending a marriage.

## PART003D: DEFINING ‘BILL OF DIVORCE’

The Greek word APOSTASION, usually translated in English as “Certificate of Divorce” is defined according to Friberg’s Lexicon as “a legal term, the act of putting away a wife, divorce; a certificate of divorce.” The Strong’s defines it as “divorce, repudiation, a bill of divorce”. In the Old Testament, this Greek word is used to translate the two words “CEPHER KERIYTHUWTH”. CEPHER, according to Strong’s, means “book, document, letter, legal document, scroll, etc”. KERIYTHUWTH means “divorce, dismissal, divorcement.” So what we have literally in Hebrew is “BILL OF DIVORCE,” to which the Greek APOSTASION is an equivalent. More literally, the Greek would be translated as “a thing of abandonment/defection/apostasy”.

This rare word is used only in the following passages:

Deuteronomy 24:1, 3

Isaiah 50:1

Jeremiah 3:8

Matthew 5:31, 19:7

Mark 10:4

When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent, and therefore he writes out a BILL OF DIVORCE and hands it to her, thus SENDING her AWAY from his house: if on leaving his house she goes and becomes the woman of another man, and the second man, too, comes to dislike her and SENDS her AWAY from his house by handing her a BILL OF DIVORCE; or if this second man who has married her, dies; then her former man, who SENT her AWAY from *him*, may not again take her as his woman after she has become defiled. That would be an abomination before Yahweh, and you shall not bring such guilt upon the land which Yahweh, your God, is giving you as a heritage. (Deuteronomy 24:1~4)

This is what Yahweh says: Where is the BILL OF DIVORCE with which I SENT-AWAY your mother from *me*? Or to which of my creditors have I sold you? It was for your sins that you were sold, for your crimes that your mother was SENT-AWAY from *me*. (Isaiah 50:1)

...that for all the adulteries rebellious Israel had committed, I SENT her AWAY from *me* and gave her a BILL OF DIVORCE, nevertheless her traitor sister Judah was not frightened; she too went off and committed sexual-immorality. (Jeremiah 3:8)

From the context of this rare word, whenever a divorce was made on the grounds of sexual-immorality, then the husband was to SEND her AWAY with a BILL OF DIVORCE to make it final. However, in the Old Testament, having this BILL OF DIVORCE did not prevent her from being marrying to another man. In fact, one may assume that the only way she could be married to another man was after the acceptance of this BILL OF DIVORCE. I assume that if she was SENT-AWAY otherwise that she would be guilty of adultery.

According to the Judean historian Josephus, this was in fact the custom of the Judeans during the first century AD in this particular situation for only the man to do this:

But some time afterward, Shelome happened to quarrel with Kostobar, and straightaway she indeed sent him a *bill of divorce*, RELEASING herself from the marriage, a practice which was not in accordance with the Judean laws. For it is indeed permitted by us for only a man to do this. But a woman, if she SEPARATES, may not marry another, unless her previous man sets her aside. (Antiquities 15:259)

## PART003E: DEFINING ‘BOUND’

The Greek word DEO, usually translated in English to “bound” is defined by Friberg’s Lexicon as “bind (together), tie (up)”; it is normally used in the following contexts: of burial procedures, wrap up; of arrest and imprisonment, bind, tie up; of mutual commitment to the marriage vow, be restricted; of physical incapacity, cause to be ill; the binding and loosing.

As can be seen, like many marital terms, this has parallels in slavery and imprisonment. Therefore, we can again evaluate all of these terms based on the correlation between the concepts.

**General (Physical, including imprisonment, bound in fetters, allegorical):**

Genesis 38:28, 42:24  
Judges 15:4,10,12,13, 16:5~8,10~13  
2 Samuel 3:34  
2 Kings 7:10, 12:21, 17:4, 25:7  
2 Chronicles 33:11, 36:2,6  
1 Ezra 1:36,38  
Judith 6:13, 16:8  
3 Maccabees 6:19  
4 Maccabees 11:9,10  
Psalm 149:8  
Proverbs 15:7, 25:12  
Song of Solomon 7:5  
Job 32:19, 36:13, 39:10, 40:26,29  
Wisdom 17:16  
Sirach 28:19  
Isaiah 3:10, 22:3, 42:7, 43:14, 45:14  
Jeremiah 40:1, 52:11  
Ezekiel 3:25, 16:4, 27:24, 37:17  
Daniel 4:17,32  
Hosea 10:6

Nahum 3:10  
Matthew 12:29, 13:30, 14:3, 21:2, 22:13, 27:2  
Mark 3:27, 5:3,4, 6:17, 11:2,4, 15:1,7  
Luke 19:30  
John 11:44, 18:12,24, 19:40  
Acts 9:2,14,21, 12:6, 21:11,13,33, 22:5, 22:29, 24:27  
Colossians 4:3  
2 Timothy 2:9

**Spiritual (Binding Demons / People Bound by Demons / by the Spirit)**

Tobit 3:17, 8:3  
Luke 13:16  
Acts 20:22  
Revelation 9:14, 20:2

**Binding on Earth/Heaven:**

Matthew 16:19, 18:18

**Marriage:**

Romans 7:2  
1 Corinthians 7:27,39

From observing these passages, and the close connection between DEO (bound) and APOLUO/LUO (released), as well as them being constantly used together in the same sentences related to marriage, demonstrate that both ‘bound’ and ‘released’ are opposites, and, in context, are referring to being married and unmarried. The primary verse that demonstrates this can be clearly seen from Paul’s writings, the opposite of bound, is to be loosed:

Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE. Are you RELEASED from a woman? Do not seek a woman. But and if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries she does not sin. (1 Corinthians 7:27~28)

But, one cannot be released unless one has first been bound. So, unless one has first been bound, one cannot be released. So, clearly, someone who is ‘released’ is someone who has already been previously married, and does not include someone who was never bound to a wife to begin with (i.e. a virgin, never married person). In the same way that one cannot be released from a marriage if they have never been married, in the same way, a prisoner cannot be released unless they are first imprisoned.

## PART004: DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE IN THE GOSPELS

Now that we have defined these terms, and have delved through the passages in the Old Testament, we now proceed into the teachings of Jesus himself, as recorded down in the Good-Messages, the primary passages being in the Good-Message according to Matthew. After listing off the passages one by one, we shall go through them each individually:

And *some* Pharisees approached him, testing him and saying, “Is it permissible for a human to RELEASE his woman from *him* for any cause whatever?”

But he replied, speaking, “Have you not read, that from *the* beginning the Creator made them male and female, and spoke, ‘For this reason a human shall leave his father and his mother and be glued to his woman, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, *but* instead one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE.”

They said to him, “Then why did Moses instruct that *the man* give *the woman* a BILL OF DIVORCE and RELEASE *her* from *him*?”

He said to them, “Because of your hardness-of-heart Moses allowed you to RELEASE your women from *you*, but from *the* beginning it was not so. But I say to you, if anyone RELEASES his woman from *him* (not on *grounds of sexual-immorality*) and marries another he commits adultery\*.<sup>11</sup>

The disciples said to him, “If that is the case of the human with the woman, it is better not to marry.”

But he spoke to them, “Not all can accept the account, *but* instead *only* those to whom it has been granted.

”For some are eunuchs because they were born so; and some, because they were made so by the humans; and some, because they have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of the heaven. Whoever is able to accept this ought to accept it.”  
(Matthew 19:1~12)

And *some* Pharisees approached, asking, “Is it permissible for a man to RELEASE a woman from *him*?” They were testing him.

But he replied, speaking to them, “What did Moses instruct you?”

But they spoke, “Moses allow him to write a BILL OF DIVORCE and RELEASE *her* from *him*.”

But Jesus spoke to them, “Because of your hardness-of-heart he wrote you this instruction. But from *the* beginning of creation, ‘*God* made them male and female. For this reason a human shall leave his father and his mother and be glued to his woman, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two *but* instead one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE.”

And in the house the disciples again asked him about this.

And he said to them, “If anyone RELEASES his woman from *him* and marries another he commits adultery\* against her; and if she RELEASES her man from *her and* marries another, she commits adultery.”\*(Mark 10:1~12)

“But it was said, ‘He who RELEASES his woman from *him* must give her a *BILL OF DIVORCE*.’

But I say to you, he who RELEASES his woman from *him* (except for an account of *sexual-immorality*), makes her commit adultery\*, and if a *man* marries a *woman* RELEASED from a *man* he commits adultery\*.

(Matthew 5:31~32)

Every one who RELEASES his woman from *him* and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a *woman* RELEASED from a man commits adultery.  
(Luke 16:18)

Matthew 19 and Mark 10 are parallel accounts (two tellings of the *same* event by different witnesses), while Matthew 5 and Luke 16 are independent sayings interspersed into collections of other sayings of Jesus. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus is approached with a question about whether or not is it permitted for a man to RELEASE his wife *for any cause whatever*. First Jesus refers to the account of creation, and then immediately refers to the Old Testament for the next answer:

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<sup>11</sup> Late Greek manuscripts (which, unfortunately, were the only ones present during the time of the KJV translation) include another clause to this verse. “And the one marrying a woman released from a man commits adultery\*.” It is nearly word for word the same as the Matthew 5:32 clause. As it does not appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts, it is most likely not original. But since the exact same information is portrayed in Matthew 5:32, there is no reason to make any sort of contention about any information which it contains.

When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent, and therefore he writes out a BILL OF DIVORCE and hands it to her, thus SENDING her AWAY from his house: if on leaving his house she goes and becomes the woman of another man, and the second man, too, comes to dislike her and SENDS her AWAY from his house by handing her a BILL OF DIVORCE; or if this second man who has married her, dies; then her former man, who SENT her AWAY, may not again take her as his woman after she has become defiled. That would be an abomination before Yahweh, and you shall not bring such guilt upon the land which Yahweh, your God, is giving you as a heritage. (Deuteronomy 24:1~4)

Although he does refer to the account of Creation, the book of Deuteronomy, which Jesus referred to in this answer, also contains many commandments showing that polygamy is permitted. Since the Israelites were still bound to the Old Covenant, they would have understood polygamy as a completely acceptable and non-sinful practice. Therefore, if Jesus' intentions had been to abolish polygamy, which his Israelite hearers would have not thought was a sinful practice, then it would have been absurd for him not to have spoken against that law specifically. But this topic which the Pharisees were testing Jesus with was *not* about polygamy, but about RELEASING/SENDING-AWAY. When Jesus referred to the beginning, he was not making a statement about monogamy in opposition to polygamy; instead, he is answering their question, which is that God's original plan for creation was that a man and a woman were not to be SEPARATED. (And as we defined in our definitions of these words; we saw that both RELEASE/SENDING-AWAY and SEPARATION are synonyms for ending a marriage, but have slight differences in which party is at fault.)

Yes, God permitted them to be SEPARATED for the hardness of their hearts. Why he permitted such a thing is unknown. But regardless of the reason, it was never condemned as a sinful activity to RELEASE a woman in the particular case as stated above.

Now God specifically granted this concession to RELEASE/SEND-AWAY her if the man found in her something "indecent". The interpretation of what is "indecent" has been debated by scholars both ancient and modern. But according to history (which may be additionally supported by people doing so in Josephus), husbands were RELEASING their wives for each and every reason. Even many post-Jesus Rabbinic traditions teach that RELEASING was acceptable for any and every reason, as long as they presented them with the proper certificate. So no matter what a woman did, her husband was able to divorce her for any reason. Therefore, innocent women were being RELEASED for unrighteous reasons. Now this was based on a wrong interpretation of Deuteronomy 24.

Now, let us pause a moment here to reflect upon another commandment of the Old Testament:

If a human commits adultery with his neighbor's woman, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.  
(Leviticus 20:10)

So if adultery was punishable by death under the Old Covenant, this would certainly dissolve a marriage. In the Israelite understanding, adultery would be equal to death. This would show that 'indecent' would have had to include activities which did *not* include sexual activity. For any activity of a sexual nature was always punishable by death.<sup>12</sup>

Now regardless if Jesus was seeking to define 'indecent' as 'sexual-immorality (PORNEIA)', or whether he was further narrowing the permissions of divorce from 'indecent' to 'sexual-immorality', he responded by clarifying that, at least under the New Covenant, there was only one legitimate case for RELEASING a woman, that was sexual-immorality (which includes any and every kind of sexual sin).

But even in this case, it was not a command, it was an option. But because it was not a command, and only a right, this does not give us permission to condemn someone for choosing that option; for it was God himself who has granted this permission. Therefore, it is not sin. And if God granted permission, no one should condemn someone for choosing that option, or demean that individual in any way as being lesser or less worthy or less holy or less right with God or more sinful. For "before his own master he stands or falls." (Romans 14:4)

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<sup>12</sup> Now there is an alternate speculation, which I find highly unlikely, but which will be stated nonetheless, that God, in his foresight, could have been looking forward to the time of Jesus, where the Judeans were constrained from the power to take life, for the Romans had removed that power from them so that they were unable to enforce the death penalty upon adultery: Then Pilate said to them, "You take him [Jesus] and judge him according to your law." Therefore the Judeans said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." (John 18:31)



Besides, being unmarried is much better, and many of us choose the lesser option of being married, and that is not sinful in the least.

Now God always intended for marriage to be permanent, and never desired for RELEASING or SEPARATION, but he did permit it because of sin (and even himself commands it to be done occasionally). Jesus explains that the only reason is for sexual-immorality alone. There is no other exception here. And it also is a permission for the innocent partner who was not involved in sin, and who never intended to RELEASE the woman whom he was married to.

Now there are some different topics which are elaborated upon in the Mark and Luke versions of the command which are not directly mentioned in the Matthew versions.

For example, Mark omits the exception clause in his telling of the event (which Matthew includes in the same event). Therefore (either purposefully or accidentally), he omits part of the initial question, “for any cause whatever” and consequently omits the specific answer to this part of the question in Jesus’ answer “not on grounds of sexual-immorality”. Luke is also not concerned with the exception clause.

Some people refute this by stating that, “It is not in Mark, and it is not in Luke.” That is true. But how many times does God have to state something for it to become a fact? It is stated *twice* in Matthew (both once in an independent saying and once in the exact same incident which Mark records). In every instance that God speaks about a topic, he does not have to include every single exception, especially if the exceptions are already declared elsewhere or implied. And the absence of a fact in one place does not nullify it from elsewhere.

If the Good-Messages are compared throughout, the reader can easily find some things omitted from various parallel accounts of the same exact event. Because a certain detail was not present in one account, that does not mean that it is now excluded from that story. In fact, in each of the three Good-Messages, Matthew, in Mark, and in Luke, each of them deals with features on divorce and marriage which are unique to their own account. Why? Because each writer has a specific plan, or was restricted by the limitations of the human memory to fully remember each conversation and event. John even John said, “But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” (John 21:25).

Is it unreasonable to assume that because the Lord did not state an exception everywhere, that he did not mean it? Or that it suddenly is nullified when determining the meaning of a statement elsewhere? If he said it once, it is truth. In fact, judging by the fact that the exception clause *is* found in Matthew, the audience of Mark and Luke would have also heard it, even if they themselves had not written it down. Mark tells the *exact* same situation as Matthew. Because Mark failed to include the exception clause in his account of the story, does that mean that Jesus never said that then, even though Matthew said that Jesus stated that in that story? The failure to include a statement or a clause does not even mean that the author did not see it. By not stating it, it does not mean that the authors did not know about it. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the entire audience already understood that if one partner committed sexual-immorality (PORNEIA), that the marriage was broken, so this matter-of-fact statement was already understood and would have been needless to repeat, or that a obvious single exception did not have to be stated over and over again every single time.

Would not stating the obvious exceptions to every single statement in language be ridiculously burdensome? Some would believe that the holy writings would not leave room for this. But the contrary may be seen. In the Good-Messages according to Mark and Luke, the exception clause is missing which is present in Matthew.

But why should I burden you with human reasoning here? May I present forth an example from the very lips of Jesus the Christ himself?

**No one has gone up into the heaven except the one who has come down from the heaven,** the Son of Man.  
(John 3:13)

We know that technically this is not true. For Enoch, Elijah and Moses have all been taken up into the heaven.

And Enoch was well-pleasing to God, and was not found, because God translated him. (Genesis 5:24)  
He who pleased God was loved; he who lived among sinners was translated. (Wisdom 4:10)

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and “he was found no more because God had taken him.” Before he was taken up, he was attested to have pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5)

As they walked on conversing, a flaming chariot and flaming horses came between them, **and Elijah went up into the heavens/heaven**<sup>13</sup> in a whirlwind. (2 Kings 2:11)  
Elijah, for his zealous zeal for the law, was taken up into the heaven. (1 Maccabees 2:58)

Two Moseses became visible: one alive in the spirit and the other dead in the body. The one went along with messengers [angels] as their companion, where a new name was given to him **in the heavens**: Melchi. (Ascension of Moses)<sup>14</sup>

But since these are of the few in all history that have ascended into the heavens (the souls of deceased are transferred to the Netherworld), there is no need to state an exception clause in every single sentence which is spoken. Notice how cumbersome such speech would become. “There is no one who has gone up into the heavens, except for Elijah and Moses and Enoch, but apart from them, no one has except for the son of man who has come down.”

So, I find that the best way to treat all of these commandments and to have a complete record of the actual words which Jesus spoke in that particular instance, is to corporately, instead of independently, deal with the topic, since each writer is actually referring to the very same event or topic. Therefore, since Matthew 19 and Mark 10 deal with the exact same event, they will be woven together first:

And *some* Pharisees approached him, testing him and asking, “Is it permissible for a human/man to RELEASE his woman from *him* for any cause whatever?”

But he replied, speaking to them, “What did Moses instruct you?”

But they spoke to him, “Moses allow him to write a BILL OF DIVORCE and RELEASE *her* from *him*. So why did Moses instruct that *the man* give *the woman* a BILL OF DIVORCE and RELEASE *her* from *him*?”

But Jesus replied, speaking to them, “Because of your hardness-of-heart Moses wrote you this instruction and allowed you to RELEASE your women from *you*, but from *the* beginning it was not so. Have you not read, that from *the* beginning of creation the Creator made them male and female, and spoke, ‘For this reason a human shall leave his father and his mother and be glued to his woman, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, *but* instead one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE.”

And in the house the disciples again asked him about this.

And he said to them, “But I say to you, if anyone RELEASES his woman from *him* (not on *grounds of* sexual-immorality) and marries another he commits adultery against her; and if she RELEASES her man from *her and* marries another, she commits adultery.”

The disciples said to him, “If that is the case of the human with the woman, it is better not to marry.”

But he spoke to them, “Not all can accept the account, *but* instead *only* those to whom it has been granted.

“For some are eunuchs because they were born so; and some, because they were made so by the humans; and some, because they have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of the heaven. Whoever is able to accept this ought to accept it.” (Matthew 19 / Mark 10 composite)

Now both Matthew 5 and Luke 16 are independent statements. But if they are strung together with the above, the following command is the result:

But I say to you, if anyone RELEASES his woman from *him* (not on *grounds of* an account of sexual-immorality) and marries another he commits adultery\* against her and makes her commit adultery;\* and if *a man* marries a *woman* RELEASED from a man he commits adultery.\* And if she RELEASES her man from *her and* marries another, she commits adultery.\*

<sup>13</sup> In the original Hebrew, this verse reads “heavens”, but in the Greek Septuagint translation of this verse reads “heaven”. In Hebrew, this word is *always* in the plural “heavens”, but in Greek, it is either singular or plural, without any noticeable difference in understanding. This is especially noticeable in the Septuagint, as it inconsistently translates the Hebrew plural “heavens” to either “heaven” or “heavens”. Therefore, it can be seen, that there is no difference in understanding between the two. It would be equivalent for an English speaking to say “I looked up into the skies” or “I looked up into the sky”. There is no distinct difference in meaning. (This is also supported by the singular ‘heaven’ in the next verse, when the speaker is recounting the past event.)

<sup>14</sup> Jude references this book “Yet the chief-messenger Michael, when he argued with the Slanderer in a dispute over the body of Moses, did not venture to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him but said, “May the Lord rebuke you!” / Regardless, they both Elijah and Moses appeared to Jesus on the mount when he was transfigured.

According to this passage, whenever a man RELEASES the woman whom he is married to for any other reason than sexual-immorality and marries another, he *causes* her into committing adultery. If a man RELEASES his wife for sexual-immorality, this clause does not apply. Why? Because she is already guilty of sexual-immorality, the very reason which the man would be permitted to RELEASE her.

Now in the case of a man who does RELEASE her when she has *not* committed sexual-immorality, does it not state that he *makes* her commit adultery? The passage does *not* say, “makes her commit adultery *if* she marries another,” nor does it say, “is the cause of her committing adultery *if* she marries another.” It states that he “*makes* her commit adultery.”

Why? There is no other solution except that another marriage for the woman is inevitable; she has no other choice but to marry again. She is forced into being with another man, which was never God’s intention. This statement is not made as if it was a suggestion, or even an option, she is forced into being married again, as if she were required to, non-optional.

Unfortunately, in reality, this RELEASE of the innocent spouse (one not-guilty of sexual-immorality) *forces* that spouse into committing adultery, a non-sinful act of adultery (at least from her perspective). Non-sinful? How can adultery be non-sinful ever? It says that adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God! (1 Corinthians 6:9).

First, adultery seems to have a more neutral meaning than the English word. (See Part006). Second, if this act of adultery was in fact always sinful for the individual committing it, then God has given a husband the power over the eternal destiny of his wife, and it would be beyond her ability to choose her final destination. For out of spite, a husband could damn his wife for all eternity merely by divorcing her when she has done nothing wrong and make her commit adultery and therefore damn her against her own will. That is not the nature of God by any means, to allow an individual’s eternal destiny to be decided by another.

Now this may be further explained by the fact that the commandment is directed to the guilty husband who has initiated an unrighteous act (RELEASING) when she has not committed sexual-immorality, Jesus is stating that that sin does not fall upon the head of the innocent wife; she is not condemned for this so-called adulterous marriage. The guilty husband is the sinner, he is the one who *caused* his innocent wife to commit adultery. The blood of the sin falls upon the husband who RELEASED the innocent woman. *He*, the unrighteous instigator of the RELEASE is guilty before God by RELEASING an innocent wife and forcing her to marry another, an activity which is assumed, inevitable. There is only condemnation for the sinful husband.

In fact, when the grammatical aspects of the Greek language are analyzed, it is even more obvious that the released woman, and even the man who marries this woman, are not at fault for the remarriage which is considered adultery. In Greek (and in English), there are several different tenses for verbs. An ‘active’ verb, is when the subject of the sentence is the one who actively caused the action. A ‘passive’ verb is where the verb happens to the subject of the sentence, although the subject of the sentence is not the cause of the verb happening to them.

An example of an active verb in English is:

I baked the cake. (the subject is “I” and “baked” is an active verb)

An example of a passive verb in English is:

The cake was baked. (the subject is “the cake” and “baked” is a passive verb)

In the above quotations, I have marked all of the ‘passive’ forms of the verb ‘to commit adultery’ with an asterisk (\*). In all of the occurrences of ‘to commit adultery’ (apart from the Luke passage), these are all in the passive tense, which means that this actual verb/activity is *not* necessarily caused by the individual who themselves, but something which is being imposed on or happening to them. So from the context, both the adultery committed by the unrighteously released woman, as well as by the woman who marries her, is passive, and a result of the husband having had released/divorced her wrongfully. He is the one who made her have to resort to this behavior, a thing of which it was not God’s original intention to have been done.

It should also be mentioned here that the main context of all the passages on marriage are from the viewpoint of the husband. In fact, almost all of the holy writings are written from a masculine perspective. All the commandments, ordinances, and statues of God are written as dealing with the man. If there is a passage

that specifically refers to the woman, then it is an exceptional passage that has something specifically dealing with that sex as opposed to the entirety of mankind. Therefore, since the roles are specifically distinguished in these passages, these rules and regulations should be specifically noted and distinguished between sexes.

Mark is the only Good-Message (and, I believe, the only writing in the entire collection of the holy writings) which speaks of a woman **RELEASING** her husband:

And if she **RELEASES** her man *and* marries another, she commits adultery.

And as we saw in both Deuteronomy and Josephus (above), it was never permitted for a woman to **RELEASE** her husband; but in Jesus' day it seems that such unrighteous practices were taking place.

Nevertheless, I would assume that the same rules apply here for both sexes. But in light of polygamy being an acceptable practice of the time, and that all of the passages, even of the New Testament, must be understood in the light of polygamy being a non-sinful activity, I am hesitant to add any additional rules which are not stated. It does not state that the woman makes her husband commit adultery if he married another after she **RELEASED** him; and it must be assumed, that since polygamy was an acceptable practice by Jesus' Israelite audience, his hearers may have already had more than one wife.

Also recall that the definition of adultery is defined as a man having relations with a woman who is already married to another man. Therefore, it is impossible for a man to commit adultery by marrying another unmarried woman (Jesus would have clarified this if the definition of adultery had changed between the Old Covenant and New). Therefore, that is the reason why these passages state that when the man wrongly **RELEASES** her, that he "commits adultery against her" and also "makes her commit adultery." The adultery is specifically referring to the woman marrying another. Whereas in the woman's case, it merely states that she 'commits adultery', and not that she 'commits adultery against him' or 'makes him commit adultery'.

Now, there are some believers who do not even believe that **RELEASE** is acceptable in *any* case. But those who do accept it, but believe that a second marriage is wrong, argue for the fact that *only* the **RELEASE** is able to be done by sexual-immorality, but that Jesus does not permit one to be married again under any cause even for sexual-immorality. As we have seen above, the innocent wife is committing adultery by marrying another (the context implies that she *must* remarry), but that the husband is guilty for the sin of the wife and that it is not accounted to her at all (though this certainly does not overlook the possibility that the relationship with the new wife is adulterous, though this is not completely clear).

But, another portion of this argument must be clarified: Due to the obvious grammar, in English, but even more so in Greek, the entire passage must be taken as a whole. In the primary incident, the topic which Jesus is speaking of specifically is **RELEASING AND MARRYING ANOTHER**, not *merely* **RELEASING** and not *merely* **MARRYING ANOTHER**. The grammar, in both English translations and in the Greek original, forces this activity into one standalone unit:

"He who **RELEASES** his woman *and* marries another."

Coming to the conclusion that Jesus was permitting a man to **RELEASE** his woman but not to marry another betrays grammatical rules and structure in *both* Greek and English. This type of statement occurs in modern English even today:

He who goes to grocery store (except on Fridays) and shows the green coupon, gets 50% off all merchandise.

Or, he who takes merchandise off a shelf (unless he paid for it) and leaves the store, is guilty of theft.

No one would argue that in the first example, that the person is merely stating that you will still get 50% off all merchandise even if you do go to the store on Fridays; or, that someone who always leaves a store is guilty

of theft. However, our opponents try to sneak in a meaning which defies both grammatical constraints and reason, by stating that it is okay to release your woman for sexual-immorality but always a case of adultery to marry another. And if this was not a case of our opponents trying to be contentious to grasp at straws to preserve a defeated doctrine, there would be no contention over this point at all.

Therefore, we can clearly see, that this particular statement is *not* addressing any of the following parties:

- A man who marries another.
- A man who releases his woman/wife without marrying another.

However, since the Matthew 5 statement is a standalone incident and does *not* include “and marries another”, it can be seen that the situation occurs regardless if the man marries another or does not. Therefore, taking all of this into consideration, the only situation which it does not address is:

- A man who marries another.

So any act of polygamy (as long as the man did not divorce a previous wife) is excluded from having anything to do with this passage, and the passage is addressing a man who RELEASES the woman whom he is married to, regardless if he marries another or not after the RELEASING.

Now when Jesus does address the man who does in fact marry another, he speaks of RELEASING *and* marrying another. This is a single unit, not two independent actions. Therefore, taking the exception clause into affect as well, if the RELEASE was done for the sake of the woman having been involved in sexual-immorality, then the following sins of adultery do *not* apply. Therefore, these words of Jesus are *not* applicable for the following conditions:

- A man who marries another without having RELEASED a current woman (i.e. polygamy)
- A man who RELEASES a woman because she committed sexual-immorality and does *not* marry again.
- A man who RELEASES a woman because she committed sexual-immorality and does marry again.

It is only applicable to the following:

- A man who RELEASES his woman when she has *not* committed sexual-immorality and does *not* marry again.
- A man who RELEASES his woman when she has *not* committed sexual-immorality and does marry again.

Therefore, it can be clearly seen that this RELEASING *only* involved adultery if it was for a reason other than sexual-immorality. Sexual-immorality, as was in the Old Testament, was a justifiable reason for divorce, as this ended a marriage relationship.

The key point in this passage is the *unlawful* RELEASING, regardless if remarriage was done afterwards, or if the man was involved in a state of polygamy. For Jesus was speaking to a society which accepted the laws of Moses, which understood that polygamy was fully acceptable.

Now let us turn to an example where God uses the symbolism of marriage in correlation with his relationship to Israel:

That for all the adulteries rebellious Israel had committed, I SENT her AWAY from *me* and gave her a BILL OF DIVORCE, nevertheless her traitor sister Judah was not frightened; she too went off and committed sexual-immorality.  
(Jeremiah 3:8)

God uses marriage to symbolize what is it like for sons of men to worship other Gods apart from Yahweh. He considered them adulterers. And in correlation with Matthew, Jeremiah, speaking on behalf of God, also

sees that the reason for an acceptable release is for sexual-immorality (here, used to symbolize worshipping other gods), and as the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24.

So why is sexual-immorality used as an acceptable reason for RELEASE/divorce? Why does he not use “adultery” here? Since sexual-immorality refers to every and any sort of sexual sin, this shows that permission of a RELEASE has not been granted for adultery alone, but for any kind of unlawful sexual relationship (see Leviticus 20, etc; and the section of the definition of sexual-immorality), be that with a man, woman, child, or animal. All these sexual sins brought about the death penalty under the Old Covenant. Therefore, they all constitute the sum of a violation.

It seems, from our study above, that if death was not incumbent in the situation under the Old Covenant, then RELEASE was the alternative. Why? God does not tell us. But we do know that sexual sin is the greatest defilement of all:

Avoid sexual-immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but whoever commits sexual-immorality sins against his own body. (1 Corinthians 6:18)

And so, God allows the RELEASE as a concession to end a marriage relationship with a wife who is involved in evil practices of which he was not a partaker. But from the beginning, it was intended that no such evil should be committed, but that marriages should remain pure.

It should be noted that Jesus never advocated RELEASE; he only permits times (which are non-sinful) that do not directly lead to adultery. He still hates RELEASE all the time. But when a wife who has done no wrong is unrighteously RELEASED, the so-called adultery was not upon her head as she was forced to remarry. So God recognized that it will happen. And when it does, the woman who remarried, which is inevitable, will be free from judgment, sin, and condemnation, as long as she did not commit sexual-immorality.

Now the composite passage:

“And he who marries a woman RELEASED from her man commits adultery.”

This is a difficult passage, and there are three common interpretations, which shall be dealt with here.

1. The first is that this passage is referring *only* to the woman who was RELEASED from her husband because of sexual-immorality, and does not concern an innocent woman (one who was not RELEASED for sexual-immorality). Therefore, anyone who marries this RELEASED woman who is guilty of sexual-immorality commits adultery with her. Therefore, those who follow this interpretation believe that the woman who was RELEASED for having committed sexual-immorality is not allowed to ever be remarried or it is considered adultery.
2. The second interpretation sees this as referring to the innocent spouse (the one who was unrighteously RELEASED for reasons *other than* sexual-immorality). While neither interpretation can be decisively selected, this would seem to line up more with the previous part of the statement:

He who RELEASES his woman from *him* (except on *grounds of* an account of sexual-immorality), and marries another, commits adultery against her and makes her commit adultery.

Of course, if the woman is forced into committing adultery, then the husband she had been remarried to would also be guilty of adultery. But, taking the spirit behind the entire passage and the context of the first portion of the passage, the guilt of the adultery would rest upon the husband who unrighteously RELEASES his wife without rightful grounds (i.e. sexual-immorality). This is also supported by the fact that committing of adultery is a ‘passive’ verb.

3. There is a third interpretation, that is, that God does not recognize divorce at all save through death. And that is why when she marries another it is adultery. That is, that a woman RELEASED from the

man whom she is married to is not able to marry another under any circumstances save for death. Because, as Paul writes:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor **adulterers** nor boy-prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals, nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

Followers of this interpretation believe that once two individuals have become one flesh that they cannot be SEPARATED, and, therefore, it is adultery for the remarriage to take place. That they might divorce physically, but are still joined spiritually.

Since this concept is not spoken of anywhere in all of the holy writings, it should not be assumed that such is founded even on a shred of truth. In fact, the exact opposite is spoken. Jesus commands that what God has joined together, that a human must not SEPARATE. This implies that a human is able to SEPARATE what God has joined together. This is a commandment against doing that. And as we have shown in when defining each individual word, RELEASE/SENDING-AWAY and SEPARATE are the same, in that they both end a marriage.

But, as we have shown above, this viewpoint is only proper in the case of a woman who was RELEASED for sexual-immorality. This is not so in a case where a woman has been RELEASED for reasons other than sexual-immorality. Although, God does consider this a certain type of adultery, the guilty man who wrongfully RELEASED the woman whom he was married to, not the innocent woman, is the one who takes the sin for this second marriage. Therefore, the third interpretation is completely nullified.

Now we are left with a decision between the first and second interpretations, in which I can find no conclusive way to decide which is correct. The only help I can find, is in the controversial writings of Clement of Alexandria (c. 200 AD)

After his word about divorce some asked him whether, if that is the position in relation to woman, it is better not to marry; and it was then that the Lord said: "Not all can accept the account, *but* instead *only* those to whom it has been granted." (*Matthew 19:11*) What the questioners wanted to know was whether, when a man's woman, who has been condemned for sexual-immorality, it is allowable for him to marry another.

Regardless of which is correct, it still stands that any sin of remarriage for the wrongfully RELEASED woman is upon the man who RELEASED his wife on grounds other than sexual-immorality; and that the innocent woman, who is forced to marry another, is innocent of this adulterous sin.

Now, there is a common futile refutation to this passage, where some try to define the passage on sexual-immorality in a different context. These men attempt to show that the exception clause refers to the committing of sexual-immorality *before* the marriage, and, therefore, God does not recognize the marriage at all. They do not consider that sexual-immorality is a reason for RELEASING a woman once the marriage has *already* been consummated. Let me present an example for clarity.

In Leviticus and Deuteronomy, we have lists of types of sexual sin which are included in the word sexual-immorality. (see Leviticus 18:7~24, 20:10~21, Deuteronomy 27:20~23). Many of these include the sin of incest. Therefore, for example, they would believe that if a man were to marry his own sister, that his marriage is founded on sexual-immorality; and that, therefore, the marriage is not recognizable by God, and a RELEASE can be made. Why? They say it is because it is not a marriage which God has joined together; so it was never a marriage in the first place.

This is clearly a teaching that is founded upon error. Let us refer to a passage in the Prophet Jeremiah to show that this certainly is not the case:

If a man SENDS-AWAY his woman from *him*, and, after leaving him, she marries another man, does the first man come back to her? Would not the land be wholly defiled? But you have sinned with many lovers, and yet you would return to me! says Yahweh. (Jeremiah 3:1)

...that for all the adulteries rebellious Israel had committed, I SENT her AWAY from *me* and gave her a BILL OF DIVORCE, nevertheless her traitor sister Judah was not frightened; she too went off and committed sexual-immorality. (Jeremiah 3:8)

In this context, God spiritually SENT-AWAY Israel and Judah on certain grounds – for sexual-immorality, the same reason that Jesus permitted a man to RELEASE his own wife. The context in Israel and Judah is not because they had an incestuous marriage to God that was never recognized, and that now God had to SEND-AWAY a relationship which had never been recognized by him. No. This was a marriage between Israel & Judah and God. And because they were committing sexual-immorality with other gods, God SENT-AWAY both nations. This shows that a SENDING-AWAY based on sexual-immorality is due to sexual sin that occurs in a marriage that has *already* been recognized by God, and in a marriage which was righteous, but now the wife has been unfaithful and committed sexual-immorality. This is *not* talking about sin prior to the marriage, or an invalid marriage because of incest.

Now let us turn to Deuteronomy once more:

When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent, and therefore he writes out a bill of divorce and hands it to her, thereby SENDING her AWAY from his house... (Deuteronomy 24:1~2)

Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage is in the context of this passage in Deuteronomy, where it states that "*after* marrying a woman and having relations with her, is *later* displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent..." And so, when he, either clarifying "something indecent" or limiting it further, refers to sexual-immorality and nothing else, it shows that the exception clause is Matthew refers to sexual-immorality committed after a proper marriage has been consummated, and does *not* refer to incest, or something else, that would have rendered the marriage invalid.

Now one further point should be mentioned here. In this passage, the sexes of the members in this commandment are clearly defined. There are specific commandments for the woman which are not present with the husband. Mark is the only one who partially reverses the rolls:

And if she RELEASES her man from *her and* marries another, she commits adultery. (Mark 10:12)

It is interesting to note, that in this case, it is again the woman who is committing adultery. Unlike the situation where the husband RELEASES his wife (where he causes the woman to commit adultery as well), the woman does *not* cause her husband to commit adultery when she RELEASES him, but she is still guilty of adultery herself.

Why is this? All of it must be interpreted in the light of polygamy being an acceptable practice of the time. A woman was limited to one husband, but a man could have multiple wives. Therefore, it was not a sin for a man to marry another, but it was for a woman to.

Keeping bound to the Mark passage (and not using the parallel passages):

And he said to them, "If anyone RELEASES his woman from *him* and marries another he commits adultery against her; and if she RELEASES her man from *her and* marries another, she commits adultery."

It can be seen that, when the husband RELEASES his wife and marries another, he commits adultery against *her* (or as Matthew words it 'makes her commit adultery'). But when the woman RELEASES her husband and marries another, it is her who commits adultery. For Mark does *not* say that she commits adultery '*against him*'. This is a bit confusing until we recall that polygamy is not a sin.



Also, we must remember that the definition of adultery is ‘a man having sexual relations with a *woman* who is already married to another man,’ *not* sexual relations between a woman and a man who is already married. That is why the adultery is limited to woman’s remarriage and not the man’s, and why in both cases the remarriage of the woman is the adultery. But we must remember, that although it is technically adultery, if the woman was RELEASED for a reason other than sexual-immorality, than her adultery became his sin, not her own.

The main case here is *not* that the man was marrying another, but that he was RELEASING the woman whom he was married to when she has not committed sexual-immorality (the only legitimate reason for ending a marriage). He was not taking care of the woman whom he was already married to. And then, he forces her to be taken care of by another man, which is adultery.

So, let us make a summary:

- If a man RELEASES his woman for any reason other than sexual-immorality (regardless if he remarries or not after doing so), he is guilty of *causing* that woman to commit adultery. The sin is his own, not hers, for she is forced into marrying another.
- If a woman RELEASES her man/husband *and* marries another, she commits adultery.

In both cases, the woman is the one who commits adultery. But if the husband does the RELEASING, he is guilty of her adultery, she is not (for it is not considered adultery for a man to be married to more than one woman); but if the woman does, she is guilty of adultery. Therefore, the guilty party is always held responsible, and the spouse who was RELEASED on unrighteous grounds (those other than sexual-immorality) does not sin.

## PART005: PAUL ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Now that we have carefully examined the passages of Jesus on divorce and remarriage, let us turn our attention to one of the longest passages on the subject, found in the writings of the Apostle Paul:

Now in regard to the matters about which you wrote: "It is a good thing for a man not to touch a woman," but because of cases of sexual-immorality every man should have his own woman, and every woman her proper man.

The man should fulfill his duty toward his woman; but, likewise, the woman toward the man. The woman does not have authority over her own body, *but* instead the man *does*; and similarly the man does not have authority over his own body, *but* instead the woman. Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by mutual consent for a time, to be free for prayer, and then return to one another, so that the Adversary may not tempt you through your lack of self-control.

Now this I say by way of concession, not as a command. But I want everyone to be even as I am. Instead, each has a particular gift from God, indeed one of one kind, but one of another.

Now to the unmarried and to the widows, I say: it is beautiful for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control they should marry, for it is better to marry than to be on fire.

But to the married, I give this instruction (not I, *but* instead the Lord): a woman should not SEPARATE from a man – but and if she does SEPARATE, she must either remain an unmarried-*individual* or become reconciled to the man – and a man should not DISMISS a woman.

But to the rest, I say (not the Lord): if any brother has a woman who is an unbeliever, and she is willing to go on living with him, he should not DISMISS her; and if any woman has a man who is an unbeliever, and he is willing to go on living with her, she should not DISMISS the man. For the man who is the unbeliever is made holy through the woman, and the woman who is the unbeliever is made holy through the brother. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. (But if the unbeliever SEPARATES, let him SEPARATE. The brother or the sister is not enslaved in such cases; but God has called you to peace.) For how do you know, woman, whether you will save the man; or how do you know, man, whether you will save the woman?

Nevertheless, everyone should live as the Lord has assigned, exactly as God called each one. And I give this order in all the assemblies. Was someone called after he had been circumcised? He should not try to undo his circumcision. Was an uncircumcised person called? He should not be circumcised. The circumcision means nothing, and the uncircumcision means nothing; instead, what matters is keeping God's commandments. Everyone should remain in the state in which he was called.

Were you a slave when you were called? Do not be concerned. Instead, even if you can gain your freedom, make the most of it. For the slave called in the Lord is a freed person in the Lord, exactly as the free person who has been called is a slave of Christ. All of you have been purchased at a price. Do not become slaves to humans. Brothers, everyone should continue before God in the state in which he was called.

Now about the virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is faithful. Therefore, this is what I think best because of the present distress: that it is beautiful for a human to remain as he is. Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE. Are you RELEASED from a woman? Then do not seek for a woman. But and if you marry, you do not sin, and if the virgin marries, she does not sin; but such people will experience a tribulation in the flesh, and I would like to spare you that.

But I declare to you, brothers, the season is running out. From now on, let those having women act as not having them, and those weeping as not weeping, and those rejoicing as not rejoicing, and those buying as not owning, and those using the world as not using it fully. For the world in its present form is passing away. But I want you to be free of concerns.

The unmarried *individual* is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But the one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please the woman, and he is divided.

And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both the body and the spirit. But a *woman* who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please the man.

Now I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you, *but* instead for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction.

But if anyone thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if a critical moment has come and so it has to be, let him do as he wants. He is committing no sin; let them get married.

But the one who stands firm in his heart, who is not under compulsion but has power over his own will, and has made up his mind to keep his virgin, will be doing well.

So then, the one who marries his virgin does well; and the one who does not marry her will do better.

A woman is BOUND to her man as long as he lives. But if the man falls asleep, she is free to be married to whomever she wants, provided that it be in the Lord. But she is more happy, though, in my opinion, if she remains as she is. But I think that I *too* have a spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 7:1~40)

And also:

Are you unaware, brothers (for I am speaking to people who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a human as long as one lives? For a married woman is BOUND by a law to the living man; but if the man dies, she is set free from the law in respect to the man. Therefore, while the man is alive she will be called an adulteress if she consorts with another man. But if the man dies, she is free from that law, *and* she is not an adulteress if she *consorts* with another man.  
(Romans 7:1~3)

First let us delve into the entire context of this section. That is mentioned in the opening:

Now in regard to the matters about which you wrote: “It is a good thing for a man not to touch a woman,” but because of cases of sexual-immorality every man should have his own woman, and every woman her proper man.

Now, as we can see, there was an issue arising within the assembly of Corinth. It seems, that, for whatever reason, the assembly was trying to restrict men and woman from having contact with each other and striving for celibacy. Paul’s entire exhortation is “because of cases of sexual-immorality.” Paul’s intention is to prevent sexual-immorality. The first part of his rebuke is to make sure that husbands and wives do not seek after permanent celibacy by depriving one another of sexual intercourse:

The man should fulfill his duty toward his woman; but, likewise, the woman toward the man. The woman does not have authority over her own body, *but* instead the man *does*; and similarly the man does not have authority over his own body, *but* instead the woman. Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by mutual consent for a time, to be free for prayer, and then return to one another...

Why? Because Paul realizes that if one partner is depriving the other of sexual intercourse, that the natural desire, which God had placed within humans, will tempt that individual into committing sexual-immorality with someone else because the desire is not being satisfied by their spouse. This was:

...so that the Adversary may not tempt you through your lack of self-control.

And he does clarify this further:

Now this I say by way of concession, not as a command. But I want everyone to be even as I am. Instead, each has a particular gift from God, indeed one of one kind, but one of another.

God created some to have the gift of celibacy, but others he endowed them with the desire to be married. And therefore, if this gift was granted by God, then it is only right that this should not be restricted. (more of this topic will be detailed in the “Appendix: How Long Should I Wait Before Getting Married?”) The purpose is that Paul does not want men to have to be forced into temptation. He does not want them to have to battle against sexual sin, looking for someone else besides their spouse, who has singly taken the decision to remain celibate, to satisfy their sexual desires – desires which God himself implanted within them – not sinful desires. And that is why, this celibacy may only be embarked upon by “mutual consent”, and then, only “for a time.”

Therefore, we can understand that the entire topic of Paul’s entire discourse is to prevent anyone from committing sexual-immorality. That is his goal.

Therefore, with this in mind, he proceeds to the unmarried and to the widows:

Now to the unmarried and to the widows, I say: it is beautiful for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control they should marry, for it is better to marry than to be on fire.

First, there are two categories in this section whom Paul is addressing here: “Unmarried” and “Widows”. So the unmarried category does *not* include widows. Because of this, some are quick to think of the ‘unmarried’ as

being people who have never been married. But this may be challenged on the following. For after addressing the ‘unmarried’ and ‘widows’, he goes on to addressing the following (in verse 25):

Now about the virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is faithful.

Some argue that that passage is not clear. However, this is made even more distinct by this passage:<sup>15</sup>

And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both the body and the spirit. But a *woman* who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please the man.

This clearly shows that “unmarried” and “virgin” are separate categories. So, from these passages, we can clearly see that Paul distinguishes three categories (other than the ‘married’ category): “Unmarried” and “Widows” and “Virgins”. So, if a widow is someone whose spouse died, and a virgin is someone who was never married, then where does that leave the ‘unmarried’ category? It would leave those whose spouse never died and have already been married once. Hence, an individual whose spouse has left them. This can also be seen in verse 11, where it includes separated people in the unmarried category.

But and if she does SEPARATE, she must either remain an unmarried-*individual*...

This is also made clear from this passage (which will be discussed more in detail further below):

Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE. Are you RELEASED from a woman? Then do not seek for a woman. But and if you marry, you do not sin, and if the virgin marries, she does not sin; but such people will experience a tribulation in the flesh, and I would like to spare you that.

So we can conclude:

- “Unmarried” and “Widows” are two separate categories. (verse 8)
- “Married” is a different category than “Unmarried” and “Widows” (verse 10)
- “Unmarried” includes people who are separated/divorced from their spouse (verse 10 & 27)
- “Unmarried” does *not* include “Virgins” (verse 25 & 27~28)
- It is obvious that “Widows” and “Virgins” are not the same thing.
- Therefore, the “Unmarried” does not include “Widows” or “Virgins” or “Married.”

Therefore, these are the four categories mentioned by Paul:

- Gamew – those who are married
- Agamois – an UNMARRIED individual (literally the opposite of the Greek word for a married individual)
- Xhrais – a widow or a widower
- Parthenos – an unmarried young woman, virgin, maiden, girl, an adult male who has not had sexual intercourse with a woman

Now despite these things, Paul encourages the unmarried to attempt to remain unmarried, but understands that if God placed this natural desire to get married within them, that it is better for them to marry than to deal with this desire. For if someone is unable to control their desire to get married, by denying this, it will only

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the KJV (therefore followed by the NKJV) translates this passage *wrong* here. The incorrectness of this translation can be verified by reading the Greek and the Latin Vulgate translation (made in ~400 AD). Also, all modern translations translate it correctly, as displayed here.

tempt him to have premarital sex or adultery with someone else – and Paul’s goal is to prevent sexual-immorality at all costs. For he knows how deadly this sin is!

Now, before turning to the married, let us refresh ourselves with the commandment of the Christ himself, where he commands against SEPARATION:

But he replied, speaking, “Have you not read, that from *the* beginning the Creator made them male and female, and spoke, ‘For this reason a human shall leave his father and his mother and be glued to his woman, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, *but* instead one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE.”  
(Matthew 19)

Again, God brought forth a command, instructing that no one must SEPARATE what God has joined together. God did not say, “No man *is able* to SEPARATE what God has joined together.” He says that a human must not do this. Therefore, by forming this commandment, he indicates that *it is possible* for a man to SEPARATE what God has joined together. One way to do this is by RELEASE.

And so, moving on into this passage, we see Paul begins his instructions to the married:

But to the married, I give this instruction (not I, *but* instead the Lord): a woman should not SEPARATE from a man – but and if she does SEPARATE, she must either remain an unmarried-*individual* or become reconciled to the man – and a man should not DISMISS a woman.

Again, here Paul is giving the instruction of the Christ: “What God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE.” In fact, this certainly is the *very* instruction which he states that “not I, but the Lord” had given. This does *not* refer to a physical separation as many seek to interpret, but the SEPARATION of what God has joined together! For the result is that she is now *unmarried*.

(As a reminder, in the previous sections, SEPARATION is primarily used when the spouse departs, but RELEASE/SEND-AWAY/DISMISS is when one spouse sends the other away. A master RELEASES his slave, a slave SEPARATES from his master. Marriage shares the similar terminology with imprisonment and slavery. Though in this particular topic, he additionally uses another word for divorce, which is AFIEMI, which means ‘to DISMISS’ – the only places where this word is used in that context.)

At any rate, Paul commands that a woman must *not* SEPARATE from the man. He deals *only* with the woman here, not the man. For the man is *not* given the same commandments of instruction as the woman.

In this particular case, Paul is dealing with *two believing* spouses; any believer who has an unbelieving spouse is instructed differently below. So, Paul is instructing that a *believing* woman is not to SEPARATE from her *believing* husband. That is, to destroy the marriage, to break what God has joined together. This woman is not permitted to do this; it is a sin for her to do this.

But, if for some reason the believing woman does SEPARATE, she has but two options: to remain unmarried *or* to become reconciled to the man. And then he finally goes on to state that the *believing* man must not DISMISS his *believing* wife.

Notice that Paul specifies that the “remaining unmarried or becoming reconciled” refers only to a woman. He never gives this commanded of remaining unmarried or reconciling for the man. In any marriage situation, the man and woman are given different commandments of instruction. Only the woman is commanded to remain unmarried, but the man is not.

In both of these cases, Paul does not add any exception clause to this. But, since he himself is referring back to the very teachings of the Christ, it would be unreasonable to think that he would not also have been taught the exception clause, which, as stated by Jesus, would have been obviously applied. His hearers were not ignorant of the teachings of the Christ; they knew them. There was no reason to have to go out of his way to restate the exception clause which everyone knew.

But for the sake of preventing misunderstanding, I will state the passage again:

I say to you, he who RELEASES his woman (except on *grounds of* an account of sexual-immorality), and marries another, commits adultery against her and makes her commit adultery; and he who marries a woman RELEASED from her man commits adultery.  
(composite of Gospel teachings)

If something happens in the marriage and the woman SEPARATES when no sexual-immorality is involved, then she is not allowed to marry again. There is no permissible SEPARATION except for the reason of sexual-immorality. So, if a woman SEPARATES, then she only has two options.

In the next passage, we see that Paul even adds an additional cause for SEPARATION. So if he adds a lesser cause, then it is obvious that this greater cause of sexual-immorality would be implied as grounds for ending a marriage relationship (especially since he refers back to the Christ's commandment in the Good-Message).

But to the rest, I say (not the Lord):

Some seek to annul the following passage by stating that this teaching is a mere opinion of Paul, and not necessary to take into consideration. That is not, by any means, what Paul is instructing. Paul has now diverted from the direct teaching that Jesus himself uttered while on earth (that as found in the Good-Message)—the commandment on RELEASE and SEPARATION—which he previously referred to. Now he is delving into a teaching which I would assume was given to him by the holy spirit directly.

For at the end of this section, he concludes his additional teachings with:

But I think that I *too* have a spirit of God.

(1 Corinthians 7:40)

For John speaks:

We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

(1 John 4:6)

So let us proceed as Paul gives instructions to a *believing* partner married to an *unbelieving* one:

If any brother has a woman who is an unbeliever, and she is willing to go on living with him, he should not DISMISS her; and if any woman has a man who is an unbeliever, and he is willing to go on living with her, she should not DISMISS the man. For the man who is the unbeliever is made holy through the woman, and the woman who is the unbeliever is made holy through the brother. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

Paul makes it very clear. If the *unbeliever* is willing to continue living with the believer, then the believer is not allowed to DISMISS the unbeliever. He does *not* state “If any brother has a woman who is an unbeliever, he should not DISMISS her,” but “If any brother has a woman who is an unbeliever **and she is willing to go on living with him**, he should not DISMISS her.” Therefore, by inserting “and she is willing to go on living with him” as a condition, he makes the statement *only* apply if the unbeliever is willing to remain. This particular statement does not restrict a believer from DISMISSING the woman if she is unwilling to go on living with him.

Paul goes on to further explain, that the most beneficial thing that can be done is for the believer to remain with the unbelieving family and be God's representative. Paul may have taken great lengths to explain this, because he knew that when one spouse became a believer, while the other did not, that the believing spouse might seek to be yoked with a new spouse, one that was a Christian believer.

But, despite this, Paul does add this parenthetical exception comment before continuing:

(But if the unbeliever SEPARATES, let him SEPARATE. The brother or the sister is not enslaved in such cases; but God has called you to peace.)

SEPARATION, the breaking of the marriage – SEPARATING what God has joined together. If this is the case, the believer is supposed to *let* the unbeliever SEPARATE. This is the same commandment (using the same Greek word), which Jesus instructed man not to do: not to SEPARATE. Since Paul says, “If the unbeliever SEPARATES”, this shows that a marriage is able to be SEPARATED. The marriage is done. It is finished. It had ended. They are no longer one flesh. Let them depart if they want to. (Notice in addition how

Paul does not add, in this case, that she/he must remain unmarried or become reconciled to the man, as he does in the previous section with two believing spouses.)

However, this certainly does not give a believer permission to treat his spouse wrongly in order to force them to SEPARATE. For God has instructed in many places for men to love their wives. And God knows the heart behind each man:

Likewise, you men should live with your women in understanding, showing honor to the weaker womanly vessel, since we are joint heirs of the gift of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

(1 Peter 3:1, see also Colossians 3:19, Ephesians 5:28+)

And the wrongful driving away of a woman to force her to SEPARATE, hoping that the guilt will not be upon yourself, is wrong. And your prayers will most definitely be hindered.

Now what about if the unbeliever SEPARATES? God states that the brother or sister is not enslaved in such cases, for God has called them to peace. Why? It is not entirely clear. Perhaps because it is not God's desire for a believer to continue to be glued to someone who is opposed to the Christian faith. That would not be peaceful. In fact, in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we can see God's heart:

Do not be yoked with those who are different, with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? What accord has Christ with Beliar? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said: "I will live with them and move among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Therefore, come forth from them and be separate," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will receive you

(2 Corinthians 6:14~17)

If this is God's heart for believers, then it is obvious that God's intention is for believers *not* to be yoked (married) with unbelievers. In fact, his intention is for believers to remove themselves from those who are not believers. In this marriage situation, God is hoping that the life of the believer will influence the unbeliever to become a believer. But if the unbeliever departs, God does not want the believer to be enslaved to them.

One may wonder if God always desired for the believer (even the one married to the unbeliever) to be married to a believer; but because RELEASE without grounds of sexual-immorality is also not a part of God's command, it seems that this is God's way of providing his believers with a believing spouse without spoiling the name of his own people by having them RELEASE their spouse, or without violating his own commands.

Paul never once condones RELEASE here. He is aware that there will be times when unbelievers will not want to remain with a believer. That the unbeliever will despise that believer for faith in the Christ; and if that is the case, and the unbeliever SEPARATES, then the believer is not enslaved. There is liberty there to be remarried to a believer, so that God might satisfy the natural desire he placed within a man with a Christian spouse, to encourage those within his assembly and to build each other up. In a sense, the unbelieving spouse is as good as dead.

Now Paul is not presenting conditions under which RELEASE is possible. The ideal is for a believer never to RELEASE his wife at all. He is far removed from instructing a believing man who is married to an unbelieving woman to do everything possible to force them to RELEASE her. That would be no different than legalism, the *letter* of the law instead of the *spirit* of the law. If the believer forces the unbeliever to SEPARATE, then the believer must give an account of this sin to the Lord. Battling with technicalities will only make a lawyer. God examines the heart. God knows if, when the unbeliever SEPARATES, whether the believer has done everything possible to win them over to the Lord, or whether the believer simply turned their back upon the unbeliever in an attempt to drive them out to replace them with a Christian spouse.

Here, it is only under the conditions when a believer is the victim of a SEPARATION that was not instigated by them. Only then is that spouse free to remarry.

Those who are adamantly opposed to remarriage with an exception of death, believe that this verse does not allow for remarriage, but that "no longer enslaved" refers to the man or woman being free from their

responsibilities to that wife or husband. And furthermore, some believe that this goes so far as to the fact that God still considers them married and does not recognize SEPARATION. Obviously, we have seen otherwise. As proven several times above, SEPARATION is a complete dissolving of marriage.

Some would like to believe that the believer must wait for the other spouse to return. This is *not* stated here, or anywhere else in all the holy writings. The only consideration for that condition would be directed at the *believing* wife. She must either remain unmarried or reconcile with the man. But even then, there is no commandment or binding upon the former husband to wait for his wife to return to him. In fact, even this is a dissolving of the marriage, for as Paul stated above:

A woman should not SEPARATE from a man – but and if she does SEPARATE, she must either remain an unmarried-*individual* or become reconciled to the man.

So, if the *believing* husband has remarried (in our modern society), there is no obligation presented for him to wait for her return. She has broken the marriage. It is no longer a marriage. They are no longer husband and wife. What God has joined together as one flesh has now been SEPARATED.

But, specifically in the case of an *unbeliever* the *believer* is the innocent party, and Paul specifically adds in this case that the *believer* is not enslaved. So, if the marriage is broken, and all of the marriage terminology parallels that of slaves and masters,<sup>16</sup> then it is clear that the innocent partner is no longer bound to that marriage. He is loosed and free. For a slave is bound to their master. Likewise, a woman is bound to her man. But if one is no longer enslaved to the other, then they are not BOUND. Therefore, the meaning of the word ENSLAVEMENT in the context of marriage correlates with being BOUND. Once a slave is RELEASED from his master, he is no longer BOUND, no longer ENSLAVED. Free to become the property of another if he so wishes.

Many people try to split hairs over these words, but they all are in the same context and with the same concept behind them. No one tries to split hairs over being YOKED (2 Cor. 6:14) and being BOUND. Because the concept is understood behind each one.

Now we must return to Paul's original intention for this letter, to prevent the Adversary from tempting the members of the assembly into committing sexual-immorality. Therefore, we must keep this entire theme in mind here. For the *believing* spouse is now left stranded, completely against his own will. God had already planted within that spouse the desire for marriage. So, now, if the two are now SEPARATED, how can this God-given desire be filled? It cannot be filled by continual sexual intercourse with that former wife, for they are no longer one flesh – they have been SEPARATED. Now the innocent believer is caught in a tremendous battle against desire that God never intended to be fought against – against desires that were planted there directly by God himself. And without a spouse, these desires are a mammoth temptation for that believer to become involved in sexual-immorality. So how does Paul prevent this sexual-immorality in such a case? He tells them that they are no longer enslaved. They are RELEASED, no longer BOUND.

Previously he encouraged:

Now to the unmarried and to the widows, I say:

This man would now be unmarried (unmarried does not refer to virgins alone, see below):

It is beautiful for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control they should marry, for it is better to marry than to be on fire.

For as Paul goes on to state later:

Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE. Are you RELEASED from a woman? Then do not seek for a woman. But and if you marry, you do not sin, and if the virgin marries, she does not sin.

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<sup>16</sup> Another example of slave terminology is “this is how Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him ‘lord’” (1 Peter 3:8)



His entire purpose here is to prevent sexual-immorality! And so, now that this believer is no longer enslaved to his former wife, and now RELEASED, Paul tells him that he does not sin if he marries. There is no condemnation here. God never intended for an innocent partner to go unmarried for the rest of life struggling with these sins that will tempt him into sexual-immorality.

Some refute this here and state, "He is speaking only about virgins at this part." If he is only speaking about virgins, then why does he state "Are you bound to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE." This shows clearly that this passage does not refer to virgins alone. Notice again, that he is addressing someone who has been RELEASED from a marriage, not someone who has never been married.

Some, referring to a further passage which reads:

A woman is BOUND to her man as long as he lives. But if the man falls asleep, she is free to be married to whomever she wants, provided that it be in the Lord.

And they think that when Paul is speaking, about someone who is "released" from a woman, that he is talking about a widow, not a divorced individual. But this is absurd. Otherwise, when Paul is speaking, "Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE" that he was merely instructing people not to kill their spouses. Then, even if the 'released' individuals does for some reason include widows, it does not restrict having divorced people in that category. So, if this category is able to contain widows and divorced individuals and not virgins, then he telling both of them not to seek a woman. But, if they disobey this command, it is not a sin. And this can be even further demonstrated by the fact that in the next statement he mentions the next class, which is virgins:

Now about the virgins:

A virgin is specifically distinguished from the unmarried, as Paul himself distinguished below: "An *unmarried woman* or a *virgin*." There is a difference. Even the Mosaic law makes this difference when giving restrictions to the priest:

The priest shall marry a virgin. Not a widow, or a woman who has been cast out, or a woman who has lost her honor as a whore, but a virgin. (Leviticus 21:13~14)

And therefore, if there is a difference between *virgin* and *unmarried woman*, then the term "unmarried" would include those who have been married at one time and are no longer married.

Now about the virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is faithful. Therefore, this is what I think best because of the present distress: that it is beautiful for a human to remain as he is. Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE. Are you RELEASED from a woman? Then do not seek for a woman. But and if you marry, you do not sin, and if the virgin marries, she does not sin; but such people will experience a tribulation in the flesh, and I would like to spare you that.

Again, Paul encouraged absolute celibacy if it is possible, and not to seek for a woman. There is no doubt in this context that these words referred to marriage and SEPARATION. But, Paul did remind them that it was not a sinful activity to get married. But he did want to spare them from earthly affliction so that they might be anxious alone to things regarding the Lord. He told them this for their own benefit:

...not to impose a restraint upon you, *but* instead for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction.

But if anyone thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if a critical moment has come and so it has to be, let him do as he wants. He is committing no sin; let them get married.

But the one who stands firm in his heart, who is not under compulsion but has power over his own will, and has made up his mind to keep his virgin, will be doing well.

So then, the one who marries his virgin does well; and the one who does not marry her will do better.

After his encouragement to be unmarried if it is possible and they desire to, and making sure that they understand that even though celibacy is better, that it is not sin, and a God-given desire, we come to the most crucial passage of this entire treatise on divorce and remarriage:

A woman is BOUND to her man as long as he lives. But if the man falls asleep, she is free to be married to whomever she wants, provided that it be in the Lord. But she is more happy, though, in my opinion, if she remains as she is. But I think that I *too* have a spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 7:1~40)

In order to understand this being BOUND to her husband as long as he lives, let us also refer to a parallel passage as found in another of Paul's letters:

Are you unaware, brothers (for I am speaking to people who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a human as long as one lives? This is how a married woman is BOUND by a law to the living man; but if the man dies, she is set free from the law in respect to the man. Therefore, while the man is alive she will be called an adulteress if she consorts with another man. But if her man dies, she is free from that law, *and* she is not an adulteress if she *consorts* with another man. (Romans 7:1~3)

First, in this letter, Paul states that he is referring to people who know the law. Paul's standard for marriage, being bound, is to be found in the law. That is the measuring rod.

Now let us look at how a woman is bound to her man *by the law*:

“When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent, and therefore he writes out a BILL OF DIVORCE and hands it to her, thus SENDING her AWAY from his house: if on leaving his house she goes and becomes the woman of another man, and the second man, too, comes to dislike her and SENDS her AWAY from his house by handing her a written BILL OF DIVORCE; or if this second man who has married her, dies; then her former man, who SENT her AWAY, may not again take her as his woman after she has become defiled. That would be an abomination before Yahweh, and you shall not bring such guilt upon the land which Yahweh, your God, is giving you as a heritage.(Deuteronomy 24:1~4)

So, if a woman is bound to her man as long as she lives, by the law, then the law gives freedom from a marriage where the partner has committed sexual-immorality (see explanation in sections above). Besides some of the exceptions in Leviticus (against incest, etc – see the section on ‘Marriage & Adultery’ where all such passages have been collected), there is really no other place in the law that directly speaks regarding marriage.

Deuteronomy Chapter 24 is one of the primary chapters about marriage. So if Paul refers to the law as being how a woman is bound to her man until death, then it would imply that this same law gives an exception clause for a SEPARATION, the same exception which Jesus himself spoke of, that of sexual-immorality. Jesus either clarified the misconception of this clause, or brought further restrictions to it, so that it was understood that no one could put their wives away for reasons other than sexual-immorality.

Paul is here speaking of the perfect non-sinful situation in his example. In this ideal situation, a woman is to be BOUND to her man until death. And Paul certainly is not for the dissolving of this type of union, but should it be dissolved, this law of Deuteronomy, which he therefore speaks of, would be the law that binds them, and thus would have been obviously implied in his statements. And it should also be mentioned, that in the cause of fornication under the Old Covenant, the woman would have been stoned, thereby freeing the husband regardless.

But again, these verses are to be interpreted in light of polygamy being an acceptable practice. In both Corinthians and Romans, it speaks only to the woman, never to the man. It does not state that the man is an adulterer if he marries another woman. Why? Again, adultery *cannot* be committed by a married man marrying an unmarried woman. It only refers to a man who has sexual relations with a woman already married to another spouse. Therefore, with an understanding that both Jesus and Paul were speaking to a polygamist society, it is easily understandable why this statement applies to the woman alone, and not for the man to take another wife, for this had been permissible. Otherwise it would not have been necessary to single out the female sex in these passages.

And again, this situation must refer to believers alone. For in the situation of an unbelieving man leaving a believing woman, Paul states that the believer is no longer ENSLAVED. But in the cases of a believing man wrongfully RELEASING a believing woman, then the exception clause stated in Matthew must apply: that the believing man forces his wife into adultery (unless she has committed sexual-immorality). Why? Because she is BOUND to him. But, as explained above, the guilt of the adultery lies upon the man in this case, not the woman.

So, in summary, the only permitted reason that a man or woman may marry another after a SEPARATION without sinning is if an *unbelieving* partner SEPARATED from them, or, if they were RELEASED by their spouse for a reason other than sexual-immorality. Besides these, the only other reason is if the husband died. There is no other reason that is permitted by God in the holy writings. And it is assumed that the woman *will be* married to another.

For both of these passages, Corinthians and Romans, those who are trying to support the doctrine of forbidding remarriage of the innocent party are finding something here more than is implied. Yes, men and women are BOUND by the law, but in doing so, one cannot invalidate parts of the law which they do not like, since, according to Paul, it is the law that is binding a woman and a man together.

Let us keep in mind, that exceptions which have been stated both by Jesus and Paul are still completely valid, and do not need to be stated in all cases. The non-stating of them in one case, does not invalidate them in the others. In normal speech, we have a generalization in mind, and do not long-wind ourselves by stating each and every exception, especially when the exceptions are already known and implied. The authors of the writings do this many times.

Although we gave an example in the previous section, let us state one of Paul's here so that the reader might understand that many times the author does not state his exception in each passage, but many times they are implied:

I wrote you in my letter not to associate with sexual-immoral individuals (PORNOS),<sup>17</sup> not at all referring to the sexual-immoral individuals (PORNOS) of this world or the greedy and robbers or idolaters; for you would then have to leave the world. But I now write to you not to associate with anyone named a brother, if he is a sexual-immoral individual (PORNOS), greedy, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a robber, not even to eat with such a person. For why should I be judging outsiders? Is it not your business to judge those within? God will judge those outside. "Purge the evil person from your midst." (1 Corinthians 5:9~13)

Clearly, in one of Paul's former letters to the Corinthians (which unfortunately did not survive), he wrote something like "Do not associate with a sexual-immoral individual (PORNOS)." And the readers, taking Paul completely literally and not realizing that he did have some exceptions in mind, thought that they were to completely disassociate from all unbelievers entirely. Therefore, in this letter, Paul clarifies what he meant. So, we can see, that merely because an exception is not present in the present passage, does not mean that the author did not imply that the exceptions stated elsewhere were invalid.

Now what if the spouse goes away and goes with another man? All I can refer the reader to is the following in Deuteronomy:

"When a man, after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent, and therefore he writes out a BILL OF DIVORCE and hands it to her, thus SENDING her AWAY from his house: if on leaving his house she goes and becomes the woman of another man, and the second man, too, comes to dislike her and SENDS her AWAY from his house by handing her a written BILL OF DIVORCE; or if this second man who has married her, dies; then her former man, who SENT her AWAY, may not again take her as his woman after she has become defiled. That would be an abomination before Yahweh, and you shall not bring such guilt upon the land which Yahweh, your God, is giving you as a heritage.(Deuteronomy 24:1~4)

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<sup>17</sup> PORNOS is one who commits PORNEIA (as in, a sexual-immoral individual)

If a man SENDS-AWAY his woman from *him* and, after leaving him, she marries another man, Does the first man come back to her? Would not the land be wholly defiled? But you have sinned with many lovers, and yet you would return to me! says Yahweh.  
(Jeremiah 3:1)

If Jesus referred to Deuteronomy as his standard for divorce and remarriage, then perhaps this passage is still kept in mind. Perhaps that is why Paul was so adamant against allowing the believing wife to marry another after a SEPARATION. But there is one instance where God seems to have commanded against his own commandment, that of Hosea (see next section “Letter of the Law vs. Spirit of the Law.”)

## PART006: SPIRIT OF THE LAW vs. LETTER OF THE LAW

There are two places in Paul's letters where he compares the "Letter" with the "Spirit."

[We are] ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter brings death, but the spirit gives life. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, was so glorious that the Israelites could not look intently at the face of Moses because of its glory that was going to fade, how much more will the ministry of the spirit be glorious?  
(2 Corinthians 3:6~8)

And again:

But now we are released from the law, dead to what held us captive, so that we may serve in the newness of the spirit and not under the obsolete letter.  
(Romans 7:6)

It is clear that Paul refers to the Mosaic law as the "letter" and what was brought through Jesus the Christ as the "ministry of the Spirit." How is this? I think it is similar to what Paul speaks of in another of his letters:

If you died with the Christ to the elemental powers of the world, why do you submit to regulations as if you were still living in the world? Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch! These are all things destined to perish with use; they accord with human precepts and teachings. While they have a semblance of wisdom in rigor of devotion and self-abasement (and) severity to the body, they are of no value against gratification of the flesh.  
(Colossians 2:21~23)

But I believe that there is something deeper than a simple comparison between both the Old and New Covenants which have been given by God. There is a spirit behind each commandment issued forth by God. It is possible to literally follow that commandment—that is, by the letter—yet still walk in opposition to the reason which the commandment was issued—that is, by the spirit. Likewise, it is possible to transgress the literal interpretation, yet still walk in harmony with the reason the commandment was issued.

Once when Jesus was accused of breaking the Sabbath (he did not in fact break the Sabbath here, even on a literal level, but he offended the interpretation of the law brought forth by the traditions of the elders), he replied with an interesting statement, that would even have justified the situation had he in fact broken the Sabbath law on a literal level:

On another sabbath he went into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him closely to see if he would cure on the sabbath so that they might discover a reason to accuse him.

But he realized their intentions and said to the man with the withered hand, "Come up and stand before us." And he rose and stood there.

Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?"

Looking around at them all, he then said to him, "Stretch out your hand."

He did so and his hand was restored. But they became enraged and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.  
(Luke 6:6~11)

Let us observe, Jesus states the spirit behind the Sabbath law:

"Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?"

And let us observe another passage:

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. And one of the scribes, a lawyer, came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him a question, to test him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law that is the first of all?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the great and first commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that he is one, and there is no other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."  
(composite of Matthew 22:34~40 / Mark 12:28~34 / Luke 20:40)

And again:

And on one occasion a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live." (Luke 10:25+)

The intentions behind *every* commandment is "to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind", "to love your neighbor as yourself", "to do good rather than evil", and "to save life rather than destroy it." If this can be understood as the spirit behind every law, then we can understand how it is possible at times to break the letter, yet retain the spirit; and likewise, to be following the letter, yet condemned for violating its spirit.

Let us first appeal to secular laws; although, some of these become laws for us Christians, because of the following:

Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the approval of those who do good. For it is the will of God that by doing good you may silence the ignorance of foolish people. Be free, yet without using freedom as a pretext for evil, but as slaves of God. Give honor to all, love the community, fear God, honor the king." (1 Peter 2:13~17)

And:

Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority opposes what God has appointed, and those who oppose it will bring judgment upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear to good conduct, but to evil.

Do you wish to have no fear of authority? Then do what is good and you will receive approval from it, for it is a servant of God for your good. But if you do evil, be afraid, for it does not bear the sword without purpose; it is the servant of God to inflict wrath on the evildoer. Therefore, it is necessary to be subject not only because of the wrath but also because of conscience.

This is why you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Pay to all their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, toll to whom toll is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, (namely) "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:1~10)

Not only have we here received an encouragement to authorities, but are again reminded of the spirit of the law, that is, to love your neighbor as yourself.

The first secular example is the Speed Limit Law. This law is binding upon men who wish to drive. There are varying limits placed upon varying roads to restrict the speed that cars may drive. This is the *limit*, not a guideline. Any breaking of this law may result in penalty from those who are in authority above us. This is the letter of the law.

Now, in the case that I have a dying spouse, was that law instituted to make sure that my spouse died on the way to the hospital before I could reach there? Was this law instituted to encourage the spreading of a wildfire by preventing a fire-engine from reaching its destination? Was this law instituted to force me into a car accident, when instead, by increasing my speed for a limited time, I would have been able to accelerate fast enough to prevent the entire unforeseeable accident?

Clearly none of these things are in violation of the Speed Limit Law. Was the law created to save life or to destroy it?

Again, let us appeal to the Jaywalking Law. It is illegal in most states to cross the road except at a crosswalk or a corner. And it also illegal to cross a crosswalk when the “red hand sign” is lit-up (designating that one may not cross the street at this time). Failure to abide by this law may result in a penalty by the authorities. Was this law intended to force an escaping rape victim to have to find a corner before crossing the street, or to force them to wait at the corner until the “go” signal lights up so that the rapist may accost them in their idleness while waiting to cross the street? Was the law created to save life or to destroy it?

The courts of law are packed full of lawyers, who look to excuse thousands of criminals—those who have not broken the letter of the law, but are certainly guilty of the spirit. And there are many, who have not broken the spirit of the law, yet are falsely accused as criminals because they broken the letter of the law. For example, there is a law against public exposure of the genitalia. Was this law instituted to prevent a man from pulling his car over on the side of the road to urinate when he is simply unable to hold it back any longer, or when there is no bathroom to be found? Absolutely not! For there are many times that the functions which God has equipped our bodies with are completely out of our control. Yet, there are many who have been arrested as criminals for urinating in public. They certainly violated the letter of the law, but in no way violated the spirit of the law. And these innocent men are labeled as sex offenders and must register as such even on job applications. Was the law created to save life or to destroy it?

Unfortunately, like these corrupted lawyers and law enforcers, the Pharisees and scribes are no different. But are we not guilty of the same thing, when we try to interpret the laws and commandments of the Christ himself?

So now, let us turn to some examples within the Old Testament ourselves. But before this, let us incline our ears to the wisdom of one of the disciples of John the Apostle, who was appointed as an elder over the assemblies of the first age:

With respect to those things which the writings **do not reprove**, but simply leave alone, we ought not to become accusers, for we are not more exact than God, nor can we be above the teacher... For not one of those things which has been left unaccused in the writings is without significance. (Teachings of the Elders)

Let us now turn to our first example, that is, Rahab the whore. First, in the ten commandments it clearly states:

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

But Rahab did exactly that, and was even blessed by God with her life for doing so. Although it is quite a lengthy account, I will present it here in its fullness so that nothing be omitted:

Then Joshua, son of Nun, secretly sent out two spies from Shittim, saying, “Go, reconnoiter the land and Jericho.”

When the two reached Jericho, they went into the house of a harlot named Rahab, where they lodged. But a report was brought to the king of Jericho that some Israelites had come there that night to spy out the land. So the king of Jericho sent Rahab the order, “Put out the visitors who have entered your house, for they have come to spy out the entire land.”

The woman had taken the two men and hidden them, so she said, “True, the men you speak of came to me, but I did not know where they came from. At dark, when it was time for the gate to be shut, they left, and I do not know where they went. You will have to pursue them immediately to overtake them.”

Now, she had led them to the roof, and hidden them among her stalks of flax spread out there. But the pursuers set out along the way to the fords of the Jordan, and once they had left, the gate was shut.

Before the spies fell asleep, Rahab came to them on the roof and said: "I know that Yahweh has given you the land, that a dread of you has come upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are overcome with fear of you. For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the waters of the Sea of Reeds before you when you came out of Egypt, and how you dealt with Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites beyond the Jordan, whom you doomed to destruction. At these reports, we are disheartened; everyone is discouraged because of you, since Yahweh, your God, is God in heaven above and on earth below.

"Now then, swear to me by Yahweh that, since I am showing kindness to you, you in turn will show kindness to my family; and give me an unmistakable token that you are to spare my father and mother, brothers and sisters, and all their kin, and save us from death."

"We pledge our lives for yours," the men answered her. "If you do not betray this errand of ours, we will be faithful in showing kindness to you when Yahweh gives us the land."

Then she let them down through the window with a rope; for she lived in a house built into the city wall.

"Go up into the hill country," she suggested to them, "that your pursuers may not find you. Hide there for three days, until they return; then you may proceed on your way."

The men answered her, "This is how we will fulfill the oath you made us take: When we come into the land, tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you are letting us down; and gather your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. Should any of them pass outside the doors of your house, he will be responsible for his own death, and we shall be guiltless. But we shall be responsible if anyone in the house with you is harmed. If, however, you betray this errand of ours, we shall be quit of the oath you have made us take."

"Let it be as you say," she replied, and bade them farewell. When they were gone, she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

They went up into the hills, where they stayed three days until their pursuers, who had sought them all along the road without finding them, returned. Then the two came back down from the hills, crossed the Jordan to Joshua, son of Nun, and reported all that had befallen them.

They assured Joshua, "Yahweh has delivered all this land into our power; indeed, all the inhabitants of the land are overcome with fear of us."  
(Joshua 2:1~24)

Then later:

The seventh time around, the priests blew the horns and Joshua said to the people, "Now shout, for Yahweh has given you the city and everything in it. It is under Yahweh's ban. Only the whore Rahab and all who are in the house with her are to be spared, because she hid the messengers we sent."  
(Joshua 6:16~17)

Then:

The spies entered and brought out Rahab, with her father, mother, brothers, and all her kin. Her entire family they led forth and placed them outside the camp of Israel. The city itself they burned with all that was in it, except the silver, gold, and articles of bronze and iron, which were placed in the treasury of the house of Yahweh. Because Rahab the whore had hidden the messengers whom Joshua had sent to reconnoiter Jericho, Joshua spared her with her family and all her kin, who continue in the midst of Israel to this day.  
(Joshua 6:23~25)

This woman hid the spies and lied to those who sought them in opposition to this command of God which spoke, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18). And she was honored with salvation because of this. And if one still wishes to condemn this woman, let us recognize that she is mentioned three times in the New Testament writings:

By faith Rahab the whore did not perish with the disobedient, for she had received the spies in peace.  
(Hebrews 11:31)

And again:

See how a person is made righteous by works and not by faith alone.

And in the same way, was not Rahab the whore also made righteous by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by a different route?  
(James 2:24~25)



And again:

Because of her faith and hospitality, Rahab the whore was saved. For when spies were sent to Jericho by Joshua the son of Nun, the king of the country ascertained that they had come to spy out their land and sent men to seize them, so that when they were taken, they might be put to death. But the hospitable Rahab received them and concealed them on the roof of her house under stalks of flax.

And when the men sent by the king arrived and said, "The men spying on our land came to you. Bring them out, for so the king commands," she answered, pointing them in the opposite direction, "The men whom you seek indeed came to me, but immediately departed and are continuing on their journey."

Then she said to the men, "I surely know that the Lord God has given you this city, for the fear and dread of you have fallen upon all its inhabitants. Therefore, when you have taken it, save me and the house of my father."

(Clement 12:1~5)

Therefore, if these deeds, which include bearing a false witness, are honored by God as an example of deeds proceeding forth from faith, and she is honored three times in the New Testament, then this woman is highly honored, for there are few who are even mentioned more than once in the New Testament, even some of the greatest prophets of the faith. And if she is able to transgress the law and be honored, then we must ask ourselves, was the law created to save life or to destroy it?

Now I will briefly show another case relating to 'murder'. For in the ten commandments which God issued to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, he states:

You shall not murder.

(Exodus 20:13)

But later, there are many instances where Israelites, under God's command, did that very thing, such as:

And on that day, Joshua took Makkedah and murdered the inhabitants with *the* edge of a short-sword... And Yahweh gave it [Libnah] into the hand of Israel, and they took it and its king, and murdered the inhabitants with *the* edge of a short-sword.

(Joshua 10:28, 30)

So even though murder is one of the Ten Commandments, and is always bad, and will not be in the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns, it is not always sinful in itself. God does not want to have to have it be done, but it must be done under certain circumstances due to the sinfulness of the individual who is being murdered. Therefore, we can see, that in the case of Jesus, when he speaks of the innocent spouse being made to commit adultery, even though this is a bad practice, it must be done due on account of the actions of the sinful husband who wrongfully RELEASED her from him, and it is not sinful in itself for the woman to commit adultery by being married to another, even though it is one of the Ten Commandments not to commit adultery. He is warning the man not to do this, because he will be making his wife do something which God never intended to be done, and which is bad, but necessary.

Then, it also states in the ten commandments:

You shall not make for yourself an idol, nor a likeness of anything, which is in the heavens above, or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow-down to them, nor serve them.

(Exodus 20:4~5)

But we read:

And Yahweh sent seraph serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned. For we have spoken against Yahweh and against you. Pray to Yahweh, so that he will take the serpents away from us."

And Yahweh said to Moses, "Make a seraph and set it on an ensign. And everyone who is bitten and who looks at it, shall live."

So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the ensign. And whenever the serpent bit someone, that person would look at the bronze serpent *and* lived.

(Numbers 21:6~9)

So, even though making an idol or an image is against the ten commandments of God, there are certain limited situations in which God even commands for people to disobey his ordinances.

Now let us turn to a more serious of an example, where Yahweh God himself commands one of his prophets to actually transgress one of his own commandments, which he himself instituted. That is, the example of Hosea the prophet:

In the beginning of Yahweh's speaking to Hosea, Yahweh said to Hosea: Go, take a woman of sexual-immorality, and children of sexual-immorality, for the land gives itself to sexual-immorality, turning away from Yahweh. So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived and bore him a son. (Hosea 1:2~3)

Here are the Mosaic laws for this situation:

If a man comes upon a maiden *who is a virgin* that is not betrothed, takes her and has relations with her, and their deed is discovered, the man who had relations with her shall pay the maiden's father fifty silver shekels and take her as his woman, because he has deflowered her. Moreover, he may not SEND her AWAY from *him* as long as he lives. (Deuteronomy 22:13~29)

When a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall pay her marriage price and marry her. If her father refuses to give her to him, he must still pay him the customary marriage price for virgins. (Exodus 22:16~17)

Do not profane your daughter by making her a committer of sexual-immorality, lest the land fall into sexual-immorality and the land become full of wickedness.

But if this charge is true, and evidence of the girl's virginity is not found, they shall bring the girl to the entrance of her father's house and there her townsmen shall stone her to death, because she committed a crime against Israel by her unchasteness in her father's house. Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst. (Deuteronomy 22:20~21)

Despite these commands, (which, I must admit are very strange, even if God himself is making an allegory, but I dare not criticize what is beyond my understanding), there is no command forbidding anyone, except for a priest, to marry a woman of sexual-immorality (although, according to Leviticus 20, there are certain types of sexual-immorality that do result in the death penalty and other serious penalties). So, Hosea is not committing a sin by marrying such a woman.

First, it is not certain how many of these children were born to Hosea. It can be ascertained from what follows, that not all of them belonged to Hosea. For it later accuses her of both sexual-immorality *and* adultery, and God tells him to take "children of sexual-immorality" (i.e. children born from sexual sin). But it cannot be certain whether the first was born from him or not (whether the child had been conceived from sexual-immorality of another man, or from his own intercourse with her).

But when the third child is born, the Lord says:

Protest against your mother, protest!

for she is not my woman,  
and I am not her man.

Let her remove her sexual-immorality from before her,

her adultery from between her breasts,

or I will strip her naked,

leaving her as on the day of her birth;

I will make her like the desert,

reduce her to an arid land, and slay her with thirst.

I will have no pity on her children,

for they are the children of sexual-immorality.

Yes, their mother has committed sexual-immorality;

she that conceived them has acted shamefully.

"I will go after my lovers," she said,

"who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink." (Hosea 2:4~7)

First, I am not certain how much of the discourses are literally what happened between Hosea and Gomer, or whether some of this is God's personal discourse that is directed to Israel, and the literal events do not contain all of the particulars as mentioned in the discourses. Either way, from these passages, it seems clear on a literal level that all three children would have been born out of sexual-immorality and not from Hosea himself. In addition, it also accuses her of adultery. So, we can clearly see that some of these children would have been born while she was committing adultery while married to Hosea. According to the Mosaic law:

If a man commits adultery with his neighbor's woman, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.  
(Leviticus 20:10)

I do not understand why, but God does not enforce this commandment with Hosea. But it shows that in certain conditions, that God is able to withhold the literal upholding of the letter of his law. Regardless, it does seem that instead of the stoning penalty that he did fulfill Deuteronomy 24, in giving her a BILL OF DIVORCE, for he says that "she is not my woman, and I am not her man." But in this allegory, it seems that the spirit behind these commands was to leave room for repentance before the stoning; for here, God states "Let her remove her sexual-immorality from before her, her adultery from between her breasts, or I will strip her naked, leaving her as on the day of her birth." (Hosea 2:4) He seems patient, hoping that she will repent before he has to strike with his final blow. So we can see that God's heart is patience for a season before the penalty comes.

In the next section, we see God's detest of Israel's path (whether Gomer actually did this stuff, I am not certain, or whether it is only between God and Israel now; but the context would imply that this refers to God providing them with things like crops and fields that produced in their seasons as dictated by God, yet they were accrediting Baal with these things).

Since she has not known  
that it was I who gave her  
the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and her abundance of silver,  
and of gold, which they used for Baal,  
Therefore I will take back my grain in its time,  
and my wine in its season;  
I will snatch away my wool and my flax,  
with which she covers her nakedness.  
So now I will lay bare her shame  
before the eyes of her lovers,  
and no one can deliver her out of my hand.  
I will bring an end to all her joy,  
her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths,  
and all her solemnities.  
I will lay waste her vines and fig trees,  
of which she said, "These are the hire  
my lovers have given me";  
I will turn them into rank growth  
and wild beasts shall devour them.  
I will punish her for the days of the Baals,  
for whom she burnt incense  
while she decked herself out with her rings  
and her jewels,  
and, in going after her lovers,  
forgot me, says Yahweh.

But in response to Israel's adulteries, he replies:

So I will allure her;  
I will lead her into the desert  
and speak to her heart.  
From there I will give her the vineyards she had,

and the valley of Achor as a door of hope.  
 She shall respond there as in the days of her youth,  
 when she came up from the land of Egypt.  
 On that day, says Yahweh,  
 she shall call me "My man,"  
 and never again "My baal."  
 Then will I remove from her mouth the names of the Baals,  
 so that they shall no longer be invoked.  
 I will make a covenant for them on that day,  
 with the beasts of the field,  
 with the birds of the air,  
 and with the things that crawl on the ground.  
 Bow and sword and war  
 I will destroy from the land,  
 and I will let them take their rest in security.  
 I will espouse you to me forever:  
 I will espouse you in right and in justice, in love and in mercy;  
 I will espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know Yahweh.

So we can see that God goes forth to attempt reconciliation at great costs. But before all of this, he does set forth some conditions:

Again Yahweh said to me:  
 Give your love to a woman  
 beloved of a paramour, an adultress;  
 even as Yahweh loves the people of Israel,  
 though they turn to other gods and are fond of raisin cakes.

So I bought her for fifteen pieces of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. Then I said to her:

"Many days you shall wait for me;  
 you shall not commit sexual-immorality  
 or belong to any man;  
 I in turn will wait for you."

For the people of Israel shall remain many days  
 without king or prince,  
 without sacrifice or sacred pillar,  
 without ephod or household idols.  
 Then the people of Israel shall turn back  
 and seek Yahweh, their God,  
 and David, their king;  
 they shall come trembling to Yahweh  
 and to his bounty, in the last days.

Now, it is not certain if this woman that Hosea now takes it a different woman, or Gomer once again. Either way, this woman is an adulterer, one that should have been stoned. But, God did not take her back unconditionally. He stated that "you shall not commit sexual-immorality or belong to any man; I *in turn* will wait for you." This is not an unconditional restoration. She had to stop committing these wicked deeds.

Later in the book of Hosea, when he is making general discourses now apart from this topic, he states to Israel directly:

Their deeds do not allow them to return to their God; for a spirit of sexual-immorality is in them, and they do not  
 recognize Yahweh.

(Hosea 5:4)

Now, keep in mind that this entire picture was an allegory. God has a different type of patience with an entire nation than with individuals, and different commands at different periods; and his relationship with Israel is definitely not seen in the same way as his relationship with individual people. So I do not think it is wise to

form doctrine out of an allegory, or discourse that is not intended to be teaching doctrine; or to constrain all individuals to these procedures. So, I do not want to bring forth instructions here that are contrary to how we should walk in these types of situations.

But this does show God's heart, that is a heart of patience and one willing to reconcile, if the other party is willing. In this case, if all of this literally happened, it seemed that Gomer repented of her sins and came back. That spirit of all of God's laws was repentance, not anger and not intent to destroy someone. I am not sure how all these were to be balanced out in the Old Testament when these rules were commanded by God (such as commanding an adulterer to be stoned), but if this is possible, then let us not judge when the Letter of the law does not seem to be followed, instead seeking the Spirit of the law.

Each situation is different, and we need to seek God, regarding what is his heart in every situation. Some may end like Hosea and Gomer, but in others, it is necessary to marry another. Let each man find his own way between him and God. But either way, God did grant permission for SENDING-AWAY in a case of sexual-immorality. So, unless an individual sees that God is instructing him otherwise, I do not think, that even in light of Hosea, that we should condemn someone who SENDS-AWAY a wife in sexual-immorality, or marries another after an unbelieving spouse has SEPARATED. It is not a sin. But let us all seek the wisdom of God in each situation. For it is God alone who knows all things beforehand.

But, even in all this, God does have patience, and also a limited period for repentance. For Isaiah also prophecies:

This is what Yahweh says:  
Where is the BILL OF DIVORCE  
with which I SENT-AWAY your mother from *me*?  
Or to which of my creditors  
have I sold you?  
It was for your sins that you were sold,  
for your crimes that your mother was SENT-AWAY from *me*.  
Why was no one there when I came?  
Why did no one answer when I called?  
Is my hand too short to ransom?  
Have I not the strength to deliver?  
Lo, with my rebuke I dry up the sea,  
I turn rivers into a desert;  
their fish rot for lack of water,  
and die of thirst.

(Isaiah 50:1~2)

And Jeremiah:

If a man SENDS AWAY his woman from him  
and, after leaving him,  
she marries another man,  
does the first man come back to her?  
Would not the land be wholly defiled?  
But you have sinned with many lovers,  
and yet you would return to me! says Yahweh  
Lift your eyes to the heights, and see,  
where have men not lain with you?  
By the waysides you waited for them  
like an Arab in the desert.  
You defiled the land  
by your wicked sexual-immorality.  
Therefore the showers were withheld,  
the spring rain failed.  
But because you have a PORNOS' brow,  
you refused to blush.  
Even now do you not call me, "My father,  
you who are the bridegroom of my youth"?  
"Will he keep his wrath forever,

will he hold his grudge to the end?"  
This is what you say;  
yet you do all the evil you can.

Yahweh said to me in the days of King Josiah:

See now what rebellious Israel has done! She has gone up every high mountain, and under every green tree she has committed sexual-immorality. And I thought, after she has done all this she will return to me. But she did not return. Then, even though her traitor sister Judah saw that for all the adulteries rebellious Israel had committed, I put her away and gave her a bill of divorce, nevertheless her traitor sister Judah was not frightened; she too went off and committed sexual-immorality. Eager to sin, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and wood. With all this, the traitor sister Judah did not return to me wholeheartedly, but insincerely, says Yahweh

Then Yahweh said to me: Rebel Israel is inwardly more just than traitorous Judah. Go, proclaim these words toward the north, and say:

Return, rebel Israel, says Yahweh,  
I will not remain angry with you;  
for I am merciful, says Yahweh,  
I will not continue my wrath forever.  
Only know your guilt:  
how you rebelled against Yahweh, your God,  
how you ran hither and yon to strangers (under every green tree)  
and would not listen to my voice, says Yahweh.  
Return, rebellious children, says Yahweh,  
for I am your Master;  
I will take you, one from a city, two from a clan,  
and bring you to Zion. (Jeremiah 3:1~14)

Why should I pardon you these things?  
Your sons have forsaken me,  
they swear by gods that are not.  
I fed them, but they committed adultery;  
to the PORNOS' house they throng.  
Lustful stallions they are,  
each neighs after another's woman.  
Shall I not punish them for these things? says Yahweh;  
On a nation such as this shall I not take vengeance?  
Climb to her terraces, and ravage them,  
destroy them (not) wholly.  
Tear away her tendrils,  
they do not belong to Yahweh.  
For they have openly rebelled against me,  
both the house of Israel and the house of Judah, says Yahweh.  
They denied Yahweh,  
saying, "Not he –  
No evil shall befall us,  
neither sword nor famine shall we see.  
The prophets have become wind,  
and the word is not in them.  
May their threats be carried out against themselves!"

As time went on, God's anger was brought forth, until he finally rejected them and allowed for the city to be burned. God has patience, but there is a limit. And when he finally brought his son Jesus to them, they rejected him, and they received an ultimate penalty for their sins. And now, the Christ has taken a new bride, hoping that by the love he shares with a this new nation (consisting of both repentant Israelites *and* those from other nations), that he will be able to induce his first wife to return to him:

But I ask, did not Israel understand?

First Moses says: "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a senseless nation I will make you angry."

Then Isaiah speaks boldly and says: “I was found (by) those who were not seeking me; I revealed myself to those who were not asking for me.”

But regarding Israel he says, “All day long I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contentious people.”

(Romans 10:19~21)

But again, even though God uses marriage as an imagery between him and Israel (and now the Christ and the Assembly), this does not mean that *all* of the same principles apply. There are different things which the Christ requires from a man and a woman rather than between us and him, and different permissions and commandments apply. And therefore, I state these examples of Hosea, and those from the prophets, regarding Israel’s sins, so that we can see a glimpse of God’s heart in everything.

For the final example, we shall turn to the Good-Messages themselves, in which our Lord and savior justifies three groups of people who broke the letter of the law, therefore proving that they were innocent of having broken the spirit of the law:

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on one Sabbath; and as they made their way his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck and eat some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.

But when some of the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, why are your disciples doing what is unlawful to do on the sabbath?”

And Jesus answered and said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him [for any to eat], but only for the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him? Or have you not read in the law how on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless?”

And he said to them, “I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; for the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

(composite Matthew 12:1~8 / Mark 2:23~28 / Luke 6:1~5)

Although it seems that Jesus himself may not have broken the letter of the sabbath here, it is clear that his disciples violated the letter of the sabbath. Yet, Jesus justifies them first by bringing up examples from the Old Testament, concluding by declaring the men in those examples, as well as his disciples “guiltless.”

So, now, let us return to the commandments of divorce and remarriage. Were these commandments instituted to save life or to destroy it? To me, it is clear that the spirit of these commandments were designed to prevent marriages from being destroyed, forcing them to have to reconcile differences rather than going their separate ways. These commandments were never intended to keep the innocent spouse enslaved (under bondage) following a SEPARATION by stranding them isolated for the remainder of their lives and prone to struggle with sexual-immorality and other aloneness, especially when God has placed a desire within their hearts to have a companion. This was clearly not the intention of these commandments.

The heart of God is this:

This also you do: the altar of Yahweh you cover  
with tears, weeping and groaning,  
because he no longer regards your sacrifice  
nor accepts it favorably from your hand;  
and you say, “Why is it?” –  
because Yahweh is witness  
between you and the woman of your youth,  
with whom you have broken faith  
though she is your companion, covenant-woman.  
Did he not make one being, with flesh and spirit:  
and what does that one require but godly offspring?  
You must then safeguard life that is your own,  
and not break faith with the woman of your youth.  
For I hate SENDING-AWAY,

says Yahweh, the God of Israel,  
and covering one's garment with injustice,  
says Yahweh of hosts;<sup>18</sup>  
you must then safeguard life that is your own,  
and not break faith.

As far as it is possible on our part, we should not break faith. God is here rebuking someone who is breaking faith with his wife, not someone who was abandoned by an unfaithful spouse. Yes, God still hates that, but he is concerned with the individual. He does not hold an individual responsible for another's sin. Again, God's heart is not against remarriage, it is against wrongful SENDING-AWAY and SEPARATION.

So if God can command people to do contrary to his own law, and even declare them innocent, how then can we condemn remarriage in certain situations that were not declared unlawful at all, since God himself gave permission for someone to do so?

“Each man stands or falls before his master.”

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<sup>18</sup> The Greek translation (and possible original version?) of Malachi reads “But if you should hate *your wife* and SEND her AWAY from *him*, says the God of Israel, then ungodliness shall cover your thoughts, says the Lord Almighty.”



## PART007: GOD COMMANDS DIVORCE

Some people believe that if God's intention always was for man never to SEPARATE, then it is certainly man himself who had the hard-heart by an act of RELEASE. Yes, I agree. According to Jesus this was why Moses permitted this. However, hard-heartedness must not have always been the case. For, behold, then we would be accusing our God, who himself divorced Israel, and who also both instructed and permitted his own people to SEND-AWAY their wives at times when they were outside of God's will (and not even always for sexual-immorality). Therefore, with these examples, it will be clear that God's will at times is for divorce, despite that he never intended for it.

The first example is that of Hagar. First, God had promised that Abraham would have a child, but after a long period of time, Sarah was unable to bear any. So she had the idea that God must have wanted them to have a child through another woman. (Keep in mind, that being married to multiple women at the same time in those days was a completely acceptable practice.)

Abram's woman Sarai had borne him no children. She had, however, an Egyptian servant-girl named Hagar.

Sarai said to Abram: "Yahweh has kept me from bearing children. Have intercourse, then, with my servant-girl; perhaps I shall have sons through her."

Abram heeded Sarai's request. Thus, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, his woman Sarai took her servant-girl, Hagar the Egyptian, and gave her to her man Abram to be his woman. He had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. When she became aware of her pregnancy, she looked on her mistress with disdain.

So Sarai said to Abram: "You are responsible for this outrage against me. I myself gave my servant-girl to your embrace; but ever since she became aware of her pregnancy, she has been looking on me with disdain. May Yahweh decide between you and me!"

Abram told Sarai: "Your maid is in your power. Do to her whatever you please."

Sarai then abused her so much that Hagar ran away from her.

A messenger of Yahweh found her by a spring in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur, and he asked, "Hagar, servant-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?"

She answered, "I am running away from my mistress, Sarai."

But Yahweh's messenger told her: "Go back to your mistress and submit to her abusive treatment. I will make your descendants so numerous," added Yahweh's messenger, "that they will be too many to count. Besides," Yahweh's messenger said to her: "You are now pregnant and shall bear a son; you shall name him Ishmael, for Yahweh has heard you, God has answered you. He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him; In opposition to all his kin shall he encamp."

To Yahweh who spoke to her she gave a name, saying, "You are the God of Vision"; she meant, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after my vision?" That is why the well is called Beer-lahai-roi. It is between Kadesh and Bered.

Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram named the son whom Hagar bore him Ishmael. (Genesis 16:1~15)

So we see here, that Abraham took Hagar to be his woman. He was married to two women at once. This was not condemned by God. For when Hagar ran away, not only did God hear her prayer and bless her with a son, but God even instructed her to return to Abraham. There is no condemnation here by God against the marriage.

Isaac grew, and on the day of the child's weaning, Abraham held a great feast. Sarah noticed the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing with her son Isaac; so she demanded of Abraham: "Drive out that slave and her son! No son of that slave is going to share the inheritance with my son Isaac!"

Abraham was greatly distressed, especially on account of his son Ishmael.

But God said to Abraham: "Do not be distressed about the boy or about your slave woman. Heed the demands of Sarah, no matter what she is asking of you; for it is through Isaac that descendants shall bear your name. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a great nation of him also, since he too is your offspring."

Early the next morning Abraham got some bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. Then, placing the child on her back, he SEND her AWAY from *him*. (Genesis 21:9~14)

But God never instructed Abraham to SEND HER AWAY from *him* because of sexual-immorality, nor did he find any sort of fault in the marriage itself (for polygamy was a common practice, not to mention an un sinful practice, even before God in those days, so this cannot, and is not, the reason). In fact, God did not even

command Abraham to SEND Hagar AWAY from *him* even though the entire union had been because of Abraham and Sarah's unbelief. No, we can see somewhat above why this was so. But God did, in this situation, command Abraham to SEND her AWAY from *him*. And so he did.

Now turning to the days of Ezra, we will see another situation of forced divorces:

When these matters had been concluded, the leaders approached me with this report: "Neither the Israelite laymen nor the priests nor the Levites have kept themselves aloof from the peoples of the land and their abominations (Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites); for they have taken some of their daughters as women for themselves and their sons, and thus they have desecrated the holy race with the peoples of the land. Furthermore, the leaders and rulers have taken a leading part in this apostasy!" (Ezra 9:1~2)

For they had broken the following commandment:

When Yahweh, your God, brings you into the land which you are to enter and occupy, and dislodges great nations before you – the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites: seven nations more numerous and powerful than you – and when Yahweh, your God, delivers them up to you and you defeat them, you shall doom them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. You shall not intermarry with them, neither giving your daughters to their sons nor taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn your sons from following me to serving other gods, and then the wrath of Yahweh would flare up against you and quickly destroy you. (Deuteronomy 7:1~4)

So, in response to this crisis:

While Ezra prayed and acknowledged their guilt, weeping and prostrate before the house of God, a very large assembly of Israelites gathered about him, men, women, and children; and the people wept profusely.

Then Shecaniah, the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, made this appeal to Ezra: "We have indeed betrayed our God by taking as women foreign women of the peoples of the land. Yet even now there remains a hope for Israel. Let us therefore enter into a covenant before our God to SEND-AWAY from us all our foreign women and the children born of them, in keeping with what you, my lord, advise, and those who fear the commandments of our God. Let the law be observed! Rise, then, for this is your duty! We will stand by you, so have courage and take action!"

Ezra rose to his feet and demanded an oath from the chiefs of the priests, from the Levites and from all Israel that they would do as had been proposed; and they swore it. (Ezra 10:1~5)

Then:

Then Ezra, the priest, stood up and said to them: "Your unfaithfulness in taking foreign women as women has added to Israel's guilt. But now, give praise to Yahweh, the God of your fathers, and do his will: DIVIDE<sup>19</sup> yourselves from the peoples of the land and from these foreign women."

In answer, the whole assembly cried out with a loud voice: "Yes, it is our duty to do as you say! But the people are numerous and it is the rainy season, so that we cannot remain out-of-doors; besides, this is not a task that can be performed in a single day or even two, for those of us who have sinned in this regard are many. Let our leaders represent the whole assembly; then let all those in our cities who have taken foreign women for women appear at appointed times, accompanied by the elders and magistrates of each city in question, till we have turned away from us our God's burning anger over this affair." (Ezra 10:10~14)

And then:

They pledged themselves to SEND their women AWAY from *them*, and as a guilt-offering for their guilt they gave a ram from the flock. (Ezra 10:19)

And then:

All these had taken foreign women; but they sent them away, both the women and their children. (Ezra 10:44)

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<sup>19</sup> The alternate 1Ezra translation uses "SEPARATE" here

Though it must be noted that Ezra was not issuing a direct command from the Lord here, so the actions commanded by Ezra should not necessarily be a reflection of how God would have wanted his people to act in this situation, nor are they necessarily in contradiction. We simply do not have enough evidence to know; we only have the mere facts. Regardless, the Israelites were forced to SEPARATE from foreign women whom they had married and had become one flesh with. And if everything which Ezra was doing was pleasing to God, then SEPARATION is an act which is acceptable to God under certain conditions.

The same thing, the marrying of foreign women, occurred during the days of Nehemiah, though there is no detail as to whether or not there was SEPARATION to remedy the situation, but it seems something of the sort may be implied:

Also in those days I saw Judeans who had married Ashdodite, Ammonite, or Moabite women. Of their children, half spoke Ashdodite, and none of them knew how to speak Judean; and so it was in regard to the languages of the various other peoples. I took them to task and cursed them; I had some of them beaten and their hair pulled out; and I adjured them by God:

“You shall not marry your daughters to their sons nor take any of their daughters for your sons or for yourselves! Did not Solomon, the king of Israel, sin because of them? Though among the many nations there was no king like him, and though he was beloved of his God and God had made him king over all Israel, yet even he was made to sin by foreign women. Must it also be heard of you that you have done this same very great evil, betraying our God by marrying foreign women?”

One of the sons of Joiada, son of Eliashib the high priest, was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite! I drove him from my presence. Remember against them, O my God, how they defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites!

Thus I cleansed them of all foreign contamination. I established the various functions for the priests and Levites, so that each had his appointed task. I also provided for the procurement of wood at stated times and for the first fruits. Remember this in my favor, O my God!  
(Nehemiah 13:23~31)

These examples clearly show that God is able to SEPARATE those who have become one flesh, and even has commanded such in certain situations.

Now some would argue, that these men were never lawfully married to these women, which is why God SEPARATED them, because they disobeyed his commands by marrying people which they ought not to. Based on that reasoning, we can assume that if a Christian marries an unbeliever (which is something forbidden by God), that they would be granted a right to SEND-AWAY that unbelieving spouse because the marriage between the believer and unbeliever was not within God’s will. Regardless, there is no evidence within the holy writings whatsoever that once these women had been SENT-AWAY from their husbands, that God considered these women to still be married to them. The SENDING-AWAY is the end of a marriage.

## PART008: COVENANTS

Since most marriages are made up of a marriage covenant, I thought that it is best to take into account what a marriage covenant actually is. There are no examples that I can find of wedding vows made anywhere in all of the holy writings; and so if they are not discussed anywhere within, then vows are foreign to God's concept of a marriage covenant. But nevertheless, if one is foolish enough to make vows of any sort, those made in the presence of our God cannot be disregarded, for:

You had better not make a vow than make it and not fulfill it. Let not your utterances make you guilty, and say not before his representative, "It was a mistake," lest God be angered by such words and destroy the works of your hands. Rather, fear God!  
(Ecclesiastes 5:4~5)

When you make a vow to Yahweh, your God, you shall not delay in fulfilling it; otherwise you will be held guilty, for Yahweh, your God, is strict in requiring it of you. Should you refrain from making a vow, you will not be held guilty. But you must keep your solemn word and fulfill the votive offering you have freely promised to Yahweh.  
(Deuteronomy 23:22~24)

Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.' But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Anything more is from the wicked-One.(Matthew 5:33~37)

But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but let your "Yes" mean "Yes" and your "No" mean "No," that you may not incur condemnation.  
(James 5:12)

He even upholds vows and declarations done under the guise of deceit. Take for example, the story of Jacob. For Isaac wished to put his blessing upon Esau. But Jacob disguised himself as Esau and received the blessing instead. Yet, even then, Isaac was unable to withdraw the blessing which was placed upon Jacob in deceit. For the sake of space, we shall only quote the ending of this story:

"Who are you?" his father Isaac asked him.

"I am Esau," he replied, "your first-born son."

With that, Isaac was seized with a fit of uncontrollable trembling. "Who was it, then," he asked, "that hunted game and brought it to me? I finished eating it just before you came, and I blessed him. Now he must remain blessed!"

On hearing his father's words, Esau burst into loud, bitter sobbing. "Father, bless me too!" he begged.

When Isaac explained, "Your brother came here by a ruse and carried off your blessing,"

Esau exclaimed, "He has been well named Jacob! He has now supplanted me twice! First he took away my birthright, and now he has taken away my blessing." Then he pleaded, "Haven't you saved a blessing for me?"

Isaac replied, "I have already appointed him your master, and I have assigned to him all his kinsmen as his slaves; besides, I have enriched him with grain and wine. What then can I do for you, son?"

But Esau urged his father, "Have you only that one blessing, father? Bless me too!"

However, Isaac made no reply; and Esau wept aloud. Finally Isaac spoke again and said to him: "Ah, far from the fertile earth shall be your dwelling; far from the dew of the heavens above! By your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; but when you become restive, you shall throw off his yoke from your neck." (Genesis 27:32~40)

And heed the advice of the author of the Letter to the Hebrews:

See to it that no one be deprived of the grace of God, that no bitter root spring up and cause trouble, through which many may become defiled, that no one be an immoral or profane person like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that later, when he wanted to inherit his father's blessing, he was rejected because he found no opportunity to change his mind, even though he sought the blessing with tears.  
(Hebrews 12:15~17)

A covenant, on the other hand, is something which is agreed upon by two or more people, and is understood that if one party breaks their side of the bargain (such as being unfaithful) that the other party is no longer

obligated to fulfill their part of the covenant (although there is certainly no condemnation if they still wish to fulfill that part).

The Greek word, which is usually translated to “covenant” is DIATHEKE.

- either, “a settlement; legal, last will and testament” or “a binding contract, agreement, treaty between two or more persons” (*Friberg Greek Lexicon*) It also states that, in the context of the Bible, it is used as a declaration of the will of God concerning his self-commitment, promises, and conditions by which he entered into a relationship with man.
- a last will and testament, declaration of will, ordinance, decree, assurance (*Gingrich*)
- a formal arrangement or agreement for disposing of something in a manner assuring continuity, a last will and testament (*Danker*)
- disposition, testament, compact, covenant (LSJ)
- disposition, will, testament, arrangement between two parties, covenant (Middle Liddell)

In the Greek Old Testament, DIATHEKE is the word used to translate the Hebrew BERIYTH:

- covenant, alliance, pledge, treaty, league, constitution, ordinance, agreement, between two individuals (*Strong’s*)
- covenant, constitution, pact, compact, treaty, alliance, league, ordinance, between two individuals (*Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon*)
- agreement, alliance, covenant, pact (*Holladay – Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT*)

This word is always used in the context of a covenant, agreement, etc. between two individuals, including between men, between man and God, between friends, or in marriage.

Now when God establishes a covenant with someone, he is always faithful to his side of the covenant. But if the other side breaks it, it frees God from having to uphold his portion of the covenant, whether or not he specifically declared it as conditional—for there is an implication within the word ‘covenant’ that it is conditional. For example, to Abraham, God speaks:

Circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the mark of the covenant between you and me. Throughout the ages, every male among you, when he is eight days old, shall be circumcised, including houseborn slaves and those acquired with money from any foreigner who is not of your blood. Yes, both the houseborn slaves and those acquired with money must be circumcised. Thus my covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting pact. If a male is uncircumcised, that is, if the flesh of his foreskin has not been cut away, such a one shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant. (Genesis 17:11~14)

And even when Moses, God’s chosen servant broke this commandment, he was near death:

On the journey, at a place where they spent the night, Yahweh came upon Moses and would have killed him. But Zipporah took a piece of flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and, touching his person, she said, “You are a spouse of blood to me.”

Then God let Moses go. At that time she said, “A spouse of blood,” in regard to the circumcision. (Exodus 4:24~26)

Or the Jubilees version, as told from the mouth of a holy messenger:

“You know who spoke to you at Mount Sinai and what the Prince of Mastemah desired to do with you while you were returning to Egypt—on the way when you met him at the shelter. Did he not wish, with all his strength, to kill you and to save the Egyptians from your power, because he saw that you were sent to carry out punishment and revenge on the Egyptians? I rescued you from his power.” (Jubilees 48:2~4)

Again, when the Book of Covenant was read before the people:

Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people, who answered, “All that Yahweh has said, we will heed and do. Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which Yahweh has made with you in accordance with all these words of his.” (Exodus 24:7~8)

“But if you will not obey me, and do not observe all these commandments, if you spurn my statutes, and abhor my ordinances, so that you will not observe all my commandments, and you break my covenant, I in turn will do this to you:

“I will bring terror on you; consumption and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away. You shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down by your enemies; your foes shall rule over you, and you shall flee though no one pursues you.

“And if in spite of this you will not obey me, I will continue to punish you sevenfold for your sins. I will break your proud glory, and I will make your sky like iron and your earth like copper. Your strength shall be spent to no purpose: your land shall not yield its produce, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

“If you continue hostile to me, and will not obey me, I will continue to plague you sevenfold for your sins. I will let loose wild animals against you, and they shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock; they shall make you few in number, and your roads shall be deserted.

“If in spite of these punishments you have not turned back to me, but continue hostile to me, then I too will continue hostile to you: I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins. I will bring the sword against you, executing vengeance for the covenant; and if you withdraw within your cities, I will send pestilence among you, and you shall be delivered into enemy hands. When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven, and they shall dole out your bread by weight; and though you eat, you shall not be satisfied.

“But if, despite this, you disobey me, and continue hostile to me, I will continue hostile to you in fury; I in turn will punish you myself sevenfold for your sins. You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars; I will heap your carcasses on the carcasses of your idols. I will abhor you. I will lay your cities waste, will make your holy-places desolate, and I will not smell your pleasing odors. I will devastate the land, so that your enemies who come to settle in it shall be appalled at it. And you I will scatter among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword against you; your land shall be a desolation, and your cities a waste. Then the land shall enjoy its sabbath years as long as it lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its sabbath years. As long as it lies desolate, it shall have the rest it did not have on your sabbaths when you were living on it.

“And as for those of you who survive, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a driven leaf shall put them to flight, and they shall flee as one flees from the sword, and they shall fall though no one pursues. They shall stumble over one another, as if to escape a sword, though no one pursues; and you shall have no power to stand against your enemies. You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall devour you. And those of you who survive shall languish in the land of your enemies because of their iniquities; also they shall languish because of the iniquities of their ancestors.

“But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their ancestors, in that they committed treachery against me and, moreover, that they continued hostile to me – so that I, in turn, continued hostile to them and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob; I will remember also my covenant with Isaac and also my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. For the land shall be deserted by them, and enjoy its sabbath years by lying desolate without them, while they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they dared to spurn my ordinances, and they abhorred my statutes. Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, or abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them; for I am Yahweh their God; but I will remember in their favor the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, to be their God: I am Yahweh.”

These are the statutes and ordinances and laws that Yahweh established between himself and the people of Israel on Mount Sinai through Moses. (Leviticus 26:15~45)

As your reward for heeding these decrees and observing them carefully, Yahweh, your God, will keep with you the merciful covenant which he promised on oath to your fathers. (Deuteronomy 7:12)

## And in Joshua:

Yahweh replied to Joshua: “Stand up. Why are you lying prostrate? Israel has sinned: they have violated the covenant which I enjoined on them. They have stealthily taken goods subject to the ban, and have deceitfully put them in their baggage. If the Israelites cannot stand up to their enemies, but must turn their back to them, it is because they are under the ban. I will not remain with you unless you remove from among you whoever has incurred the ban.

“Rise, make the people holy. Tell them to make themselves holy before tomorrow, for Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: You are under the ban, O Israel. You cannot stand up to your enemies until you remove from among you whoever has incurred the ban. In the morning you must present yourselves by tribes. The tribe which Yahweh designates shall come forward by clans; the clan which Yahweh designates shall come forward by families; the family which Yahweh designates shall come forward one by one. He who is designated as having incurred the ban shall be destroyed by fire, with all that is his, because he has violated the covenant of Yahweh and has committed a shameful crime in Israel.”  
(Joshua 7:11~15)

And some notable excerpts from the prophets:

You continue your kindness through a thousand generations; and you repay the fathers’ guilt, even into the lap of their sons who follow them. O God, great and mighty, whose name is Yahweh of hosts, great in counsel, mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of men, giving to each according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds: you have wrought signs and wonders in the land of Egypt and to this day, both in Israel and among all other men, until now you have gained renown.

With strong hand and outstretched arm you brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt amid signs and wonders and great terror. This land you gave them, as you had promised their fathers under oath, a land flowing with milk and honey. They entered and took possession of it, but they did not listen to your voice; by your law they did not live, and what you commanded they failed to do. Hence you let all these evils befall them. See, the siegeworks have arrived at this city to breach it; the city will be handed over to the Chaldeans who are attacking it, amid sword, famine, and pestilence.  
(Jeremiah 33:18~24)

Then I took my staff “Favor” and snapped it asunder, breaking off the covenant which I had made with all the peoples; that day it was broken off. The sheep merchants who were watching me understood that this was the word of Yahweh.  
(Zechariah 11:10~11)

Sometimes I threaten to uproot and tear down and destroy a nation or a kingdom. But if that nation which I have threatened turns from its evil, I also change my mind concerning the evil which I threatened to do.

Sometimes, again, I promise to build up and plant a nation or a kingdom. But if that nation does what is evil in my eyes, refusing to obey my voice, I will change my mind concerning the good with which I promised to bless it.  
(Jeremiah 18:7~10)

For this is what Yahweh says, concerning the house of the king of Judah: Though you are like Gilead to me, like the peak of Lebanon, I will surely turn you into a wasteland, *into* uninhabited cities. And I will prepare destroyers for you, each with his weapons; and they shall cut down your choice ceders, and cast them into the fire. And many nations will pass by this city and ask one another, “Why has Yahweh done this to such a great city?” And they will say, “Because they have forsaken their covenant with Yahweh their God, by worshipping and serving strange gods.”  
(Jeremiah 22:6~9)

And I [Daniel] prayed to Yahweh my God, and confessed, and said, “O Lord, behold, you are the great and awesome God and the fear-inspiring one, who keeps the merciful covenant with those who love him, and with those who keep his commandments...”  
(Daniel 9:4)

For the lips of a priest are to preserve knowledge, and a law is to be sought from his mouth, because he is a messenger of Yahweh of hosts. But all of you—all of you have turned aside from the way; all of you have caused many to falter by your law; all of you have disabled the covenant of Levi, says Yahweh of hosts. And therefore, I have made you contemptible and base before all the people, since all of you do not keep my ways, but show partiality in the law.  
(Malachi 2:7~9)

The days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant and I had to show myself their master, says Yahweh. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.  
(Jeremiah 31:31~33)

So as we can see, covenants can be broken by one party; in these cases it is never God. God only breaks his side of the covenant and retaliates upon the guilty party which has broken the covenant. The promises which he promised them are not in effect when they have broken their side of the covenant, nor is he required to fulfill his part of it any longer.

Now the example of Israel is a bit different, because God sometimes remembers the broken covenant which he has made with them, and makes a new covenant with the nation even though they had been disobedient to the original one; but with individuals, he removes it entirely. But the covenant is never in effect unless the people have upheld their side of the covenant. By the mere fact that a new covenant is necessary, demonstrates decisively that the first was broken, otherwise it would be unnecessary to make a new one.

The marriage covenant is the same thing; in fact, the only passage mentioning anything like a marriage covenant is found in the Prophet Malachi:

This also you do: the altar of Yahweh you cover with tears, weeping and groaning, Because he no longer regards your sacrifice nor accepts it favorably from your hand; and you say, "Why is it?" – Because Yahweh is witness between you and the woman of your youth, with whom you have broken faith though she is your companion, your COVENANT-woman.

Did he not make one being, with flesh and spirit: and what does that one require but godly offspring? You must then safeguard life that is your own, and not break faith with the woman of your youth.

For I hate SENDING-AWAY, says Yahweh, the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with injustice,<sup>20</sup> says Yahweh of hosts; You must then safeguard life that is your own, and not break faith.

You have wearied Yahweh with your words, yet you say, "How have we wearied him?" By your saying, "Every evildoer is good in the sight of Yahweh, And he is pleased with him"; or else, "Where is the just God?"

Even here, the same word is used for the "covenant-woman" (or it can be translated "woman of your covenant") as it is used when God made a covenant with Israel. This shows that the bond God intended between a married man and woman is the same type of bond which God had for Israel and his people. So it is understandable then, that if one party does not keep their part of the covenant, that the covenant is declared broken. And because of this, punishment is able to come upon them.

As we have seen in the teachings of both Jesus and of Paul, there are only a few things which are able to break a marriage covenant. But all of these things are initiated by the actions of the sinful spouse. The woman who committed sexual-immorality is able to be SENT-AWAY from him because she is the guilty one. The marriage is ended when the unbeliever SEPARATES, because the unbeliever is the guilty one. Just like God, the righteous man is not permitted to break his side of the covenant. But the covenant is not in effect once the other party breaks it.

Even covenants made in deceit are required to be upheld by God:

When the news reached the kings west of the Jordan, in the mountain regions and in the foothills, and all along the coast of the Great Sea as far as Lebanon: Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, they all formed an alliance to launch a common attack against Joshua and Israel.

On learning what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, the inhabitants of Gibeon put into effect a device of their own. They chose provisions for a journey, making use of old sacks for their asses, and old wineskins, torn and mended. They wore old, patched sandals and shabby garments; and all the bread they took was dry and crumbly.

Thus they journeyed to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, where they said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant land to propose that you make a covenant with us."

But the men of Israel replied to the Hivites, "You may be living in land that is ours. How, then, can we make a covenant with you?"

But they answered Joshua, "We are your servants."

Then Joshua asked them, "Who are you? Where do you come from?"

They answered him, "Your servants have come from a far-off land, because of the fame of Yahweh, your God. For we have heard reports of all that he did in Egypt and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites beyond the Jordan, Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, who lived in Ashteroth. So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take along provisions for the journey and go to meet them. Say to them: We are your servants; we propose that you make an alliance with us.' This bread of ours was still warm when we brought it from home as provisions the day we left to come to you, but now it is dry and crumbled. Here are our wineskins, which were new when we filled them, but now they are torn. Look at our garments and sandals, which are worn out from the very long journey."

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<sup>20</sup> Greek version reads, "But if you should hate *your wife* and SEND her AWAY, say the Lord God of Israel, then ungodliness shall cover your thoughts, say the Lord Almighty:"



Then the Israelite princes partook of their provisions, without seeking the advice of Yahweh. So Joshua made a covenant with them and entered into an agreement to spare them, which the princes of the community sealed with an oath.

Three days after the agreement was entered into, the Israelites learned that these people were from nearby, and would be living in Israel. The third day on the road, the Israelites came to their cities of Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim, but did not attack them, because the princes of the community had sworn to them by Yahweh, the God of Israel. When the entire community grumbled against the princes, these all remonstrated with the people:

“We have sworn to them by Yahweh, the God of Israel, and so we cannot harm them. Let us therefore spare their lives and so deal with them that we shall not be punished for the oath we have sworn to them.”

Thus the princes recommended that they be let live, as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the entire community; and the community did as the princes advised them.

Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said to them, “Why did you lie to us and say that you lived at a great distance from us, when you will be living in our very midst? For this are you accused: every one of you shall always be a slave (hewers of wood and drawers of water) for the house of my God.”

They answered Joshua, “Your servants were fully informed of how Yahweh, your God, commanded his servant Moses that you be given the entire land and that all its inhabitants be destroyed before you. Since, therefore, at your advance, we were in great fear for our lives, we acted as we did. And now that we are in your power, do with us what you think fit and right.”

Joshua did what he had decided: while he saved them from being killed by the Israelites, at the same time he made them, as they still are, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the community and for the altar of Yahweh, in the place of Yahweh’s choice. (Joshua 9:1~27)

Now if the so-called wedding vows go beyond and above what is expected in a marriage covenant, then God will hold that partner accountable for the fulfilling of those vows. As we have seen above, vows are not to be taken lightly. But usually there is a mutual understanding that this is a covenant. God knows the hearts of both individuals at the time of the marriage to know if there is a covenant or a vow, and what God requires of each individual. God shows no partiality, but he also is not deceived by technicalities, and knows if the individual intended to make a covenant or a vow, regardless of the words that came forth.

But as a final exhortation, even if we do fail and make such vows, let us not make them rashly; in fact, it is wise to make none at all. For example, when Boaz took Ruth, there was nothing more than a simple affirmation, and no contracts or vows:

Boaz then said to the elders and to all the people, “You are witnesses today that I have acquired from Naomi all the holdings of Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon. I also take Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, as my woman, in order to raise up a family for her late man on his estate, so that the name of the departed may not perish among his kinsmen and fellow citizens. Do you witness this today?”

All those at the gate, including the elders, said, “We do so. May Yahweh make this woman come into your house like Rachel and Leah, who between them built up the house of Israel. May you do well in Ephrathah and win fame in Bethlehem. With the offspring Yahweh will give you from this girl, may your house become like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.” (Ruth 4:9~12)

And let us even take our wives without words if necessary, and ask that God would give us the strength and determination to remain faithful, and for the husband to serve his wife as the Christ loves the assembly, and that the wife would have a heart of forgiveness and longsuffering if the husband should fail in this. In all, let us glorify the name of the Christ, whether in word or deed – everything for the sake of his Kingdom and Glory.

Some additional comments on this section, in response to an unfounded criticism that God merely was engaged/betrothed to Israel, and not married to her:

This is the word of Yahweh which came to me:

“Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations. This is what the Lord Yahweh says to Jerusalem: By origin and birth you are of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. As for your birth, the day you were born your navel cord was not cut; you were neither washed with water nor anointed, nor were you rubbed with salt, nor swathed in swaddling clothes. No one looked on you with pity or compassion to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out on the ground as something loathsome, the day you were born. Then I passed by and saw you weltering in your blood. I said to you: Live in your blood and grow like a plant in the field. You grew and developed, you came to the age of puberty; your breasts were formed, your hair had

grown, but you were still stark naked. Again I passed by you and saw that you were now old enough for love. So I spread the corner of my cloak over you to cover your nakedness; I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you; you became mine," says the Lord Yahweh. (Ezekiel 16:1~8, etc.)

And for references on God's divorce of Israel, review the beginning of Part003B, specifically the passages from Jeremiah and Israel.

## PART009: JOSEPH & MARY RELEASE

As we have discussed earlier, some people errantly believe that the exception clauses regarding sexual-immorality (as translated to “fornication” in the KJV and “sexual-immorality” by most a majority of other translations) in Matthew refers to premarital sex which occurred during a betrothal period. As we concluded this is simply not true. The exception clause refers to sexual-immorality which has occurred *during* the marriage. However, some advocates of this view cite the Good-Message according to Matthew as evidence for this:

Now this is how the birth of Jesus the Christ happened. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, *but* before they came together, she was found with child from a holy spirit. But Joseph, her man, since he was a righteous *man* and was unwilling to publicly disgrace her, decided to RELEASE her from *him* quietly. Now this was his intention when, behold, a messenger of *the* Lord appeared to him in a sleeping-vision, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary, your woman. For it is through a holy spirit that this *child* has been conceived in her. Now she will bear a son and you are to call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Now all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.”

Now when Joseph rose from the sleep, he did as the messenger of *the* Lord had commanded him and took his woman. And he did not know her *sexually* until she bore a son, and he called his name Jesus.(Matthew 1:18~19)

The Greek word, MNESTEUO, does, according to Friberg’s Lexicon, mean “woo and win for marriage, ask in marriage, betroth; promise in marriage, become engaged.” It is definitely used in this context for all the rare times it is used (Deuteronomy 20:7, 22:23,25,27,28, 1Maccabees 3:56, Hosea2:21,22, Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:27, 2;5). The word is used both in Matthew and Luke to refer to the period in which Mary was found pregnant.

Now these critics also assert that the word ‘divorce’ (which is the word used in most English translations where we are using the word ‘release’) proves that the Judeans/Jews considered the breaking of a betrothal as serious as the breaking of a marriage, or as the exact same thing.

Using the English word ‘divorce’ does not make this ending of the betrothal into something which was as serious as ending a marriage, but merely shows that RELEASE was term used both for the practice of ending a betrothal and for ending a marriage. In fact, even in modern English this very day, they say that someone has ‘broken up’ whether it is a dating-relationship, an engagement, or a marriage, even though the seriousness of each level of these relationships differs drastically. We should not be trying to interpret this passage based on the limited usage of the English word ‘divorce’, but on the broad sense of the Greek word, which means ‘RELEASE’. (See Part003B for a review of all of the contexts where this word is used elsewhere, including RELEASING prisoners, slaves, etc.)

The critics also assert, that in the Judean custom, the engaged couple was considered “husband and wife” even though they had not come to live together (this can be somewhat misleading when using the English translations of this passage, which render “woman” as “wife” and “man” as “husband”). Because of this, they seek to be contentious about these words.

However, in truth, in Greek (and also Hebrew) there is *not* a separate word for “wife” and “woman” nor for “husband” and “man”. The word is used whether or not the woman or man regardless of their current marital or betrothed state. For a woman to be denoted as being the wife of a man, she would be literally referred to in Greek or Hebrew as “the woman of his”. Therefore, in this particular passage, it is evident that in a betrothal situation, that the woman who was engaged to the man was considered “the woman of his” as well, but not in the sense of the English understanding of the word “wife”. She was simply his engaged woman.

Now these critics further assert, that in this Judean custom, if sexual-immorality was to occur during this engagement period, the man could SEND-AWAY his wife and marry another, based on the fact that they were not actually married yet. Now with this in mind, some believe that the exception clause in Matthew was relating to sexual-immorality of this sort, and that the Good-Message according to Matthew was the only one to include this because his was the only one written to a Judean audience where this practice was occurring.

Now there are penalties for sexual activity during the engagement period according to the Old Covenant law (see Deuteronomy 22:13~30), for in those days, it seems that it was intended for a man to marry only a virgin (or a woman who had been a virgin to her first husband, if it was in a case of remarriage). So, there were penalties for sexual-immorality during both the engagement period *and* the marriage period.

We do know that the Greek word sexual-immorality refers to any and every sort of sexual sin and not limited to premarital sex. The only reason that men seek to limit it to premarital sex is because of the modern day definition of fornication is “sex between two unmarried persons.” Now although the Greek word is defined as all types of sexual-immorality, the English word “fornication” (which is used in some older translations instead of sexual-immortality) and is not a direct equivalent of the Greek word sexual-immorality, actually has to do with having sex with whores:

c.1300, from O.Fr. fornication, from L.L. fornicationem (nom. fornicatio), from fornicari “fornicate,” from L. fornix (gen. fornicis) “brothel,” originally “arch, vaulted chamber” (Roman whores commonly solicited from under the arches of certain buildings), from fornus “oven of arched or domed shape.”

Regardless, the Greek, as reflected in all modern translations, is defined in every single Greek Lexicon as having to do with *every* sort of sexual sin regardless if it is premarital or not. And as can be seen in Jeremiah 3:8, Israel was SENT-AWAY for sexual-immorality (which occurred *after* this allegorical marriage); and the only allowable reason for SENDING-AWAY a woman in Deuteronomy 24, which Jesus restricted in Matthew to sexual-immorality alone, was something which took place *after* the marriage. Also, in the quotations from Hosea, the act of sexual-immorality was committed *after* he was married to Gomer. Also, in the Shepherd of Hermas quotations, it was seen that a married woman was able to commit sexual-immorality, and such an activity was considered to be adultery.

The burden of proof lies on these critics to prove that it *only* refers to the engagement period, and that it does *not* additionally refer to the marriage period, and why sexual-immorality referred to sexual-immorality taking place during both the engagement and the marital period in the Old Covenant (in fact, sexual-immorality in any circumstance regardless of the marital situation of the individual), and why it would suddenly *not* refer to sexual-immorality committed by a marriage individual in the New Testament, when clearly it is used overwhelmingly more often in the context of marriage than an engagement period. And why there is no record or indication anywhere in history that such a change took place. So despite that similar rules applied to the engagement period, there is no evidence that the exception clause is limited to premarital sex, and the evidence beyond all reasonable doubt testifies to the contrary. This is merely a wishful theoretical argument from complete silence.

In fact, by reviewing Deuteronomy 24 and Matthew 19 it can be proven with certainty, that in this context, this particular statement of Jesus involving the exception clause is in fact limited to marriage and that he is *not* referring to any engagement period whatever. For when the Pharisees confront Jesus they say to him:

“Then why did Moses instruct that *the man* give *the woman* a bill of divorce and RELEASE *her*?”

He said to them, “Because of your hardness-of-heart Moses allowed you to RELEASE your women from *you*, but from *the* beginning it was not so. But I say to you, if anyone who RELEASES his woman from *him* (not on *grounds of* sexual-immorality), and marries another he commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:1~12)

Here, the Pharisees are wondering why Moses permitted them to RELEASE (divorce) their wives with a bill of divorce. In the Old Testament, there is no instruction or allusion that a bill of divorce was required to be written to end a betrothal/engagement. The bill of divorce was only commanded for an actual marriage. So when the Pharisees are asking why Moses allowed for RELEASE, they are clearly referring to the passage in Deuteronomy which is speaking of a marriage – therefore, there can be no refuting the fact that the Pharisees are most definitely referring to someone who is already married, *not* someone who is merely engaged. And therefore, Jesus goes on to provide them with the only reason that is permissible for them to RELEASE their wives – that is, any act of sexual-immorality.

## **PART010: HEROD/HERODES REBUKED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST**

I am not entirely sure why this specific event always comes up during discussions on divorce and remarriage; but, it does not seem to prove anything either way, except more evidence that divorce is permitted in certain situations that violate the commandments of God. Nevertheless, let us delve into this situation as well, since it is related in topic:

In the Good-Message according to Matthew it is written:

Now Herod/Herodes had arrested John, bound (him), and put him in prison on account of Herodias, the woman of his brother Philip, for John had said to him, "It is not permissible for you to have her. (Matthew 14:3~4)

And in the Good-Message according to Luke it is written:

Now Herod/Herodes the tetrarch, who had been censured by him because of Herodias, his brother's woman, and because of all the evil deeds Herod/Herodes had committed, added still another to these by *also* putting John in prison. (Luke 3:19~20)

And in the Good-Message according to Mark it is written:

Herod/Herodes was the one who had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the woman of his brother Philip, whom he had married. John had said to Herod/Herodes, "It is not permissible for you to have your brother's woman." Herodias harbored a grudge against him and wanted to kill him but was unable to do so. (Mark 6:17~19)

What is taking place here? Why did John find the need to rebuke Herod/Herodes? For he violated the following from the law:

If a man marries his brother's woman and disgraces his brother in this manner, they shall be childless because of this incest. Be careful to observe all my statutes and all my decrees; otherwise the land where I am bringing you to dwell will vomit you out. (Leviticus 20:21~22)

How so? John criticized the marriage of Herod/Herodes the Tetrarch to Herodias. For Herod/Herodes the Tetrarch did illegally marry Herodias, as Josephus describes in his Antiquities of the Judeans (see Chapter 5:1~2 [109~119]). Herodias was a granddaughter of Herod/Herodes the Great and Miriam the Hasimonean, through Miriam's son Aristobulos. Her grandfather had arranged her marriage while she was still a child to her cousin, his son Herod/Herodes, the one whose mother was daughter of the priest Simon. The arranged marriage apparently was not satisfactory, as Herodias left the man whom she was currently married to and who was still living to marry her husband's step-brother, Herod/Herodes Antipas, the Tetrarch of Galilee. (The reason for this divorce is not known.) Either way, this marriage was rebuked by John the Baptist, only because it was in direct opposition to God's commandments.

For reference purposes, the entire account of this situation, regarding Herodias and John the Immerser/Baptist, according to Josephus will be appended here:

Now about this time, a quarrel arose between Harthah (king of Petra) and Herodes for the following reason:

Herodes the tetrarch had taken Harthah's daughter as his woman, and had now been married to her for a long time. But when he started out for Roma, he lodged with his half-brother Herodes, who was born of a different mother, namely, the daughter of Simon the chief-priest. But he was inflamed with passion for Herodias, who was the woman of this half-brother, and who was the daughter of their brother Aristobulos and sister of Agrippa the Great. When this man brazenly made a suggestion to her about marriage, she accepted and pledged herself to make the transfer to him as soon as he returned from Roma. But it was stipulated that he would be required to cast out Harthah's daughter.

So when this agreement had been made, he set sail for Roma. But on his return, after having transacted his business in Roma, his woman discovered the agreement which he had made with Herodias. And since she had learned about it before he knew that she had discovered everything, she asked him to send her away to Machairus, which was on the boundary between the territory of Harthah and that of Herodes. And thinking that his woman had not perceived anything, Herodes sent her there.

Now some time earlier, she herself had dispatched messengers to Machairus, and to the man who was subject to her father, so that when she arrived, all the preparations for her journey had already been made by the general. And by these means, she was able to start out for Arab as soon as she arrived, being conducted from one general to the next as they provided transport. So she quickly reached her father and told him about Herodes' intentions.

But Harthah made this the start of a quarrel. There was also a dispute about boundaries in the district of Gamala. And they mustered armies on each side, and were now at war. But they dispatched others as generals instead of going themselves. And when they engaged in battle, Herodes' entire army was destroyed by the treachery of some refugees, who had come from the tetrarchy of Philippos and had joined Herodes' army.

Herodes sent an account of these events to Tiberius. But Tiberius was furious that Harthah had begun to make war upon Herodes. And he wrote to Vitellius to declare war upon Harthah; and either to bring Harthah to him in chains, if he should be captured alive, or, if he should be killed, to send him his head. So these were the instructions which Tiberius gave to his general in Syria.

But some of the Judeans thought that the destruction of Herodes' army had come from God, and that it was certainly a very righteous vengeance for his treatment of Johanan, surnamed the Immerser. For Herodes had put him to death, though he was a good man and had exhorted the Judeans to lead virtuous lives, to practice both righteousness towards one another and piety towards God; and while doing these things, to join in immersion. This was a necessary preliminary if immersion was to be acceptable to God: they must not employ it only to gain pardon for whatever sins they had committed, but as a purification of the body implying that the soul was already thoroughly cleansed by righteousness.

And when others also joined the crowds about him, for they were greatly aroused by his words, Herodes became alarmed that Johanan's great persuasiveness with men might lead to a sedition; for they seemed ready to do everything which he advised. Therefore, Herodes decided it would be much better to seize him and destroy him first before any revolution could arise, rather than to repent afterwards when he had fallen into difficulties. And due to Herodes' suspicion, Johanan was sent in bonds to the fortress of Machairus, and there put to death. But the Judeans were convinced that the destruction of this army was sent as Herodes' punishment, since God willed to inflict such a blow on him.

And:

Herodias was married to Herodes, the son of Herod the Great by Miriam the daughter of Simon the high priest. They had a daughter Salome, after whose birth Herodias, taking it into her head to flout the way of our fathers, married Herodes the Tetrarch, her man's brother by the same father, who was tetrarch of Galilee; to do this she parted from a living husband.

## PART011: OPINIONS OF THE FATHERS (TIL ~300AD)

The church fathers are an amazing source of encouraging writings, most, if even uninspired, are incomparably superior than almost any writer (if not all) since their times. But let us remember, that they are *not* prophets and do *not* claim inspiration, but are merely using Jesus and the prophets and the apostles as their source for doctrine, the same as us. However, if we are going to risk quoting them as an authority, let us not pick and choose, but let us give a complete list of *everything* which they taught on the subject of divorce and remarriage. And in the process, let us not wrongly divide and become hypocrites, as many do. For example, someone will quote Tertullian (200AD) to support the subject of veiling, but refuse to quote any of his stances on marriage. Why? Because he believed that even remarriage after death was nothing but “specious adultery”, stating that one marriage was the limit for an each individual no matter the reason, and even wrote a personal letter to his wife instructing her not to remarry after he had died.

And if these who support this prohibition of remarriage will use the church fathers for measuring this doctrine, why do they refuse to use the church fathers elsewhere? Because a great deal of them are contrary to their purposes and doctrines; because they would not want to reveal to you what they really believed elsewhere, hoping that only a few isolated fragments are enough to support their agenda.

And even if a majority did support that remarriage was forbidden except in a case of death, should we let the majority of what the church fathers believe determine our doctrine? If so, we should be practicing infant immersion (baptism); teaching that Christians do not go into the heavens when they immediately die, but instead go to the Netherworld (Hades) to wait for Christ’s return; considering the apocrypha as holy writing (Yes, I mean Tobit, Judith, Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, and even Enoch).

In fact, should we fail to mention that many of the fathers were against a second marriage entirely, even if the other spouse was dead, and even saw not striving for celibacy as a sin? That most of them saw that any reason to get married other than for reproduction was a sin? Yes, even Clement of Alexandria, one of the most legalistic of all the fathers, said it was wrong to have sex while a woman was pregnant, because it is vain and fails its purpose, since she cannot get pregnant twice at the same time; and otherwise the sex would only be for pleasure, something which is forbidden (even Menno Simons did not agree with that!). And these supporters of this doctrine are going to quote Clement of Alexandria as an authority on what the early church believed and then pick-and-choose a couple single fragments to use in opposition to remarriage?

Therefore, it can clearly be seen, that what a majority of the fathers believed have no influence over what doctrines these prohibitors of remarriage believe, but only what these fathers believed on a particular subject which they wish to enforce. And then, they omit all of the church fathers who believed contrary (or omit sentences from those fathers), fabricating a false aura that the entirety of the early church is in support of these doctrines.

So, if we are going to quote what the early church believed on the subject of divorce and remarriage, let us not omit a single thing, so that the readers might rightly divide for themselves, and not be subject to indoctrination on any side.

### **The Shepherd of Hermas**

One of the earliest and most ancient writings outside of the modern collection of the holy writings is the Shepherd of Hermas, a writing which obtained canonical status by many Christians writers between 160~250AD (it was written about 160AD), including Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, and is found in some of the most-ancient bibles (including the Ethiopic and Greek), and is also found among two of the earliest lists of canonical writings.

Many of those who are against remarriage with an exception of death quote a lengthy passage from the Shepherd of Hermas. But before we bring this passage into the discussion, let us first challenge those who would hypocritically bring forth such a quotation as an example of what the early church believed. So, I entreat that anyone who wishes to quote from this passage to first read the entire lengthy writing itself, and then examine themselves.

Do you agree with the entire content of the Shepherd of Hermas? If not, then the entire writing must be rejected. For Hermas claims that this entire writing is a divine revelation given to him by several divine beings, one of who is a shepherding messenger of repentance. So, if one does not agree with the content of this vision, one accuses it of being a writing of deception and blasphemy. Therefore, the author would be a liar and a false prophet, having placed his own words and opinions on equal level with those of Yahweh God. And, then, nothing in this writing would be trusted as authentic.

So anyone who would quote this writing as a source must believe that the entire writing is either a divine revelation, or it is a tremendous nonsensical lie. If a lie, then it is false prophecy and must be tossed into the fiery furnace, for not a single jot or title may be used to support any opinions of the early church whatsoever, nor anyone other than the opinions of a liar. And we know that no liar has eternal life within them, and so this writing would be the product of someone who is not a Christian.

So before using this in defense or opposition of any doctrine, let the reader judge for himself if he believes that the *entire* writing of the Shepherd of Hermas is divinely inspired. Because, if it is, it must be used as though it were the very words of God. If it is a fictitious revelation, then let it not be spoken of ever again.

But, to appease those who do see it as a divine revelation, then let us proceed:

I said to him, "Lord, allow me to inquire a few things of you."<sup>21</sup>

"Ask them," he declared.

"Lord," I declared, "if a man might be having a woman who is faithful in the Lord and *he* should find her in some adultery, is he then sinning if he continues to live with her?"

"As long as *he remains* in his ignorance, he is not sinning," he declared. "But if her man should come-to-know *about* the sin, and the woman may not change-her-mind, *but* instead might be persisting in her sexual-immorality and *yet* the man should continue to be living with her, he becomes liable for himself of her sin, and a companion to her adultery."

I declared, "What then, lord, should the man do, if the woman might be persisting in this passion?"

"Release her from *him*," he declared, "and let the man remain alone. But if he, after he released the woman from *him*, should marry a different *one*, he is being put into an adulterous-condition with *her*."

"Therefore, lord," I declared, "if the woman, after she was released from *her man*, should change-her-mind and should want to return to her own man, will she not be favorably-received?"

"And truly," he declared, "if the man should not favorably-receive her, he is sinning, and he is covering himself with a great sin. Instead, the *one* who has sinned and *who* is changing-their-mind must be favorably-received, but not often. For there is *but* one change-of-mind for the slaves of God. This is why, on account of *bringing her to have this* change-of-mind, the man ought not to marry. This same action applies to *both* a woman and a man.

"Not only is it adultery if someone should stain his flesh," he declared, "*but* instead whoever might be making the likenesses of the nations is also being put into an adulterous-condition with *them*. And so, if anyone<sup>22</sup> might be persisting in works such as these and might not be changing-his-mind, abstain yourself from him, and do not live with him; but if\* you *do* not, you are also a participant in his sins. This is why all of you were ordered to remain by yourselves, whether a man *or* whether a woman *be guilty*; for under such *circumstances* at these, a change-of-mind is possible. Therefore," he declared, "I am not giving an excuse in order that the action may be completed in this way, *but* instead, in order that the *one* who is sinning be sinning no longer. But concerning his former sins: there is One who is able to give a healing,<sup>23</sup> for it is He who has the authority over all *things*."

Then later on:

Once again I asked him, saying, "Lord, since you have tolerated me once, still explain this to me also."

"Speak," he declared.

"Lord," I declared, "if a certain woman, or again a man, should sleep, and one should marry, the one who marries is not sinning, correct?"

"He is not sinning," he declared. "But if he should remain by himself, he secures for himself a superfluous honor and a great glory before the Lord. But even if he should marry, he is not sinning. Therefore, keep your purity and your solemnity and you will live to God. As much as I am uttering to you, and am going to utter to you, observe from now *on*, yes, from the day on which you were committed to me, and I may dwell within your house. Now there

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<sup>21</sup> [9:4] Lat(V) "to say a few words to you."

<sup>22</sup> [9:9] Lat(V) "she"

<sup>23</sup> [9:11] Lat(V) "∴ God, who has power to heal, will give a healing." / Gk(S) omits altogether



will be a remission for your former trespasses, if you should observe my instructions. But everyone will also *have* a remission, if they should observe these instructions and should go in this purity.”

Before delving into a few observations, it is interesting to note, that in a certain publication which sought to use this to support their false doctrine of divorce and remarriage, are mistaken about a few things. First, this publication writes, “[Hermas] even quoted Paul in 1 Cor. 7:11 as support.” This is simply not true. The entire writing claims to be a divine revelation directly from a heavenly messenger. If the author was in fact quoting from Corinthians, then that shows that the author is a liar, and his book is not a divine revelation and must be discarded. Therefore, if that particular publications wishes to hold that opinion, they must reject the entire testimony or recant their incorrect doctrine.

Further, the publication using this writing to support their publication does intentionally omit the following line [the omitted text will be in brackets].

“And truly,” he declared, “if the man should not favorably-receive her, he is sinning, and he is covering himself with a great sin. Instead, the *one* who has sinned and *who* is changing-their-mind must be favorably-received, [but not often. For there is *but* one change-of-mind for the slaves of God.] This is why, on account of *bringing her to have this* change-of-mind, the man ought not to marry. This same action applies to *both* a woman and a man.

Why do they omit this very important phrase completely, yet quote the entire remainder of that lengthy passage? Because it is contrary to their agenda, and instills doubt upon the point they were trying to prove. The omitting of this particular sentence reveals that this publication is making an attempt at indoctrination and propaganda.

But, apart from that, let us keep in mind that this writing itself clarifies that this situation *specifically* refers to a *believing* spouse:

“Lord,” I declared, “if a man might be having a woman **who is faithful** in the Lord and *he* should find her in some adultery, is he then sinning if he continues to live with her?”

So, if the spouse does not have faith in the Lord, then the entire passage here does not apply. Furthermore, the omitted passage would lend credibility that this might have been a rare event, that is, that the wife was committing adultery; but that if she changed her mind and then committed the deed again, that she had no hope of eternal life, for there is one repentance.

However, most of the advocates who quote this passage in support of the early Christian belief of prohibition against remarriage, are also against divorce altogether. But this passage shows that in a case of adultery, that the innocent spouse is *mandated* to divorce the adulterer. This is not the teaching that almost all of the people who believe in the absolute prohibition of divorce/remarriage teach. Therefore, they once again, in quoting this passage, oppose themselves to some extent.

### **Justin Martyr (150 AD)**

Concerning chastity, he uttered such sentiments as these:

“Whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart before God.”

And: “If your right eye offend thee, cut it out; for it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into everlasting fire.”

And: “Whoever marries her who is RELEASED from another man, commits adultery.”

And: “There are some who have been made eunuchs of men, and some who were born eunuchs, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake; but all cannot receive this saying.”

So that all who, by human law, are twice married, are in the eye of our Master sinners, and those who look upon a woman to desire her. For not only he who in act commits adultery is rejected by him, but also he who desires to commit adultery: since not only our works, but also our thoughts, are open before God.

Before accepting this, let us not be hypocritical and withhold other statements of his:

**But whether we marry, it is only that we may bring up children;** or whether we decline marriage, we live continently. And that you may understand that promiscuous intercourse is not one of our mysteries, one of our number a short time ago presented to Felix the governor in Alexandria a petition, craving that permission might be given to a surgeon to make him an eunuch. For the surgeons there said that they were forbidden to do this without the permission of the governor. And when Felix absolutely refused to sign such a permission, the youth remained single, and was satisfied with his own approving conscience, and the approval of those who thought as he did.

And this one fall of David, in the matter of Uriah's woman, proves, sirs," I said, "that the patriarchs had many women, not to commit sexual-immorality, but that a certain dispensation and all mysteries might be accomplished by them; since, if it were allowable to take any woman, or as many women as one chooses, and how he chooses, which the men of your nation do over all the earth, wherever they sojourn, or wherever they have been sent, taking women under the name of marriage, much more would David have been permitted to do this."

And inaccurate statements such as:

The marriages of Jacob were types of what the Christ was about to accomplish. For it was not lawful for Jacob to marry two sisters at once.

And we present one final excerpt from his writings:

There was a certain woman who lived with an unchaste man, she herself having also formerly been unchaste. But when she came to the teachings of the Anointed-One, she was recalled to her senses, and attempted to persuade her man to come to his senses, referring *him* to this teaching and bringing him a message, that there will be a chastisement in a perpetual fire for those who do not live both sound-mindedly and with a correct rationalization. But he, because he continued in *the* same acts of licentiousness, alienated his spouse from him. For she, considering it an impiety to live any longer as the woman of a man (who, contrary to the law of nature and what is righteous, was seeking to try every means of pleasure), wanted to separate their union. And when she was shamed by her *friends*, who counseled her to remain with him in the hope that at some time in the future the man might have a change, she forced herself to stay. But when this man went into Alexandria, a message was brought *to her* that his conduct was worse than ever. *So* she, in order that she might not become a partner *with him* in his unrighteous-deeds and impieties by continuing in their union and *by living with him* and sharing *his* bed, gave him a bill of divorce *and separated from him*.

But this man should have been rejoicing, that she had indeed put an end to those actions (which had she had formerly indifferently committed with the servants and the hirelings, when she rejoiced in *bouts of* drunkenness and every evil), and, that she wished for him to put an end to them too. *However*, when she had been freed from him against his wish, he made an accusation *against her*, saying, that she was a Christian.

And indeed, she issued a petition to the emperor, asking, that, first, she might be permitted to set her household in order, then, when the affairs of her household had been set in order, to defend *herself* against the accusation. And *the emperor* permitted this.

But this former man of hers, indeed, since he was no longer able to say anything *against* her, turned his attacks against a certain Ptolemaios, who had been a teacher of hers in the Christian lessons...

### **Athenagoras (177AD)**

[Nay, you would find many among us, both men and women, growing old unmarried, in hope of living in closer communion with God. But if the remaining in virginity and in the state of a eunuch brings nearer to God, while the indulgence of carnal thought and desire leads away from him, in those cases in which we shun the thoughts, much more do we reject the deeds. For we bestow our attention; not on the study of words, but on the exhibition and teaching of actions, that] a person should either remain as he was born, or be content with one marriage; for a second marriage is only a specious adultery. "For whosoever puts away his wife," says he, "and marries another, commits adultery"; not permitting a man to send her away whose virginity he has brought to an end, nor to marry again. [For he who deprives himself of his first wife, even though she be dead, is a cloaked adulterer, resisting the hand of God, because in the beginning God made one man and one woman, and dissolving the strictest union of flesh with flesh, formed for the intercourse of the race.]

Many prohibitors of "remarriage with an exception of death" like to use this passage of Athenagoras to support their doctrine. But they like to omit the statements before and after this quotation (which I have bracketed above). For if they had retained those words, they would have been against themselves in this matter, for Athenagoras is actually against a second marriage *entirely*, whether by divorce *or death*. This would condemn many of their own congregation. And if so, they should refrain from using such a statement in support of their

doctrine, unless they are willing to quote the entirety of the passage and admit that Athenagoras was teaching that only one marriage was permitted for an entire lifetime, regardless if the other spouse had died. In fact, those who believed that Athenagoras were condemned as heretics by a majority of the other church leaders (Tertullian may be the only exception; for this doctrine originated from the false-prophet Montanus). Read what else this man wrote, in his detest of sexual intercourse altogether:

“You shall not commit adultery,” ever be properly addressed to souls, or even thought of in such a connection, since the difference of male and female does not exist in them, nor any aptitude for sexual intercourse, nor appetite for it; and where there is no appetite, there can be no intercourse; and where there is no intercourse at all, there can be no legitimate intercourse, namely marriage; and where there is no lawful intercourse, neither can there be unlawful desire of, or intercourse with, another man’s wife, namely adultery.

### **Theophilus of Antioch (180 AD)**

And concerning chastity, the holy word teaches us not only not to sin in act, but not even in thought, not even in the heart to think of any evil, nor look on another man’s wife with our eyes to lust after her. Solomon, accordingly, who was a king and a prophet, said: “Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you: make straight paths for your feet.” And the voice of the Good-Message teaches still more urgently concerning chastity, saying: “Whoever looks upon a woman who is not his own woman, to desire her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” And it says, “He who marries her who is RELEASED from her man, commits adultery; and whosoever RELEASED his wife, except for the cause of sexual-immorality, causes her to commit adultery.” Because Solomon says: “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he who goes in to a married woman shall not be innocent.”

### **Irenaeus, disciple of Polycarp, disciple of John the Apostle (185AD)**

And not only so, but the Lord also showed that certain precepts were enacted for them by Moses, on account of their hardness, and because of their unwillingness to be obedient, when, on their saying to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to send away a wife?” He said to them, “Because of the hardness of your hearts he permitted these things to you; but from the beginning it was not so;” thus exculpating Moses as a faithful servant, but acknowledging one God, who from the beginning made male and female, and reproving them as hard-hearted and disobedient.

And therefore it was that they received from Moses this law of divorcement, adapted to their hard nature. But why say I these things concerning the Old Testament? For in the New also are the apostles found doing this very thing, on the ground which has been mentioned, Paul plainly declaring: “But these things I say, not the Lord.”

And again: “But this I speak by permission, not by commandment.”

And again: “Now, as concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.”

But further, in another place he says: “So that the Adversary not tempt you for your incontinence.”

If, therefore, even in the New Testament, the apostles are found granting certain precepts in consideration of human infirmity, because of the incontinence of some, lest such persons, having grown obdurate, and despairing altogether of their salvation, should become apostates from God.

It ought not to be wondered at, if also in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Ten-Commandments, and being restrained by him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love him with the whole heart.

Wherefore both are necessary, since both contribute towards the life of God, our Lord compassionating that erring Samaritan woman—who did not remain with one husband, but committed sexual-immorality by many marriages—by pointing out, and promising to her living water, so that she should thirst no more, nor occupy herself in acquiring the refreshing water obtained by labor, having in herself water springing up to eternal life.

Here Irenaeus quotes the false teachings of a heretic of his days; I state this here to show the opposite of what is being taught in the churches:

He invented a system of certain invisible Aeons, like the followers of Valentinus; while, like Marcion and Saturninus, he declared that marriage was nothing else than corruption and sexual-immorality.

### Clement of Alexandria (153~217 AD)

Our view is that we welcome as blessed the state of abstinence from marriage in those to whom this has been granted by God. We admire monogamy and the high standing of single marriage, holding that we ought to share suffering with another and “bear one another’s burdens,” (*Galatians 6:2*) lest “anyone who thinks he stands securely should himself fall.” (*1 Corinthians 10:12*) It is of second marriage that the apostle says, “If you burn, marry.” (*1 Corinthians 7:9*)

Now that **the writing counsels marriage, and allows no release from the union**, is expressly contained in the law, “You shall not put away your wife, except for the cause of sexual-immorality;” and it regards as sexual-immorality, the marriage of those separated while the other is alive.

A wife is clearly exempt from all suspicion if she refrains from prettifying or adorning herself beyond the proper limit, if she applies herself consistently to prayers and intercessions, if she avoids going out all the time, if she shuts herself off as far as possible from seeing those she ought not to be gazing at, if she puts the care of the home as a more valuable pursuit than gossiping.

It says, “The man who marries a woman who has been put away commits adultery; and if a man puts away his wife, he makes her an adulteress,” [alternate translation “he is committing adultery against her”] that is, he is forcing her into adultery. **And not only is the man who puts her away guilty of this, but the man who takes her, since he provided the woman the opportunity of sinning. For if did he not take her, she would return to her husband.**

What, then, is the law? (*Leviticus 20:10*; *Deuteronomy 22:22*) In order to check the impetuosity of the passions, it commands the adulteress to be put to death, on being convicted of this; and if of priestly family, to be committed to the flames. (*Leviticus 21:9*) And the adulterer also is stoned to death, but not in the same place, that not even their death may be in common. And the law is not at variance with the Good-Message, but agrees with it. How should it be otherwise, one Lord being the author of both?

She who has committed sexual-immorality lives in sin, and is dead to the commandments; but she who has repented, being as it were born again by the change in her life, has a regeneration of life; the old whore being dead, and she who has been regenerated by repentance having come back again to life.

The Spirit testifies to what has been said by Ezekiel, declaring, “I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he should turn.” (*Ezekiel 33:11*)

Now they are stoned to death; as through hardness of heart dead to the law which they believed not. But in the case of a priestess the punishment is increased, because “to whom much is given, from him shall more be required.” (*Luke 12:48*)

If the adulteress and he who committed sexual-immorality with her are punished with death (*Deuteronomy 22:22*), clearly the command which says, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife” (*Exodus 20:17*) speaks of the nations, in order that anyone who, as the law directs, abstains from his neighbor’s wife and from his sister may hear clearly from the Lord, “But I say unto you, You shall not lust.” (*Matthew 5:28?*)

“You have heard that the law commanded, You shall not commit adultery. But I say, You shall not lust.” (*Matthew 5:27~28*) That the law intended husbands to cohabit with their wives with self-control and only for the purpose of begetting children is evident from the prohibition which forbids the unmarried man from having immediate sexual relations with a captive woman. If the man has conceived a desire for her, he is directed to mourn for thirty days while she is to have her hair cut; if after this the desire has not passed off, then they may proceed to beget children, because the appointed period enables the overwhelming impulse to be tested and to become a rational act of will. (*Deuteronomy 21:11~13*)

For this reason you could not point to any place in Scripture where one of the ancients approached a pregnant woman; later, after the child is born and weaned, you might find that marriage relations of husbands and wives were resumed. You will find that Moses’ father kept this principle in mind. After Aaron’s birth three years passed before Moses was born. (*Exodus 7:7*) Again, the tribe of Levi observed this law of nature given by God, although they were fewer in number than any others which came into the promised land. For a tribe does not easily grow to great numbers if their men have intercourse only within the legal marriage relationship and then wait until the end not only of pregnancy but also of breast-feeding.

It was, therefore, reasonable when Moses in his attempt to bring the Jews to continence by degrees, directed that after sexual intercourse they must abstain for three days before they heard the divine words. (*Exodus 19:15*) “We are God’s temples; as the prophet said, I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people,” if our behavior conforms to the commandments both as individuals and also as a society, as the Assembly. “Wherefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and be to you a Father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” (*2 Corinthians 6:16~18*) Is He prophetically commands us to be separate not from those who are married, as they assert, but from the heathen who are still living in immorality, and also from the heretics we have mentioned, as unclean and godless persons.

There are some who say outright that marriage is sexual-immorality and teach that it was introduced by the slanderer.<sup>24</sup>

But if anyone dares to call marriage sexual-immorality, he again falls into blasphemy against the law and the Lord. For as covetousness is called sexual-immorality because it is opposed to contentment with what one possesses, and as idolatry is an abandonment of the one God to embrace many gods, so sexual-immorality is apostasy from single marriage to several. For, as we have remarked, the apostle uses the words sexual-immorality and adultery in three senses. On this matter the prophet says: "You were sold to your sins." (*Isaiah 50:1*) And again: "You were defiled in a foreign land." (*Baruch 3:10*) Here he regards as defilement an association which is bound up with a strange body and not with that which in marriage is bestowed for the purpose of procreation. That is why the apostle also says: "I wish then that the younger women marry, bear children, look after their houses, and give the adversary no occasion for abuse; for some have already turned aside after the Adversary." (*1 Timothy 5:14~15*)

Concerning the words, "Not all can receive this saying. There are some eunuchs who were born so, and some who were made eunuchs by men, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven; let him receive it who can receive it," (*Matthew 19:11~12*) they do not realize the context. After his word about divorce some asked him whether, if that is the position in relation to woman, it is better not to marry; and it was then that the Lord said: "Not all can receive this saying, but those to whom it is granted." (*Matthew 19:11*) What the questioners wanted to know was whether, when a man's wife has been condemned for sexual-immorality, it is allowable for him to marry another.

We too confess that incontinence and sexual-immorality are diabolical passions, but the agreement of a controlled marriage occupies a middle position. If the married couple agree to be continent, it helps them to pray; if they agree with reverence to have sexual relations it leads them to beget children. In fact the right time to procreate is said in Scripture to be knowledge since it says: "And Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore a son, and they called him by the name of Seth. For God has raised up for me other seed instead of Abel." (*Genesis 4:25*) You see who is the object of the blasphemy of those who abuse sober marriage and attribute birth to the slanderer?

The point of the apostle's addition "And then come together again because of the Adversary" (*1 Corinthians 7:5*) is to stop the husband from ever turning aside after other women. A temporary agreement, although for the moment intercourse is not approved, does not mean that the natural instincts are completely removed. Because of them he again restores the marriage bond, not so that husband and wife may be incontinent and fornicate and do the slanderer's work, but to prevent them from falling into incontinence, sexual-immorality, and the slanderer.

Tatianus<sup>25</sup> also separates the old man and the new, but not as we understand it. We agree with him that the law is the old man and the gospel the new, and say the same ourselves, but not in the sense in which he takes it since he would do away with the law as originating from another God. But it is the same man and Lord who makes the old new, by no longer allowing several marriages (for at that time God required it when men had to increase and multiply), and by teaching single marriage for the sake of begetting children and looking after domestic affairs, for which purpose woman was given as a "helpmeet." And if from sympathy the emissary allows a man a second marriage because he cannot control himself and burns with passion, he also does not commit any sin according to the Old Testament (for it was not forbidden by the law), but he does not fulfill the heightened perfection of the good-message ethic. But he gains heavenly glory for himself if he remains as he is, and keeps undefiled the marriage yoke broken by death, and willingly accepts God's purpose for him, by which he has become free from distraction for the service of the Lord.

Sexual-immorality and marriage are therefore different things, as far apart as God is from the slanderer.

It is not marriage that is a sin but sexual-immorality, since otherwise they must say that birth and the creation of birth are sinful.

The task of the law is to deliver us from a dissolute life and all disorderly ways. Its purpose is to lead us from unrighteousness to righteousness, so that it would have us self-controlled in marriage, in begetting children, and in general behavior. The Lord is not "come to destroy the law but to fulfill it." (*Matthew 5:17*) "To fulfill" does not imply that it was defective, but that by his coming the prophecies of the law are accomplished, since before the law the demand for right conduct was proclaimed by the Logos to those also who lived good lives. The multitude who know nothing of continence live for the body, not for the spirit. But the body without spirit is "earth and ashes." Now the Lord judges adultery which is only committed in thought. What then? Is it not possible to remain continent even in the married state and not to seek to "separate what God has joined together" (*Matthew 19:6 / Mark 10:9*) For such is the teaching of those who divide the yoke of marriage, by reason of whom the Christian name is blasphemed. If it is the view of these people who themselves owe their existence to sexual relations that such relations are impure, must not they be impure? But I hold that even the seed of the sanctified is holy.

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<sup>24</sup> He speaks out against a heretical sect.

<sup>25</sup> A false teacher

Therefore there is nothing meritorious about abstinence from marriage unless it arises from love to God. At any rate the blessed Paul says of those who revile marriage: "In the last times some shall depart from the faith, turning to spirits of error and doctrines inspired by daemons, forbidding to marry and commanding abstinence from food." (*1 Timothy 4:1,3*) And again he says: "Let no one disqualify you by demanding self-imposed ascetic practices and severe treatment of the body." (*Colossians 2:18*) And the same writer has this also: "Are you bound to a woman? Do not seek a release? Are you released from a woman? Do not seek to find one." (*1 Corinthians 7:27*) And again: "Let every man have his own woman lest the Adversary tempt you." (*1 Corinthians 7:2,5*)

How then? Did not the righteous in ancient times partake of what God made with thanksgiving? Some begat children and lived chastely in the married state.

Our general argument concerning marriage, food, and other matters, may proceed to show that we should do nothing from desire. Our will is to be directed only towards that which is necessary. For we are children not of desire but of will. A man who marries for the sake of begetting children must practice continence so that it is not desire he feels for his wife, whom he ought to love, and that he may beget children with a chaste and controlled will. For we have learnt not to "have thought for the flesh to fulfill its desires." We are to "walk honorably as in the way", that is in Christ and in the enlightened conduct of the Lord's way, "not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and lasciviousness, not in strife and envy." (*Romans 13:12~14*)

However, one ought to consider continence not merely in relation to one form of it, that is, sexual relations, but in relation to all the other indulgences for which the soul craves when it is ill content with what is necessary and seeks for luxury. It is continence to despise money, softness, property, to hold in small esteem outward appearance, to control one's tongue, to master evil thoughts. In the past certain heavenly messengers became incontinent and were seized by desire so that they fell from heaven to earth. (*Genesis 6:1~4 / Enoch*)

For by this saying also he indicates that whether we are continent or married is a matter for our free choice and that there is no absolute prohibition which would impose continence upon us as a necessity. And he further makes it clear that marriage is co-operation with the work of creation.

Therefore a man ought not to think that marriage on rational principles is a sin, supposing that he does not look on the bringing up of children as being bitter (on the contrary to many childlessness is most grievous); but if a man regards the rearing of children as bitter because it distracts him from the things of God on account of the time it takes up, he may yet desire to marry because he does not take easily to a bachelor's life. What he wants to do is not harmful if it is done with self-control; and each one of us is master of his own will in deciding whether to beget children. But I am aware that because of marriage there are some who have kept clear of it and against the principles of holy knowledge have lapsed into hatred of humanity so that the spirit of charity has departed from them. There are others who have become absorbed by marriage and fulfill their desires in the indulgence which the law permits, and, as the prophet says, "have become like beasts."

Whether a man becomes a celibate or whether he joins himself in marriage with a woman for the sake of having children, his purpose ought to be to remain unyielding to what is inferior. If he can live a life of intense devotion, he will gain to himself great merit with God, since his continence is both pure and reasonable. But if he goes beyond the rule he has chosen to gain greater glory, there is a danger that he may lose hope. Both celibacy and marriage have their own different forms of service and ministry to the Lord; I have in mind the caring for one's wife and children. For it seems that the particular characteristic of the married state is that it gives the man who desires a perfect marriage an opportunity to take responsibility for everything in the home which he shares with his wife.

One should not suppose, as some have expounded the text, that when Paul says the wife is bound to her husband (*1 Corinthians 7:39*) he means that flesh is involved in corruption. He is attacking the notion of the godless men who attribute the invention of marriage directly to the slanderer, a notion which dangerously blasphemes the lawgiver.

But it is the same man and Lord who makes the old new, by no longer allowing several marriages (for at that time God required it when men had to increase and multiply), and by teaching single marriage for the sake of begetting children and looking after domestic affairs, for which purpose woman was given as a "helpmeet." (*Genesis 2:18*) And if from sympathy the apostle allows a man a second marriage because he cannot control himself and burns with passion, he also does not commit any sin according to the Old Testament (for it was not forbidden by the Law), but he does not fulfil the heightened perfection of the gospel ethic. But he gains heavenly glory for himself if he remains as he is, and keeps undefiled the marriage yoke broken by death, and willingly accepts God's purpose for him, by which he has become free from distraction for the service of the Lord.

How then can marriage be a state only intended for ancient times and an invention of the law, and marriage on Christian principles of a different nature, if we hold that the Old and the New Testaments proclaim the same God?

Accordingly the apostle rightly says, "It is better to marry than to burn," (*1 Corinthians 7:9*) that the husband may give to the wife her due he wife to the husband, and that they should not deprive another of help given by divine providence for the

purpose of generation. “But whosoever does not hate father or mother or wife or children,” they quote, “cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26) This a command to hate one’s family. For he says: “Honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you.” (Exodus 20:12) But what he means is this: Do not let yourself be led astray by irrational impulses and have nothing to do with the city customs. For a household consists of a family, and cities of households, as Paul also says of those who are absorbed in marriage that they aim to “please the world.” (1 Corinthians 7:33) Again the Lord says, “Let not the married person seek a divorce, nor the unmarried person marriage,” (1 Corinthians 7:11,27) that is, he who has confessed his intention of being celibate, let him remain unmarried.

Marriage is the first conjunction of man and woman for the procreation of legitimate children.

We ask if we ought to marry; which is one of the points, which are said to be relative. For some must marry, and a man must be in some condition, and he must marry some one in some condition. For every one is not to marry, nor always. But there is a time in which it is suitable, and a person for whom it is suitable, and an age up to which it is suitable. Neither ought every one to take a wife, nor is it every woman one is to take, nor always, nor in every way, nor inconsiderately. But only he who is in certain circumstances, and such an one and at such time as is requisite, and for the sake of children, and one who is in every respect similar, and who does not by force or compulsion love the husband who loves her. Hence Abraham, regarding his wife as a sister, says, “She is my sister by my father, but not by my mother; and she became my wife,” teaching us that children of the same mothers ought not to enter into matrimony.

It is not only sexual-immorality, but also the giving in marriage prematurely, that is called sexual-immorality; when, so to speak, one not of ripe age is given to a husband, either of her own accord or by her parents.

### **TERTULLIAN (c. 160~220AD)**

Now we come to Tertullian, who everyone likes to quote as an authority of what the ancient church believed, but refuse to quote his viewpoints on divorce and remarriage. Why? Because in his early years he approved of divorce for the cause of sexual-immorality, but in his later years, once he joined the cult of the false-prophet Montanist, he was even against remarriage after the death of the first spouse, going as far as to call such an action adultery! Therefore, if we are going to form an opinion on what the ancient fathers believed regarding this subject, let us not withhold a single word.

### **Assumed Pre-Montanist Period (*before* Tertullian became a heretic and estranged from the church):**

Most men simply regard idolatry as to be interpreted in these senses alone, viz.: if one burn incense, or immolate *a victim*, or give a sacrificial banquet, or be bound to some sacred functions or priesthoods; just as if one were to regard adultery as to be accounted in kisses, and in embraces, and in actual fleshly contact; or murder as to be reckoned only in the shedding forth of blood, and in the actual taking away of life. But how far wider an extent the Lord assigns to those crimes we are sure: when He defines adultery *to consist* even in concupiscence, “if one shall have cast an eye lustfully on,” and stirred his soul with immodest commotion; when He judges murder *to consist* even in a word of curse or of reproach, and in every impulse of anger, and in the neglect of charity toward a brother just as John teaches, that he who hates his brother is a murderer.

But Christ prohibits divorce, saying, “Whoever RELEASES his woman and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is RELEASED from her man, also commits adultery.” In order to forbid divorce, He makes it unlawful to marry a woman that has been released. Moses, however, permitted repudiation in Deuteronomy: “When a man hath taken a woman, and has lived with her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he has found unchastity in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand, and send her away out of his house.” Therefore, you see, that there is a difference between the law and the good-message—between Moses and Christ? To be sure there is! But then you have rejected that other good-message which witnesses to the same verity and the same Christ. There, while prohibiting divorce, He has given us a solution of this special question respecting it: “Moses,” says He, “because of the hardness of your hearts, allowed you to give a bill of divorcement; but from the beginning it was not so” for this reason, indeed, because He who had “made them male and female” had likewise said, “The two shall become one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, a human must not separate.” Now, by this answer of his (to the Pharisees), he both sanctioned the provision of Moses, who was his own (servant), and restored to its primitive purpose the institution of the Creator, whose Christ he was. Since, however, you are to be refuted out of the Scriptures which you have received, I will meet you on your own ground, as if your Christ were mine. Therefore, when he prohibited divorce, and yet at the same time represented the Father, even Him who united male and female, must He not have rather exculpated than abolished the enactment of Moses? But, observe, if this Christ be yours when he teaches contrary to Moses and the Creator, on the same principle must he be mine if I can show that His teaching is not contrary to them. I maintain, then, that there was a condition in the prohibition which he now made of

divorce; the case supposed being, that a man releases his wife for the express purpose of marrying another. His words are: "Whoever RELEASES his woman, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is RELEASED from her husband, also commits adultery. "RELEASED FROM," that is, for the reason wherefore a woman ought not to be RELEASED, that another wife may be obtained. For he who marries a woman who is unlawfully put away is as much of an adulterer as the man who marries one who is UNRELEASED. **Permanent is the marriage which is not rightly dissolved. Therefore, to marry while the marriage is undissolved, is to commit adultery. Therefore, since his prohibition of RELEASING was a conditional one, he did not prohibit it absolutely; and what he did not absolutely forbid, that he permitted on some occasions, when there is an absence of the cause why he gave his prohibition.**

In very deed, his teaching is not contrary to Moses, whose precept he partially defends, I will not say confirms. However, if you deny that divorce is in any way permitted by Christ, how is it that you on your side destroy marriage, not uniting man and woman, nor admitting to the mystery of immersion and of the thank-offering those who have been united in marriage anywhere else, unless they should agree together to repudiate the fruit of their marriage, and so the very Creator himself? Well, then, what is a man to do in your sect, if his woman commits adultery? Shall he keep her? But your own apostle, you know, does not permit "the members of Christ to be joined to a whore."

**Therefore, RELEASING when justly deserved, has even in the Christ a defender.** So that Moses for the future must be considered as being confirmed by Him, since he prohibits RELEASING in the same sense as Christ does, if any unchastity should occur in the woman. For in the Good-Message of Matthew he says, "Whoever RELEASES his wife from *him*, except for the cause of sexual-immorality, causes her to commit adultery." He also is deemed equally guilty of adultery, who marries a woman put away by her man. **However, the Creator, except on account of adultery, does not SEPARATE what he himself joined together,** the same Moses in another passage enacting that he who had married after violence to a damsel, should thenceforth not have it in his power to RELEASE his woman.

Now, if a compulsory marriage contracted after violence shall be permanent, how much rather shall a voluntary one, the result of agreement! This has the sanction of the prophet: "You shall not forsake the wife of your youth." Thus you have Christ following spontaneously the tracks of the Creator everywhere, **both in permitting RELEASING and in forbidding it.** You find him also protecting marriage, in whatever direction you try to escape. **He prohibits RELEASING when he will have the marriage inviolable; he permits RELEASING when the marriage is spotted with unfaithfulness.** You should blush when you refuse to unite those whom even your Christ has united; and repeat the blush when you disunite them without the good reason why your Christ would have them separated. I have now to show whence the Lord derived this decision of His, and to what end He directed it.

It will thus become more fully evident that His object was not the abolition of the Mosaic ordinance by any suddenly devised proposal of divorce; because it was not suddenly proposed, but had its root in the previously mentioned John. For John reproved Herod, because he had illegally married the wife of his deceased brother, who had a daughter by her (a union which the law permitted only on the one occasion of the brother dying childless, when it even prescribed such a marriage, in order that by his own brother, and from his own wife, seed might be reckoned to the deceased husband), and was in consequence cast into prison, and finally, by the same Herod, was even put to death. The Lord having therefore made mention of John, and of course of the occurrence of his death, hurled His censure against Herod in the form of unlawful marriages and of adultery, pronouncing as an adulterer even the man who married a woman that had been put away from her husband. This he said in order the more severely to load Herod with guilt, who had taken his brother's wife, after she had been loosed from her husband not less by death than by divorce; who had been impelled thereto by his lust, not by the prescription of the (Levirate) law—for, as his brother had left a daughter, the marriage with the widow could not be lawful on that very account; and who, when the prophet asserted against him the law, had therefore put him to death.

That we should "abstain from sexual-immorality," not from marriage; that every one "should know how to possess his vessel in honor." In what way? "Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the nations." However, concupiscence is not ascribed to marriage even among the nations, but to extravagant, unnatural, and enormous sins.

Now, if any limitation is set to marrying—such as the spiritual rule, which prescribes but one marriage under the Christian obedience, maintained by the authority of the Paraclete, it will be His prerogative to fix the limit Who had once been diffuse in His permission; His to gather, Who once scattered; His to cut down the tree, Who planted it; His to reap the harvest, Who sowed the seed; His to declare, "It remains that those who have wives be as though they had none," Who once said, "Be fruitful, and multiply;" His the end to Whom belonged the beginning. Nevertheless, the tree is not cut down as if it deserved blame; nor is the corn reaped, as if it were to be condemned,—but simply because their time is come. So likewise the state of matrimony does not require the hook and scythe of sanctity, as if it were evil; but as being ripe for its discharge, and in readiness for that sanctity which will in the long run bring it a plenteous crop by its reaping.

Marriage, too, decks the bridegroom with its crown; and therefore we will not have heathen brides, lest they seduce us even to the idolatry with which among them marriage is initiated. You have the law from the patriarchs indeed; you have the apostle enjoining people to marry in the Lord.



We must now encounter the subject of marriage, which Marcion,<sup>26</sup> more continent than the apostle, prohibits. For the apostle, although preferring the grace of continence, yet permits the contraction of marriage and the enjoyment of it, and advises the continuance therein rather than the dissolution thereof. Christ plainly forbids divorce, Moses unquestionably permits it.<sup>27</sup>

Now, when Marcion wholly prohibits all carnal intercourse to the faithful (for we will say nothing about his catechumens), and when he prescribes repudiation of all engagements before marriage, whose teaching does he follow, that of Moses or of Christ? **Even Christ, however, when he here commands “the wife not to SEPARATE from her man, or if she does SEPARATE, to remain unmarried or be reconciled to the man,” both permitted RELEASING, which indeed he never absolutely prohibited, and confirmed *the sanctity* of marriage, by first forbidding its dissolution; and, if SEPARATION had taken place, by wishing the marriage bond to be resumed by reconciliation.**

But what reasons does *the apostle* allege for continence? Because “the time is short.” I had almost thought it was because in Christ there was another god! And yet He from whom emanates this shortness of the time, will also send what suits the said brevity. No one makes provision for the time which is another’s. You degrade your god, O Marcion, when you make him circumscribed at all by the Creator’s time. Assuredly also, when *the apostle* rules that marriage should be “only in the Lord,” that no Christian should intermarry with a heathen, he maintains a law of the Creator, who everywhere prohibits marriage with strangers.

## Writings from the assumed Montanist period (*after he became a heretic*):

Having defined the distinction (between the kinds) of repentance, we are by this time, then, able to return to the assessment of the sins—whether they be such as can obtain pardon at the hand of men. In the first place, (as for the fact) that we call adultery likewise sexual-immorality, usage requires (us so to do). “Faith,” withal, has a familiar acquaintance with sundry appellations. So, in every one of our little works, we carefully guard usage. Besides, if I shall say “adulterium,” and if “stuprum,” the indictment of contamination of the flesh will be one and the same. For it makes no difference whether a man assault another’s bride or widow, provided it be not his own “female;” just as there is no difference made by places—whether it be in chambers or in towers that modesty is massacred. Every homicide, even outside a wood, is banditry. So, too, whoever enjoys any other than nuptial intercourse, in whatever place, and in the person of whatever woman, makes himself guilty of adultery and sexual-immorality. Accordingly, among us, secret connections as well—connections, that is, not first professed in presence of the Assembly—run risk of being judged akin to adultery and sexual-immorality; nor must we let them, if thereafter woven together by the covering of marriage, elude the charge. But all the other frenzies of passions—impious both toward the bodies and toward the sexes—beyond the laws of nature, we banish not only from the threshold, but from all shelter of the Assembly, because they are not sins, but monstrosities.

I admit that the sinner portrayed in each parable is one who is already a Christian; yet not that on this account must he be affirmed to be such an one as can be restored, through repentance, from the crime of adultery and sexual-immorality.

It is not the part of good and solid faith to refer all things to the will of God in such a manner as that; and that each individual should so flatter himself by saying that “nothing is done without His permission,” as to make us fail to understand that there is a something in our own power. Else every sin will be excused if we persist in contending that nothing is done by us without the will of God; and that definition will go to the destruction of (our) whole discipline, (nay), even of God Himself; if either He produce by His own will things which He wills not, or else (if) there is nothing which God wills not.

Suffer me to have touched upon these considerations, in order that I may now follow the course of the apostle’s words. But, in the first place, I shall not be thought irreligious if I remark on what he himself professes; (namely), that he has introduced all *indulgence* in regard to marriage from his own (judgment)—that is, from human sense, not from divine prescript. For, withal, when he has laid down the definitive rule with reference to “the widowed and the unwedded,” that they are to “marry if they cannot contain,” because “better it is to marry than to burn,” he turns round to the other class, and says: “But to the wedded I make official declaration—not indeed I, but the Lord.” Thus he shows, by the transfer of his own personality to the Lord, that what he had said above he had pronounced not in the Lord’s person, but in his own: “Better it is to marry than to burn.” Now, although that expression pertain to such as *are “apprehended” by the faith* in an unwedded or widowed condition, still, inasmuch as all cling to it with a view to license in the way of marrying, I should wish to give a thorough treatment to the inquiry what kind of good he is pointing out which is “better than” a penalty; which cannot seem good but by comparison with something very bad; so that the reason why “marrying” is good, is that “burning” is worse. “Good” is worthy of the name if it continue to keep that name without comparison, I say not with evil, but even with some second good; so that, even if it *is* compared to some other good, and is by some other cast into the shade, it do nevertheless remain in possession of the name “good.” If, however, it is the nature of an *evil* which is the means which compels the predicating “good,” it is not so much “good” as a species of inferior evil, which by being obscured by a superior evil is driven to the name of good. Take away, in short, the condition of comparison, so as not to say, “Better it is to marry than to burn;” and I question whether you will have the hardihood to say, “Better it is to marry,” not adding what that is which is better.

<sup>26</sup> A chief heretic

<sup>27</sup> I noticed that most people in favor of trying to support the early churches belief against divorce/remarriage stop the quotation at this point.

Therefore what is not *better*, of course is not *good* either; inasmuch as you have taken away and removed the condition of comparison, which, while it makes the thing “better,” so compels it to be regarded as “good.” “Better it is to marry than to burn” is to be understood in the same way as, “Better it is to lack one eye than two:” if, however, you withdraw from the comparison, it will not be “better” to have one eye, inasmuch as it is not “good” either. Let none therefore catch at a defense (of marriage) from this paragraph, which properly refers to “the unmarried and widows,” for whom no (matrimonial) conjunction is yet reckoned: although I hope I have shown that even such must understand the nature of the *permission*.

However, touching second marriage, we know plainly that the apostle has pronounced: “You have been released from a wife; do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you will not sin.” Still, as in the former case, he has introduced the order of this discourse too from his personal suggestion, not from a divine precept. But there is a wide difference between a precept of God and a suggestion of man. “Precept of the Lord,” says he, “I have not; but I give advice, as having obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.” In fact, neither in the Good-Message nor in Paul’s own Epistles will you find a precept of God as the source whence repetition of marriage is permitted.

I grant that it will, if there still remain types—sacraments of something future—for your nuptials to figure; or if even now there is room for that command, “Grow and multiply;” that is, if no other command has yet supervened: “The time is already wound up; it remains that both they who have wives act as if they had not:” for, of course, by enjoining continence, and restraining concubinance, the seminary of our race, (this latter command) has abolished that “Grow and multiply.”

Apostles, withal, had a “license” to marry, and lead wives about (with them). They had a “license,” too, to “live by the Good-Message.” But he who, when occasion required, “did not use this right,” provokes us to imitate his own example; teaching us that our probation consists in that wherein “license” has laid the groundwork for the experimental proof of abstinence.

If we look deeply into his meanings, and interpret them, second marriage will have to be termed no other than a species of sexual-immorality. For, since he says that married persons make this their solicitude, “how to please one another” (not, of course, *morally*, for a good solicitude he would not impugn); and (since), he wishes them to be understood to be solicitous about dress, and ornament, and every kind of personal attraction, with a view to increasing their power of allurement; (since), moreover, to please by personal beauty and dress is the genius of carnal concupiscence, which again is the cause of sexual-immorality: pray, does second marriage seem to you to border upon sexual-immorality, since in it are detected those ingredients which are appropriate to sexual-immorality? The Lord Himself said, “Whoever has seen a woman with a view to concupiscence has already violated her in his heart.” But has he who has seen her with a view to marriage done so less or more? What if he have even married her?—which he would not do had he not desired her with a view to marriage, and seen her with a view to concupiscence; unless it is possible for a wife to be married whom you have not seen or desired. I grant it makes a wide difference whether a married man or an unmarried desire another woman. Every woman, (however), even to an unmarried man, is “another,” so long as she belongs to some one else; nor yet is the mean through which she becomes a married woman any other than that through which withal (she becomes) an adulteress. It is laws which seem to make the difference between marriage and sexual-immorality; through diversity of illicitness, not through the nature of the thing itself. Besides, what is the thing which takes place in all men and women to produce marriage and sexual-immorality? Commixture of the flesh, of course; the concupiscence whereof the Lord put on the same footing with sexual-immorality. “Then,” says (some one), “are you by this time destroying first—that is, single—marriage too?” And (if so) not without reason; inasmuch as it, too, consists of that which is the essence of sexual-immorality. Accordingly, the best thing for a man is not to touch a woman; and accordingly the virgin’s is the principal sanctity, because it is free from affinity with sexual-immorality. And since these considerations may be advanced, even in the case of first and single marriage, to forward the cause of continence, how much more will they afford a prejudgment for refusing second marriage? Be thankful if God has once for all granted you indulgence to marry. Thankful, moreover, you will be if you know not that He has granted you that indulgence a second time. But you abuse indulgence if you avail yourself of it without moderation. Moderation is understood (to be derived) from *modus*, a limit. It does not suffice you to have fallen back, by marrying, from that highest grade of immaculate virginity; but you roll yourself down into yet a third, and into a fourth, and perhaps into more, after you have failed to be continent in the second stage; inasmuch as he who has treated about contracting second marriages has not willed to prohibit even more. Marry we, therefore, daily. And marrying, let us be overtaken by the last day, like Sodom and Gomorrah; that day when the “woe” pronounced over “such as are with child and giving suck” shall be fulfilled, that is, over the married and the incontinent: for from marriage result wombs, and breasts, and infants. And when an end of marrying? I believe after the end of living!

If this dulling (of the spiritual faculties), even when the carnal nature is allowed room for exercise in first marriage, averts the Holy Spirit; how much more when it is brought into play in second marriage!

For (in that case) the shame is double; inasmuch as, in second marriage, two wives beset the same husband—one in spirit, one in flesh. For the first wife you cannot hate, for whom you retain an even more religious affection, as being already received into the Lord’s presence; for whose spirit you make request; for whom you render annual oblations. Will you stand, then, before the Lord with as many wives as you commemorate in prayer; and will you offer for two; and will you commend those two (to God) by the ministry of a priest ordained (to his sacred office) on the score of monogamy, or else consecrated

(thereto) on the score even of virginity, surrounded by widows married but to one husband? And will your sacrifice ascend with unabashed front, and—among all the other (graces) of a good mind—will you request for yourself and for your wife chastity?

And, of course, the Epistle of Barnabas is more generally received among the assemblies than that apocryphal “Shepherd” of adulterers.

He who learnt this *from* apostles, and taught it *with* apostles, never knew of any “second repentance” promised by apostles to the adulterer and fornicator.

For if any wavering of the flesh, any distraction of the mind, any wandering of the eye, shall chance to shake you down from your equipoise, “God is good.” To His own (children), not to heathens, He opens His bosom: a second repentance will await you; you will again, from being an adulterer, be a Christian! These (pleas) you (will urge) to me, most benignant interpreter of God. But I would yield my ground to you, if the scripture of “the Shepherd,” which is the only one which favours adulterers, had deserved to find a place in the Divine canon; if it had not been habitually judged by every council of assemblies (even of your own) among apocryphal and false (writings); itself adulterous, and hence a patroness of its comrades; from which in other respects, too, you derive initiation; to which, perchance, that “Shepherd,” will play the patron whom you depict upon your (sacramental) chalice, (depict, I say, as) himself withal a prostitute of the Christian sacrament, (and hence) worthily both the idol of drunkenness, and the brize of adultery by which the chalice will quickly be followed, (a chalice) from which you sip nothing more readily than (the flavor of) the “ewe” of (your) second repentance! I, however, imbibe the Scriptures of that Shepherd who cannot be broken.

But by us precaution is thus also taken against the greatest, or, (if you will), highest (crimes, viz..) in that it is not permitted, after believing, to know even a second marriage, differentiated though it be, to be sure, from the work of adultery and sexual-immorality by the nuptial and dotal tablets: and accordingly, with the utmost strictness, we excommunicate digamists, as bringing infamy upon the Paraclete by the irregularity of their discipline. The self-same liminal limit we fix for adulterers also and fornicators; dooming them to pour forth tears barren of peace, and to regain from the Assembly no ampler return than the publication of their disgrace.

But, for the adulterer and fornicator, who is there who has not pronounced him to be dead immediately upon commission of the crime? With what face will you restore to the flock one who is dead, on the authority of that parable which recalls a sheep not dead?

Else, if sexual-immorality and adultery may by possibility be anew admissible, Christ withal will be able anew to die.

Who “seduces with empty words” but he who states in a public harangue that adultery is remissible?

According to this difference of sins, the condition of repentance also is discriminated. There will be a condition which may possibly obtain pardon,—in the case, namely, of a remissible sin: there will be a condition which can by no means obtain it,—in the case, namely, of an irremissible sin. And it remains to examine specially, with regard to the position of adultery and sexual-immorality, to which class of sins they ought to be assigned.

But if the view with which the opposite party is eager to mould the ewe, and the drachma, and the voluptuousness of the son to the shape of the Christian sinner, is that they may endow adultery and sexual-immorality with (the gift of) repentance; it will be fitting either that all other crimes equally capital should be conceded remissible, or else that their peers, adultery and sexual-immorality, should be retained inconcessible.

## **FROM TERTULLIAN’S TREATISE ON MONOGAMY:**

Since this is a rather long treatise. I will cover the most important excerpts for the first half, but will include a majority of the second half.

Heretics do away with marriages; Psychics accumulate them. The former marry not even once; the latter not only once.

But (as for the question) whether monogamy be “burdensome,” let the still shameless “infirmity of the flesh” look to that: let us meantime come to an agreement as to whether it be “novel.” This (even) broader assertion we make: that even if the Paraclete had in this our day definitely prescribed a virginity or continence total and absolute, so as not to permit the heat of the flesh to foam itself down even in single marriage, even thus He would seem to be introducing nothing of “novelty;” seeing that the Lord Himself opens “the kingdoms of the heavens” to “eunuchs,” as being Himself, withal, a virgin; to whom looking, the apostle also—himself too for this reason abstinent—gives the preference to continence. (“Yes”), you say, “but

saving the law of marriage.” Saving it, plainly, and we will see under what limitations; nevertheless already destroying it, in so far as he gives the preference to continence. “Good,” he says, “(it is) for a man not to have contact with a woman.” It follows that it is evil to have contact with her; for nothing is contrary to good except evil. And accordingly (he says), “It remains, that both they who have wives so be as if they have not,” that it may be the more binding on them who have not to abstain from having them. He renders reasons, likewise, for so advising: that the unmarried think about God, but the married about how, in (their) marriage, each may please his (partner).

And I may contend, that what is permitted is not absolutely good. For what is absolutely good is not permitted, but needs no asking to make it lawful. Permission has its cause sometimes even in necessity. Finally, in this case, there is no volition on the part of him who permits marriage. For his volition points another way. “I will,” he says, “that you all so be as I too (am).” And when he shows that (so to abide) is “better,” what, pray, does he demonstrate himself to “will,” but what he has premised is “better?” And thus, if he permits something other than what he has “willed”—permitted not voluntarily, but of necessity—he shows that what he has unwillingly granted as an indulgence is not absolutely good.

Finally, when he says, “Better it is to marry than to burn,” what sort of good must that be understood to be which is better than a penalty? which cannot seem “better” except when compared to a thing very bad? “Good” is that which keeps this name per se; without comparison—I say not with an evil, but even—with some other good: so that, even if it be compared to and overshadowed by another good, it nevertheless remains in (possession of) the name of good. If, on the other hand, comparison with evil is the mean which obliges it to be called good; it is not so much “good” as a species of inferior evil, which, when obscured by a higher evil, is driven to the name of good. Take away, in short, the condition, so as not to say, “Better it is to marry than to burn;” and I question whether you will have the hardihood to say, “Better (it is) to marry,” not adding than what it is better. This done, then, it becomes not “better;” and while not “better,” not “good” either, the condition being taken away which, while making it “better” than another thing, in that sense obliges it to be considered “good.” Better it is to lose one eye than two. If, however, you withdraw from the comparison of either evil, it will not be better to have one eye, because it is not even good.

But, moreover, in the introductory speech which preceded the work itself, He said, “It is not good for the man that he be alone; let us make an help-meet for him.” For He would have said “helpers” if He had destined him to have more wives (than one). He added, too, a law concerning the future; if, that is, (the words) “And two shall be (made) into one flesh”—not three, nor more; else they would be no more “two” if (there were) more—were prophetically uttered. The law stood (firm). In short, the unity of marriage lasted to the very end in the case of the authors of our race; not because there were no other women, but because the reason why there were none was that the first-fruits of the race might not be contaminated by a double marriage.

But again: the reformation of the second human race is traced from monogamy as its mother. Once more, “two (joined) into one flesh” undertake (the duty of) “growing and multiplying;”—Noah, (namely), and his wife, and their sons, in single marriage. Even in the very animals monogamy is recognized, for fear that even beasts should be born of adultery. “Out of all beasts,” said (God), “out of all flesh, two shalt thou lead into the ark, that they may live with thee, male and female: they shall be (taken) from all flying animals according to (their) kind, and from all creepers of the earth according to their kind; two out of all shall enter unto thee, male and female.” In the same formula, too, He orders sets of sevens, made up of pairs, to be gathered to him, consisting of male and female—one male and one female. What more shall I say? Even unclean birds were not allowed to enter with two females each.

Thus far for the testimony of things primordial, and the sanction of our origin, and the prejudgment of the divine institution, which of course is a law, not (merely) a memorial inasmuch as, if it was “so done from the beginning,” we find ourselves directed to the beginning by Christ: just as, in the question of divorce, by saying that that had been permitted by Moses on account of their hard-heartedness but from the beginning it had not been so, He doubtless recalls to “the beginning” the (law of) the individuality of marriage. And accordingly, those whom God “from the beginning” conjoined, “two into one flesh,” man shall not at the present day separate.

And so truly in Christ are all things recalled to “the beginning,” that even faith returns from circumcision to the integrity of that (original) flesh, as “it was from the beginning;” and freedom of meats and abstinence from blood alone, as “it was from the beginning;” and the individuality of marriage, as “it was from the beginning;” and the restriction of divorce, which was not “from the beginning;” and lastly, the whole man into Paradise, where he was “from the beginning.” Why, then, ought He not to restore Adam thither at least as a monogamist, who cannot present him in so entire perfection as he was when released thence?

let us, in like manner (as before), see whether you owe this very (same) thing to this second origin also: whether the last Adam also meet you in the selfsame form as the first; since the last Adam (that is, Christ) was entirely unwedded, as was even the first Adam before his exile. But, presenting to your weakness the gift of the example of His own flesh, the more perfect Adam—that is, Christ, more perfect on this account as well (as on others), that He was more entirely pure—stands before you, if you are willing (to copy Him), as a voluntary celibate in the flesh. If, however, you are unequal (to that perfection), He stands before you a monogamist in spirit, having one Assembly as His spouse, according to the figure of Adam and of Eve, which (figure) the apostle interprets of that great sacrament of Christ and the Assembly, (teaching that), through the spiritual, it was analogous to the carnal monogamy.

But grant that these argumentations may be thought to be forced and founded on conjectures, if no dogmatic teachings have stood parallel with them which the Lord uttered in treating of divorce, which, permitted formerly, He now prohibits, first because “from the beginning it was not so,” like plurality of marriage; secondly, because “What God hath conjoined, man shall not separate,” for fear, namely, that he contravene the Lord: for He alone shall “separate” who has “conjoined” (separate, moreover, not through the harshness of divorce, which (harshness) He censures and restrains, but through the debt of death) if, indeed, “one of two sparrows falls not on the ground without the Father’s will.” Therefore if those whom God has conjoined man shall not separate by divorce, it is equally congruous that those whom God has separated by death man is not to conjoin by marriage; the joining of the separation will be just as contrary to God’s will as would have been the separation of the conjunction.

So far as regards the non-destruction of the will of God, and the reconstruction of the law of “the beginning.” But another reason, too, conspires; nay, not another, but (one) which imposed the law of “the beginning,” and moved the will of God to prohibit divorce: the fact that (he) who shall have RELEASED his wife, except on the ground of adultery, makes her commit adultery; and (he) who shall have married a (woman) RELEASED by her husband, of course commits adultery. A divorced woman cannot even marry legitimately; and if she commit any such act without the name of marriage, does it not fall under the category of adultery, in that adultery is crime in the way of marriage? Such is God’s verdict, within straiter limits than men’s, that universally, whether through marriage or promiscuously, the admission of a second man (to intercourse) is pronounced adultery by Him. For let us see what marriage is in the eye of God; and thus we shall learn what adultery equally is. Marriage is (this): when God joins “two into one flesh;” or else, finding (them already) joined in the same flesh, has given His seal to the conjunction. Adultery is (this): when, the two having been—in whatsoever way—disjoined, other—nay, rather alien—flesh is mingled (with either): flesh concerning which it cannot be affirmed, “This is flesh out of my flesh, and this bone out of my bones.” For this, once for all done and pronounced, as from the beginning, so now too, cannot apply to “other” flesh. Accordingly, it will be without cause that you will say that God wills not a divorced woman to be joined to another man “while her husband lives,” as if He do will it “when he is dead;” whereas if she is not bound to him when dead, no more is she when living. “Alike when divorce dissevers marriage as when death does, she will not be bound to him by whom the binding medium has been broken off.” To whom, then, will she be bound? In the eye of God, it matters nought whether she marry during her life or after his death. For it is not against him that she sins, but against herself. “Any sin which a man may have committed is external to the body; but (he) who commits adultery sins against his own body.” But—as we have previously laid down above—whoever shall intermingle with himself “other” flesh, over and above that pristine flesh which God either conjoined into two or else found (already) conjoined, commits adultery. And the reason why He has abolished divorce, which “was not from the beginning,” is, that He may strengthen that which “was from the beginning”—the permanent conjunction, (namely), of “two into one flesh:” for fear that necessity or opportunity for a third union of flesh may make an irruption (into His dominion); permitting divorce to no cause but one—if, (that is), the (evil) against which precaution is taken chance to have occurred beforehand. So true, moreover, is it that divorce “was not from the beginning,” that among the Romans it is not till after the six hundredth year from the building of the city that this kind of “hard-heartedness” is set down as having been committed. But they indulge in promiscuous adulteries, even without divorcing (their partners): to us, even if we do divorce them, even marriage will not be lawful.

From this point I see that we are challenged by an appeal to the apostle; for the more easy apprehension of whose meaning we must all the more earnestly inculcate (the assertion), that a woman is more bound when her husband is dead not to admit (to marriage) another husband. For let us reflect that divorce either is caused by discord, or else causes discord; whereas death is an event resulting from the law of God, not from an offence of man; and that it is a debt which all owe, even the unmarried. Therefore, if a divorced woman, who has been separated (from her husband) in soul as well as body, through discord, anger, hatred, and the causes of these—injury, or contumely, or whatsoever cause of complaint—is bound to a personal enemy, not to say a husband, how much more will one who, neither by her own nor her husband’s fault, but by an event resulting from the Lord’s law, has been—not separated from, but left behind by—her consort, be his, even when dead, to whom, even when dead, she owes (the debt of) concord? From him from whom she has heard no (word of) divorce she does not turn away; with him she is, to whom she has written no (document of) divorce; him whom she was unwilling to have lost, she retains. She has within her the licence of the mind, which represents to a man, in imaginary enjoyment, all things which he has not. In short, I ask the woman herself, “Tell me, sister, have you sent your husband before you (to his rest) in peace?” What will she answer? (Will she say), “In discord?” In that case she is the more bound to him with whom she has a cause (to plead) at the bar of God. She who is bound (to another) has not departed (from him). But (will she say), “In

peace?" In that case, she must necessarily persevere in that (peace) with him whom she will no longer have the power to divorce; not that she would, even if she had been able to divorce him, have been marriageable. Indeed, she prays for his soul, and requests refreshment for him meanwhile, and fellowship (with him) in the first resurrection; and she offers (her sacrifice) on the anniversaries of his falling asleep. For, unless she does these deeds, she has in the true sense divorced him, so far as in her lies; and indeed the more iniquitously—inasmuch as (she did it) as far as was in her power—because she had no power (to do it); and with the more indignity, inasmuch as it is with more indignity if (her reason for doing it is) because he did not deserve it. Or else shall we, pray, cease to be after death, according to (the teaching of) some Epicurus, and not according to (that of) Christ? But if we believe the resurrection of the dead, of course we shall be bound to them with whom we are destined to rise, to render an account the one of the other. "But if 'in that age they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be equal to *heavenly* messengers,' is not the fact that there will be no restitution of the conjugal relation a reason why we shall not be bound to our departed consorts?" Nay, but the more shall we be bound (to them), because we are destined to a better estate—destined (as we are) to rise to a spiritual consortship, to recognize as well our own selves as them who are ours. Else how shall we sing thanks to God to eternity, if there shall remain in us no sense and memory of this debt; if we shall be re-formed in substance, not in consciousness? Consequently, we who shall be with God shall be together; since we shall all be with the one God—albeit the wages be various, albeit there be "many mansions", in the house of the same Father having labored for the "one penny" of the self-same hire, that is, of eternal life; in which (eternal life) God will still less separate them whom He has conjoined, than in this lesser life He forbids them to be separated.

Since this is so, how will a woman have room for another husband, who is, even to futurity, in the possession of her own? (Moreover, we speak to each sex, even if our discourse address itself but to the one; inasmuch as one discipline is incumbent [on both].) She will have one in spirit, one in flesh. This will be adultery, the conscious affection of one woman for two men. If the one has been disjoined from her flesh, but remains in her heart—in that place where even cogitation without carnal contact achieves beforehand both adultery by concupiscence, and matrimony by volition—he is to this hour her husband, possessing the very thing which is the mean whereby he became so—her mind, namely, in which withal, if another shall find a habitation, this will be a crime. Besides, excluded he is not, if he has withdrawn from viler carnal commerce. A more honorable husband is he, in proportion as he is become more pure.

Grant, now, that you marry "in the Lord," in accordance with the law and the apostle—if, notwithstanding, you care even about this—with what face do you request (the solemnizing of) a matrimony which is unlawful to those of whom you request it; of a monogamist overseer, of elders and ministers bound by the same solemn engagement, of widows whose Order you have in your own person refused? And they, plainly, will give husbands and wives as they would morsels of bread; for this is their rendering of "To every one who asketh thee thou shalt give!" And they will join you together in a virgin assembly, the one betrothed of the one Christ! And you will pray for your husbands, the new and the old. Make your election, to which of the twain you will play the adulteress. I think, to both. But if you have any wisdom, be silent on behalf of the dead one. Let your silence be to him a divorce, already endorsed in the dotal gifts of another. In this way you will earn the new husband's favor, if you forget the old. You ought to take more pains to please him for whose sake you have not preferred to please God! Such (conduct) the Psychics will have it the apostle approved, or else totally failed to think about, when he wrote: "The woman is bound for such length of time as her husband lives; but if he shall have died, she is free; whom she will let her marry, only in the Lord." For it is out of this passage that they draw their defense of the license of second marriage; nay, even of (marriages) to any amount, if of second (marriage): for that which has ceased to be once for all, is open to any and every number. But the sense in which the apostle did write will be apparent, if first an agreement be come to that he did not write it in the sense of which the Psychics avail themselves.

Such an agreement, moreover, will be come to if one first recall to mind those (passages) which are diverse from the passage in question, when tried by the standard of doctrine, of volition, and of Paul's own discipline. For, if he permits second nuptials, which were not "from the beginning," how does he affirm that all things are being recollected to the beginning in Christ? If he wills us to iterate conjugal connections, how does he maintain that "our seed is called" in the but once married Isaac as its author? How does he make monogamy the base of his disposition of the whole Ecclesiastical Order, if this rule does not antecedently hold good in the case of laics, from whose ranks the Ecclesiastical Order proceeds? How does he call away from the enjoyment of marriage such as are still in the married position, saying that "the time is wound up," if he calls back again into marriage such as through death had escaped from marriage? If these (passages) are diverse from that one about which the present question is, it will be agreed (as we have said) that he did not write in that sense of which the Psychics avail themselves; inasmuch as it is easier (of belief) that that one passage should have some explanation agreeable with the others, than that an apostle should seem to have taught (principles) mutually diverse. That explanation we shall be able to discover in the subject-matter itself. What was the subject-matter which led the apostle to write such (words)? The inexperience of a new and just rising Assembly, which he was rearing, to wit, "with milk," not yet with the "solid food" of stronger doctrine; inexperience so great, that that infancy of faith prevented them from yet knowing what they were to do in regard of carnal and sexual necessity. The very phases themselves of this (inexperience) are intelligible from (the apostle's) rescripts, when he says: "But concerning these (things) which ye write; good it is for a man not to touch a woman; but, on account of sexual-immoral-individuals, let each one have his own wife." He shows that there were who, having been "apprehended by the faith" in (the state of) marriage, were apprehensive that it might not be lawful for them thenceforward to enjoy their marriage, because they had believed on the holy flesh of Christ.

And yet it is "by way of allowance" that he makes the concession, "not by way of command;" that is, indulging, not enjoining, the practice. On the other hand, he "willed rather" that all should be what he himself was. Similarly, too, in

sending a rescript on (the subject of) divorce, he demonstrates that some had been thinking over that also, chiefly because withal they did not suppose that they were to persevere, after faith, in heathen marriages. They sought counsel, further, “concerning virgins”—for “precept of the Lord” there was none—and (were told) that “it is good for a man if he so remain permanently;” (“so”), of course, as he may have been found by the faith. “Thou hast been bound to a wife, seek not loosing; thou hast been loosed from a wife, seek not a wife.” “But if you have taken a wife, you have not sinned;” because to one who, before believing, had been “loosed from a wife,” she will not be counted a second wife who, subsequently to believing, is the first: for it is from (the time of our) believing that our life itself dates its origin. But here he says that he “is sparing them;” else “pressure of the flesh” would shortly follow, in consequence of the straits of the times, which shunned the encumbrances of marriage: yea, rather solicitude must be felt about earning the Lord’s favor than a husband’s. And thus he recalls his permission.

So, then, in the very same passage in which he definitely rules that “each one ought permanently to remain in that calling in which he shall be called;” adding, “A woman is bound so long as her husband lives; but if he shall have fallen asleep, she is free: whom she shall wish let her marry, only in the Lord,” he hence also demonstrates that such a woman is to be understood as has withal herself been “found” (by the faith) “loosed from a husband,” similarly as the husband “loosed from a wife”—the “loosing” having taken place through death, of course, not through divorce; inasmuch as to the divorced he would grant no permission to marry, in the teeth of the primary precept. And so “a woman, if she shall have married, will not sin;” because he will not be reckoned a second husband who is, subsequently to her believing, the first, any more (than a wife thus taken will be counted a second wife). And so truly is this the case, that he therefore adds, “only in the Lord;” because the question in agitation was about her who had had a heathen (husband), and had believed subsequently to losing him: for fear, to wit, that she might presume herself able to marry a heathen even after believing; albeit not even this is an object of care to the Psychics. Let us plainly know that, in the Greek original, it does not stand in the form which (through the either crafty or simple alteration of two syllables) has gone out into common use, “But if her husband shall have fallen asleep,” as if it were speaking of the future, and thereby seemed to pertain to her who has lost her husband when already in a believing state. If this indeed had been so, licence let loose without limit would have granted a (fresh) husband as often as one had been lost, without any such modesty in marrying as is congruous even to heathens. But even if it had been so, as if referring to future time, “If any (woman’s) husband shall have died, even the future would just as much pertain to her whose husband shall die before she believed. Take it which way you will, provided you do not overturn the rest. For since these (other passages) agree to the sense (given above): “Thou hast been called (as) a slave; care not:” “Thou hast been called in uncircumcision; be not circumcised:” “Thou hast been called in circumcision; become not uncircumcised:” with which concurs, “Thou hast been bound to a wife; seek not loosing: thou hast been loosed from a wife; seek not a wife,”—manifest enough it is that these passages pertain to such as, finding themselves in a new and recent “calling,” were consulting (the apostle) on the subject of those (circumstantial conditions) in which they had been “apprehended” by the faith.

This will be the interpretation of that passage, to be examined as to whether it be congruous with the time and the occasion, and with the examples and arguments preceding as well as with the sentences and senses succeeding, and primarily with the individual advice and practice of the apostle himself: for nothing is so much to be guarded as (the care) that no one be found self-contradictory.

Listen, withal, to the very subtle argumentation on the contrary side. “So true is it,” say (our opponents), “that the apostle has permitted the iteration of marriage, that it is only such as are in the Clerical Order that he has stringently bound to the yoke of monogamy. For that which he prescribes to certain (individuals) he does not prescribe to all.” Does it then follow, too, that to overseers alone he does not prescribe what he does enjoin upon all; if what he does prescribe to overseers he does not enjoin upon all? or is it therefore to all because to overseers? and therefore to overseers because to all? For whence is it that the overseers and allotted-ones come? Is it not from all? If all are not bound to monogamy, whence are monogamists (to be taken) into the clerical rank? Will some separate order of monogamists have to be instituted, from which to make selection for the clerical body? (No); but when we are extolling and inflating ourselves in opposition to the clergy, then “we are all one:” then “we are all priests, because He hath made us priests to (His) God and Father.” When we are challenged to a thorough equalization with the sacerdotal discipline, we lay down the (priestly) fillets, and (still) are on a par! The question in hand (when the apostle was writing), was with reference to Ecclesiastical Orders—what son of men ought to be ordained. It was therefore fitting that all the form of the common discipline should be set forth on its fore-front, as an edict to be in a certain sense universally and carefully attended to, that the laity might the better know that they must themselves observe that order which was indispensable to their overseers; and that even the office of honor itself might not flatter itself in anything tending to license, as if on the ground of privilege of position. The Holy Spirit foresaw that some would say, “All things are lawful to overseers;” just as that overseer of Utina of yours feared not even the Scantinian law. Why, how many digamists, too, preside in your assemblies; insulting the apostle, of course: at all events, not blushing when these passages are read under their presidency!

Come, now, you who think that an exceptional law of monogamy is made with reference to overseers, abandon withal your remaining disciplinary titles, which, together with monogamy, are ascribed to overseers. Refuse to be “irreprehensible, sober, of good morals, orderly, hospitable, easy to be taught;” nay, indeed, (be) “given to wine, prompt with the hand to strike, combative, money-loving, not ruling your house, nor caring for your children’s discipline,”—no, nor “courting good renown even from strangers.” For if overseers have a law of their own teaching monogamy, the other (characteristics) likewise, which will be the fitting concomitants of monogamy, will have been written (exclusively) for overseers. With laics, however, to whom monogamy is not suitable, the other (characteristics) also have nothing to do. (Thus), Psychic, you have

(if you please) evaded the bonds of discipline in its entirety! Be consistent in prescribing, that “what is enjoined upon certain (individuals) is not enjoined upon all;” or else, if the other (characteristics) indeed are common, but monogamy is imposed upon overseers alone, (tell me), pray, whether they alone are to be pronounced Christians upon whom is conferred the entirety of discipline?

“But again, writing to Timotheus, he ‘wills the very young (women) to marry, bear children, act the housewife.’” He is (here) directing (his speech) to such as he denotes above—“very young widows,” who, after being, “apprehended” in widowhood, and (subsequently) wooed for some length of time, after they have had Christ in their affections, “wish to marry, having judgment, because they have rescinded the first faith,”—that (faith), to wit, by which they were “found” in widowhood, and, after professing it, do not persevere. For which reason he “wills” them to “marry,” for fear of their subsequently rescinding the first faith of professed widowhood; not to sanction their marrying as often as ever they may refuse to persevere in a widowhood plied with temptation—nay, rather, spent in indulgence.

“We read him withal writing to the Romans: ‘But the woman who is under an husband, is bound to her husband (while) living; but if he shall have died, she has been emancipated from the law of the husband.’ Doubtless, then, the husband living, she will be thought to commit adultery if she shall have been joined to a second husband. If, however, the husband shall have died, she has been freed from (his) law, (so) that she is not an adulteress if made (wife) to another husband.” But read the sequel as well in order that this sense, which flatters you, may evade (your grasp). “And so,” he says, “my brethren, be ye too made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that ye may be made (subject) to a second,—to Him, namely, who hath risen from the dead, that we may bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin, which (passions) used to be efficiently caused through the law, (wrought) in our members unto the bearing of fruit to death; but now we have been emancipated from the law, being dead (to that) in which we used to be held, unto the serving of God in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter.” Therefore, if he bids us “be made dead to the law through the body of Christ,” (which is the assembly, which consists in the spirit of newness,) not “through the letter of oldness,” (that is, of the law,)—taking you away from the law, which does not keep a wife, when her husband is dead, from becoming (wife) to another husband—he reduces you to (subjection to) the contrary condition, that you are not to marry when you have lost your husband; and in as far as you would not be accounted an adulteress if you became (wife) to a second husband after the death of your (first) husband, if you were still bound to act in (subjection to) the law, in so far as a result of the diversity of (your) condition, he does prejudge you (guilty) of adultery if, after the death of your husband, you do marry another: inasmuch as you have now been made dead to the law, it cannot be lawful for you, now that you have withdrawn from that (law) in the eye of which it was lawful for you.

Now, if the apostle had even absolutely permitted marriage when one’s partner has been lost subsequently to (conversion to) the faith, he would have done (it), just as (he did) the other (actions) which he did adversely to the (strict) letter of his own rule, to suit the circumstances of the times: circumcising Timotheus on account of “supposititious false brethren;” and leading certain “shaven men” into the temple on account of the observant watchfulness of the Jews—he who chastises the Galatians when they desire to live in (observance of) the law. But so did circumstances require him to “become all things to all, in order to gain all;” “travailing in birth with them until Christ should be formed in them;” and “cherishing, as it were a nurse,” the little ones of faith, by teaching them some things “by way of indulgence, not by way of command”—for it is one thing to indulge, another to bid—permitting a temporary license of re-marriage on account of the “weakness of the flesh,” just as Moses of divorcing on account of “the hardness of the heart.”

And here, accordingly, we will render the supplement of this (his) meaning. For if Christ abrogated what Moses enjoined, because “from the beginning (it) was not so;” and (if)—this being so—Christ will not therefore be reputed to have come from some other Power; why may not the Paraclete, too, have abrogated an indulgence which Paul granted—because second marriage withal “was not from the beginning”—without deserving on this account to be regarded with suspicion, as if he were an alien spirit, provided only that the superinduction be worthy of God and of Christ? If it was worthy of God and of Christ to check “hard-heartedness” when the time (for its indulgence) was fully expired, why should it not be more worthy both of God and of Christ to shake off “infirmity of the flesh” when “the time” is already more “wound up?” If it is just that marriage be not severed, it is, of course, honorable too that it be not iterated. In short, in the estimation of the world, each is accounted a mark of good discipline: one under the name of concord; one, of modesty. “Hardness of heart” reigned till Christ’s time; let “infirmity of the flesh” (be content to) have reigned till the time of the Paraclete. The New Law abrogated divorce—it had (somewhat) to abrogate; the New Prophecy (abrogates) second marriage, (which is) no less a divorce of the former (marriage). But the “hardness of heart” yielded to Christ more readily than the “infirmity of the flesh.” The latter claims Paul in its own support more than the former Moses; if, indeed, it is claiming him in its support when it catches at his indulgence, (but) refuses his prescript—eluding his more deliberate opinions and his constant “wills,” not suffering us to render to the apostle the (obedience) which he “prefers.”

And how long will this most shameless “infirmity” persevere in waging a war of extermination against the “better things?” The time for its indulgence was (the interval) until the Paraclete began His operations, to whose coming were deferred by the Lord (the things) which in His day “could not be endured;” which it is now no longer competent for any one to be unable to endure, seeing that He through whom the power of enduring is granted is not wanting. How long shall we allege “the flesh,” because the Lord said, “the flesh is weak?” But He has withal premised that “the Spirit is prompt,” in order that the Spirit may vanquish the flesh—that the weak may yield to the stronger. For again He says, “Let him who is able to receive, receive (it);” that is, let him who is not able go his way. That rich man did go his way who had not “received” the precept of dividing his substance to the needy, and was abandoned by the Lord to his own opinion. Nor will “harshness” be on this account imputed to Christ, the ground of the vicious action of each individual free-will. “Behold,” says He, “I have



set before you good and evil.” Choose that which is good: if you cannot, because you will not—for that you can if you will He has shown, because He has proposed each to your free-will—you ought to depart from Him whose will you do not.

What harshness, therefore, is here on our part, if we renounce (communion with) such as do not the will of God? What heresy, if we judge second marriage, as being unlawful, akin to adultery? For what is adultery but unlawful marriage? The apostle sets a brand upon those who were wont entirely to forbid marriage, who were wont at the same time to lay an interdict on meats which God has created. We, however, no more do away with marriage if we abjure its repetition, than we reprobate meats if we fast oftener (than others). It is one thing to do away with, another to regulate; it is one thing to lay down a law of not marrying, it is another to fix a limit to marrying. To speak plainly, if they who reproach us with harshness, or esteem heresy (to exist) in this (our) cause, foster the “infirmity of the flesh” to such a degree as to think it must have support accorded to it in frequency of marriage; why do they in another case neither accord it support nor foster it with indulgence—when, (namely), torments have reduced it to a denial (of the faith)? For, of course, that (infirmity) is more capable of excuse which has fallen in battle, than (that) which (has fallen) in the bed-chamber; (that) which has succumbed on the rack, than (that) which (has succumbed) on the bridal bed; (that) which has yielded to cruelty, than (that) which (has yielded) to appetite; that which has been overcome groaning, than (that) which (has been overcome) in heat. But the former they excommunicate, because it has not “endured unto the end;” the latter they prop up, as if withal it has “endured unto the end.” Propose (the question) why each has not “endured unto the end;” and you will find the cause of that (infirmity) to be more honorable which has been unable to sustain savagery, than (of that) which (has been unable to sustain) modesty. And yet not even a bloodwring—not to say an immodest—defection does the “infirmity of the flesh” excuse!

But I smile when (the plea of) “infirmity of the flesh” is advanced in opposition (to us: infirmity) which is (rather) to be called the height of strength. Iteration of marriage is an affair of strength: to rise again from the ease of continence to the works of the flesh, is (a thing requiring) substantial reins. Such “infirmity” is equal, to a third, and a fourth, and even (perhaps) a seventh marriage; as (being a thing) which increases its strength as often as its weakness; which will no longer have (the support of) an apostle’s authority, but of some Hermogenes—wont to marry more women than he paints. For in him matter is abundant: whence he presumes that even the soul is material; and therefore much more (than other men) he has *not* the Spirit from God, being no longer even a Psychic, because even his psychic element is not derived from God’s afflatus! What if a man allege “indigence,” so as to profess that his flesh is openly prostituted, and given in marriage for the sake of maintenance; forgetting that there is to be no careful thought about food and clothing? He has God (to look to), the Foster-father even of ravens, the Rearer even of flowers. What if he plead the loneliness of his home? as if one woman afforded company to a man ever on the eve of flight! He has, of course, a widow (at hand), whom it will be lawful for him to take. Not one such wife, but even a plurality, it is permitted to have. What if a man thinks on posterity, with thoughts like the eyes of Lot’s wife; so that a man is to make the fact that from his former marriage he has had no children a reason for repeating marriage? A Christian, forsooth, will seek heirs, disinherited as he is from the entire world! He has “brethren;” he has the assembly as his mother. The case is different if men believe that, at the bar of Christ as well (as of Rome), action is taken on the principle of the Julian laws; and imagine that the unmarried and childless cannot receive their portion in full, in accordance with the testament of God. Let such (as thus think), then, marry to the very end; that in this confusion of flesh they, like Sodom and Gomorrah, and the day of the deluge, may be overtaken by the fated final end of the world. A third saying let them add, “Let us eat, and drink, *and marry*, for to-morrow we shall die;” not reflecting that the “woe” (denounced) “on such as are with child, and are giving suck,” will fall far more heavily and bitterly in the “universal shaking” of the entire world than it did in the devastation of one fraction of Judea. Let them accumulate by their iterated marriages fruits right seasonable for the last times—breasts heaving, and wombs qualmish, and infants whimpering. Let them prepare for Antichrist (children) upon whom he may more passionately (than Pharaoh) spend his savagery. He will lead to them murderous midwives.

## **EXCERPTS FROM A PERSONAL LETTER FROM TERTULLIAN TO HIS WIFE:**

The precept, therefore, which I give you is, that, with all the constancy you may, you do, after our departure, renounce nuptials; not that you will on that score confer any benefit on me, except in that you will profit yourself. But to Christians, after their departure from the world, no restoration of marriage is promised in the day of the resurrection, translated as they will be into the condition and sanctity of *heavenly* messengers. Therefore no solicitude arising from carnal jealousy will, in the day of the resurrection, even in the case of her whom they chose to represent as having been married to seven brothers successively, wound any one of her so many husbands; nor is any (husband) awaiting her to put her to confusion. The question raised by the Sadducees has yielded to the Lord’s sentence. Think not that it is for the sake of preserving to the end for myself the entire devotion of your flesh, that I, suspicious of the pain of (anticipated) slight, am even at this early period instilling into you the counsel of (perpetual) widowhood. There will at that day be no resumption of voluptuous disgrace between us. No such frivolities, no such impurities, does God promise to His (servants). But whether to you, or to any other woman whatever who pertains to God, the advice which we are giving shall be profitable, we take leave to treat of at large

We do not indeed forbid the union of man and woman, blest by God as the seminary of the human race, and devised for the replenishment of the earth and the furnishing of the world, and therefore permitted, yet singly. For Adam was the one husband of Eve, and Eve his one wife, one woman, one rib. that among our ancestors, and the patriarchs themselves, it was

lawful not only to marry, but even to multiply wives. There were concubines, too, (in those days.) But although the Assembly did come in figuratively in the synagogue, yet (to interpret simply) it was necessary to institute (certain things) which should afterward deserve to be either lopped off or modified. For the Law was (in due time) to supervene. (Nor was that enough:) for it was meet that causes for making up the deficiencies of the Law should have forerun (Him who was to supply those deficiencies). And so to the Law presently had to succeed the Word of God introducing the spiritual circumcision. Therefore, by means of the wide licence of those days, materials for subsequent emendations were furnished beforehand, of which materials the Lord by His Good-Message, and then the apostle in the last days of the (Jewish) age, either cut off the redundancies or regulated the disorders.

But let it not be thought that my reason for premising thus much concerning the liberty granted to the old, and the restraint imposed on the later time, is that I may lay a foundation for teaching that Christ's advent was intended to dissolve wedlock, (and) to abolish marriage talons; as if from this period onward were prescribing an end to marrying. Let them see to that, who, among the rest of their perversities, teach the disjoining of the "one flesh in twain," denying Him who, after borrowing the female from the male, recombined between themselves, in the matrimonial computation, the two bodies taken out of the consortship of the self-same material substance. In short, there is no place at all where we read that nuptials are prohibited; of course on the ground that they are "a good thing." What, however, is *better* than this "good," we learn from the apostle, who *permits* marrying indeed, but *prefers* abstinence; the former on account of the insidiousnesses of temptations, the latter on account of the straits of the times. Now, by looking into the reason thus given for each proposition, it is easily discerned that the ground on which the power of marrying is conceded is *necessity*; but whatever *necessity* grants, she by her very nature depreciates. In fact, in that it is written, "To marry is better than to burn," what, pray, is the nature of this "good" which is (only) commended by comparison with "evil," so that the reason why "marrying" is *more* good is (merely) that "burning" is *less*? Nay, but how far better is it neither to marry nor to burn? Why, even in persecutions it is *better* to take advantage of the permission granted, and "flee from town to town," than, when apprehended and racked, to deny (the faith). And therefore more blessed are they who have strength to depart (this life) in blessed confession of their testimony. I may say, What is *permitted* is not *good*. For how stands the case? I must of necessity die (if I be apprehended and confess my faith.) If I think (that fate) deplorable, (then flight) is good; but if I have a fear of the thing which is permitted, (the permitted thing) has some suspicion attaching to the cause of its permission. But that which is "better" no one (ever) "permitted," as being undoubted, and manifest by its own inherent purity. There are some things which are not to be *desired* merely because they are not *forbidden*, albeit they are in a certain sense *forbidden* when other things are preferred to them; for the preference given to the higher things is a dissuasion from the lowest. A thing is not "good" merely because it is not "evil," nor is it "evil" merely because it is not "harmful." Further: that which is fully "good" excels on this ground, that it is not only not harmful, but profitable into the bargain. For you are bound to prefer what is profitable to what is (merely) not harmful. For the *first* place is what every struggle aims at; the *second* has consolation attaching to it, but not victory. But if we listen to the apostle, forgetting what is behind, let us both strain after what is before, and be followers after the better rewards. Thus, albeit he does not "cast a snare upon us," he points out what tends to utility when he says, "The unmarried woman thinks on the things of the Lord, that both in body and spirit she may be holy; but the married is solicitous how to please her husband." But he nowhere permits marriage in such a way as not rather to wish us to do our utmost in imitation of his own example. Happy the man who shall prove like Paul!

Now there are two phases of human weakness which make marriages necessary to such as are disjoined from matrimony. The first and most powerful is that which arises from *fleshly* concupiscence; the second, from *worldly* concupiscence. But by us, who are servants of God, who renounce both voluptuousness and ambition, each is to be repudiated.

Thus they have laid hold for themselves of an eternal gift of the Lord; and while on earth, by abstaining from marriage, are already counted as belonging to the family of *heavenly* messengers. Training yourself to an emulation of (their) constancy by the examples of such women, you will by spiritual affection bury that fleshly concupiscence, in abolishing the temporal fleeting desires of beauty and youth by the compensating gain of immortal blessings.

Further reasons for marriage which men allege for themselves arise from anxiety for posterity, and the bitter, bitter pleasure of children. To us this is idle. For why should we be eager to bear children, whom, when we have them, we desire to send before us (to glory) in respect, I mean, of the distresses that are now imminent; desirous as we are ourselves, too, to be taken out of this most wicked world, and received into the Lord's presence, which was the desire even of an apostle? To the servant of God, forsooth, offspring is necessary! For of our own salvation we are secure enough, so that we have leisure for children! Burdens must be sought by us for ourselves which are avoided even by the majority of the nations, who are compelled by laws, who are decimated by abortions; burdens which, finally, are to us most of all unsuitable, as being perilous to faith! For why did the Lord foretell a "woe to them that are with child, and them that give suck," except because He testifies that in that day of disencumbrance the encumbrances of children will be an inconvenience? It is to marriage, of course, that those encumbrances appertain; but that ("woe") will not pertain to widows. (They) at the first trump of the *heavenly* messenger will spring forth disencumbered—will freely bear to the end whatsoever pressure and persecution, with no burdensome fruit of marriage heaving in the womb, none in the bosom.

Therefore, whether it be for the sake of the flesh, or of the world, or of posterity, that marriage is undertaken, nothing of all these “necessities” affects the servants of God, so as to prevent my deeming it enough to have once for all yielded to some one of them, and by one marriage appeased all concupiscence of this kind. Let us marry daily, and in the midst of our marrying let us be overtaken, like Sodom and Gomorrah, by that day of fear! For there it was not only, of course, that they were dealing in marriage and merchandise; but when He says, “They were marrying and buying,” He sets a brand upon the very leading vices of the flesh and of the world, which call men off the most from divine disciplines—the one through the pleasure of rioting, the other through the greed of acquiring. And yet that “blindness” then was felt long before “the ends of the world.” What, then, will the case be if God now keep us from the vices which of old were detestable before Him? “The time,” says (the apostle), “is compressed. It remaineth that they who have wives act as if they had them not.”

To us continence has been pointed out by the Lord of salvation as an instrument for attaining eternity, and as a testimony of (our) faith; as a commendation of this flesh of ours, which is to be sustained for the “garment of immortality,” which is one day to supervene; for enduring, in fine, the will of God. Besides, reflect, I advise you, that there is no one who is taken out of the world but by the will of God, if, (as is the case,) not even a leaf falls from off a tree without it. The same who brings us into the world must of necessity take us out of it too. Therefore when, through the will of God, the husband is deceased, the marriage likewise, by the will of God, deceases. Why should *you* restore what God has put an end to? Why do you, by repeating the servitude of matrimony, spurn the liberty which is offered you? “You have been bound to a wife,” says the apostle; “seek not loosing. You have been loosed from a wife; seek not binding.” For even if you do not “*sin*” in re-marrying, still he says “pressure of the flesh ensues.” Wherefore, so far as we can, let us love the opportunity of continence; as soon as it offers itself, let us resolve to accept it, that what we have not had (to follow) in matrimony we may follow in widowhood. The occasion must be embraced which puts an end to that which *necessity* commanded. How detrimental to faith, how obstructive to holiness, second marriages are, the discipline of the Assembly and the prescription of the apostle declare, when he suffers not men twice married to preside (over an assembly) when he would not grant a widow admittance into the order unless she had been “the wife of one man;” for God’s altar must be set forth pure. That whole halo which encircles the Assembly is represented (as consisting) of holiness. Priesthood is (a function) of widowhood and of celibacies among the nations. Of course (this is) in conformity with the slanderer’s principle of rivalry. For the king of heathendom, the chief pontiff, to marry a second time is unlawful. How pleasing must holiness be to God, when even His enemy affects it!—not, of course, as having any affinity with anything good, but as contumeliously affecting what is pleasing to God the Lord.

I will answer, if the Spirit give (me ability); alleging, before all (other arguments), that the Lord holds it more pleasing that matrimony should not be contracted, than that it should at all be dissolved: in short, divorce He prohibits, except for the cause of sexual-immorality; but continence He commends. Let the one, therefore, have the necessity of continuing; the other, further, even the power of not marrying.

And thus my mind has been thrown into confusion, in the fear that, having exhorted you myself to perseverance in single husbandhood and widowhood, I may now, by the mention of precipitate marriages, put “an occasion of falling” in your way.

### **MINUCIUS FELIX (c.150~270AD)**

But we maintain our modesty not in appearance, but in our heart we gladly abide by the bond of a single marriage; in the desire of procreating, we know either one wife, or none at all.

### **CYPRIAN (c. 250AD)**

And, indeed, among our predecessors, some of the overseers here in our province thought that peace was not to be granted to adulterers, and wholly closed the gate of repentance against adultery.<sup>28</sup>

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: “But to them that are married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, that the woman should not be SEPARATED from a man; but if she should SEPARATE, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled to the man: and that a man should not DISMISS a woman.”

Hold fast, O virgins! hold fast what you have begun to be; hold fast what you shall be. A great reward awaits you, a great recompense of virtue, the immense advantage of chastity. Do you wish to know what ill the virtue of continence avoids, what

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<sup>28</sup> Cyprian is actually speaking of Tertullian here, I believe (since that is what Tertullian believed, and Cyprian was a disciple of Tertullian)

good it possesses? "I will multiply," says God to the woman, "thy sorrows and thy groanings; and in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." You are free from this sentence. You do not fear the sorrows and the groans of women. You have no fear of child-bearing; nor is your husband lord over you; but your Lord and Head is Christ, after the likeness and in the place of the man; *with that of men* your lot and your condition is equal. It is the word of the Lord which says, "The children of this world beget and are begotten; but they who are counted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: neither shall they die any more: for they are equal to the *heavenly* messengers of God, being the children of the resurrection." That which we shall be, you have already begun to be. You possess already in this world the glory of the resurrection. You pass through the world without the contagion of the world; in that you continue chaste and virgins, you are equal to the *heavenly* messengers of God. Only let your virginity remain and endure substantial and uninjured; and as it began bravely, let it persevere continuously, and not seek the ornaments of necklaces nor garments, but of conduct. Let it look towards God and heaven, and not lower to the lust of the flesh and of the world, the eyes uplifted *to things* above, or set them upon earthly things.

The first decree commanded to increase and to multiply; the second enjoined continency. While the world is still rough and void, we are propagated by the fruitful begetting of numbers, and we increase to the enlargement of the human race. Now, when the world is filled and the earth supplied, they who can receive continency, living after the manner of eunuchs, are made eunuchs unto the kingdom. Nor does the Lord command this, but He exhorts it; nor does He impose the yoke of necessity, since the free choice of the will is left. But when He says that in His Father's house are many mansions, He points out the dwellings of the better habitation. Those better habitations you are seeking; cutting away the desires of the flesh, you obtain the reward of a greater grace in the heavenly home. All indeed who attain to the divine gift and inheritance by the sanctification of immersion, therein put off the old man by the grace of the saving laver, and, renewed by the Holy Spirit from the filth of the old contagion, are purged by a second nativity. But the greater holiness and truth of that repeated birth belongs to you, who have no longer any desires of the flesh and of the body. Only the things which belong to virtue and the Spirit have remained in you to glory. It is the apostle's word whom the Lord called His chosen vessel, whom God sent to proclaim the heavenly command: "The first man," says he, "is from the earth, of earth; the second man is from heaven. Such as is the earthy, such are they also who are earthy; and such as is the heavenly, such also are the heavenly. As we have borne the image of him who is earthy, let us also bear the image of Him who is heavenly." Virginity bears this image, integrity bears it, holiness bears it, and truth. Disciplines which are mindful of God bear it, retaining righteousness with religion, stedfast in faith, humble in fear, brave to all suffering, meek to sustain wrong, easy to show mercy, of one mind and one heart in fraternal peace.

Moreover, what a number of serious mischiefs we see to have arisen hence; and what a multitude of virgins we behold corrupted by unlawful and dangerous conjunctions of this kind, to our great grief of mind! But if they have faithfully dedicated themselves to Christ, let them persevere in modesty and chastity, without incurring any evil report, and so in courage and steadiness await the reward of virginity. But if they are unwilling or unable to persevere, it is better that they should marry, than that by their crimes they should fall into the fire. Certainly let them not cause a scandal to the brethren or sisters, since it is written, "If meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend."

Nor let any one think that she can be defended by this excuse, that she may be examined and proved whether she be a virgin; since both the hands and the eyes of the midwives are often deceived; and if she be found to be a virgin in that particular in which a woman may be so, yet she may have sinned in some other part of her body, which may be corrupted and yet cannot be examined. Assuredly the mere lying together, the mere embracing, the very talking together, and the act of kissing, and the disgraceful and foul slumber of two persons lying together, how much of dishonor and crime does it confess! If a husband come upon his wife, and see her lying with another man, is he not angry and raging, and by the passion of his rage does he not perhaps take his sword into his hand? And what shall Christ and our Lord and Judge think, when He sees His virgin, dedicated to Him, and destined for His holiness, lying with another? How indignant and angry is He, and what penalties does He threaten against such unchaste connections! whose spiritual sword and the coming day of judgment, that every one of the brethren may be able to escape, we ought with all our counsel to provide and to strive. And since it behoves all by all means to keep discipline, much more is it right that overseers and ministers should be careful for this, that they may afford an example and instruction to others concerning their conversation and character. For how can they direct the integrity and continence of others, if the corruptions and teachings of sin begin to proceed from themselves?

And therefore you have acted advisedly and with vigor, dearest brother, in excommunicating the minister who has often abode with a virgin; and, moreover, the others who had been used to sleep with virgins. But if they have repented of this their unlawful lying together, and have mutually withdrawn from one another, let the virgins meantime be carefully inspected by midwives; and if they should be found virgins, let them be received to communion, and admitted to the Assembly; yet with this threatening, that if subsequently they should return to the same men, or if they should dwell together with the same men in one house or under the same roof, they should be ejected with a severer censure, nor should such be afterwards easily received into the Assembly. But if any one of them be found to be corrupted, let her abundantly repent, because she who has been guilty of this crime is an adulteress, not (indeed) against a husband, but against Christ; and therefore, a due time being appointed, let her afterwards, when confession has been made, return to the Assembly. But if they obstinately persevere, and do not mutually separate themselves, let them know that, with this

their immodest obstinacy, they can never be admitted by us into the Assembly, lest they should begin to set an example to others to go to ruin by their crimes. Nor let them think that the way of life or of salvation is still open to them, if they have refused to obey the overseers and priests, since in Deuteronomy the Lord God says, "And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not obey the priest or judge, whosoever he shall be in those days, that man shall die, and all the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously." God commanded those who did not obey His priests to be slain, and those who did not hearken to His judges who were appointed for the time. And then indeed they were slain with the sword, when the circumcision of the flesh was yet in force; but now that circumcision has begun to be of the spirit among God's faithful servants, the proud and contumacious are slain with the sword of the Spirit, in that they are cast out of the Assembly. For they cannot live out of it, since the house of God is one, and there can be no salvation to any except in the Assembly. But the divine Scripture testifies that the undisciplined perish, because they do not listen to, nor obey wholesome precepts; for it says, "An undisciplined man loves not him that corrects him. But they who hate reproof shall be consumed with disgrace."

He speaks here regarding an impostor teacher named Callistus:

This one propounded the opinion, that, if an overseer was guilty of any sin, if even *a sin* unto death, he ought not to be deposed. About the time of this man, overseers, elders, and ministers, who had been twice married, and thrice married, began *to be allowed* to retain their place among the clergy. If also, however, any one who is in holy orders should become married, *Callistus permitted* such a one to continue in holy orders as if he had not sinned.

### ORIGEN<sup>29</sup> (185~254 AD)

To questions of this sort one might ask, whether any one commits adultery in his heart, even if he does not do the deed of adultery, but lacks self-control in heart only. And the like also you will say concerning the rest of things which are deserving of praise. But the passage possibly contains a plausible fallacy which must be cleared away, I think, in this manner: adultery which takes place in the heart is a less sin, than if one were also to add to it the act.

After this it is written that "*there came unto Him the Pharisees tempting Him and saying, Is it lawful for a man to wife for every cause?*" Mark, also, has written to the like effect. Accordingly, of those who came to Jesus and inquired of Him, there were some who put questions to tempt Him; and if our Savior so transcendent was tempted, which of His disciples who is ordained to teach need be vexed, when he is tempted by some who inquire, not from the love of learning, but from the wish to tempt? And you might find many passages, if you brought them together, in which the Pharisees tempted our Jesus, and others, different from them, as a certain lawyer, and perhaps also a scribe, that by bringing together what is said about those who tempted Him, you might find by investigation what is useful for this kind of inquiries. Only, the Savior, in response to those who tempted Him, laid down dogmas; for they said, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his own wife for every cause?" and He answered and said, "Have ye not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female?" etc. And I think that the Pharisees put forward this word for this reason, that they might attack Him whatever He might say; as, for example, if He had said, "It is lawful," they would have accused Him of dissolving marriages for trifles; but, if He had said, "It is not lawful," they would have accused Him of permitting a man to dwell with a woman, even with sins; so, likewise, in the case of the tribute-money, if He had told them to give, they would have accused Him of making the people subject to the Romans, and not to the law of God, but if He had told them not to give, they would have accused Him of creating war and sedition, and of stirring up those who were not able to stand against so powerful an army. But they did not perceive in what way He answered blamelessly and wisely, in the first place, rejecting the opinion that a wife was to be put away for every cause, and, in the second place, giving answer to the question about the bill of divorcement; for He saw that not every cause is a reasonable ground for the dissolution of marriage, and that the husband must dwell with the wife as the weaker vessel, giving honor, and bearing her burdens in sins; and by what is written in Genesis, He puts to shame the Pharisees who boasted in the Scriptures of Moses, by saying, "Have ye not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female," etc., and, subjoining to these words, because of the saying, "And the twain shall become one flesh," teaching in harmony with one flesh, namely, "So that they are no more twain, but one flesh." And, as tending to convince them that they should not put away their wife for every cause, is it said, "What God has joined together, a man must not SEPARATE." It is to be observed, however, in the exposition of the words quoted from Genesis in the Good-Message, that they were not spoken consecutively as they are written in the Good-Message; and I think that it is not even said about the same persons, namely, of those who were formed after the image of God, and of those who were formed from the dust of the ground and from one of the ribs of Adam. For where it is said, "Male and female made He them," the reference is to those formed "after the image," but where He also said, "For this cause shall a man leave his own father and mother," the reference is not to those formed after the image; for some time after the Lord God formed the man, taking dust from the ground, and

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<sup>29</sup> Note: Origen believed that the Shepherd of Hermas was scripture

from his side the helpmate. And mark, at the same time, that in the case of those who are formed “after the image,” the words were not “husband and wife” but “male and female.” But we have also observed this in the Hebrew, for man is indicated by the word “is,” but male by the word “zachar,” and again woman by the word “essa,” but female by the word “agebeba.” For at no time is it “woman” or “man” “after the image,” but the superior class, the male, and the second, the female. But also if a man leave his mother and his father, he cleaves not to the female, but to his own wife, and “they become,” since man and woman are one in flesh, “one flesh.” Then, describing what ought to be in the case of those who are joined together by God, so that they may be joined together in a manner worthy of God, the Savior adds, “So that they are no more twain;” and, wherever there is indeed concord, and unison, and harmony, between husband and wife, when he is as ruler and she is obedient to the word, “He shall rule over thee,” then of such persons we may truly say, “They are no more twain.” Then since it was necessary that for “him who was joined to the Lord,” it should be reserved “that he should become one spirit with Him,” in the case of those who are joined together by God, after the words, “So that they are no more twain,” it is said, “but one flesh.” And it is God who has joined together the two in one so that they are no more twain, from the time that woman is married to the man. And, since God has joined them together, on this account in the case of those who are joined together by God, there is a “gift”; and Paul knowing this, that marriage according to the Word of God was a “gift,” like as holy celibacy was a gift, says, “But I would that all men were like myself; howbeit, each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that.” And those who are joined together by God both mind and keep the precept, “Husbands love your wives, as Christ also the assembly.” The Savior then commanded, “What God has joined together, a human must not separate,” but man wishes to SEPARATE what God hath joined together, when, “falling away from the sound faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron, forbidding,” not only to commit sexual-immorality, but “to marry,” he dissolves even those who had been before joined together by the providence of God. Let these things then be said, keeping in view what is expressly said concerning the male and the female, and the man and the woman, as the Savior taught in the answer to the Pharisees.

But since the Apostle understands the words, “*And they twain shall be one flesh,*” of Christ and the assembly, we must say that Christ keeping the saying, “What God has joined together, a human must not separate,” did not put away His former wife, so to speak—that is, the former synagogue—for any other cause than that that wife committed sexual-immorality, being made an adulteress by the evil one, and along with him plotted against her husband and slew Him, saying, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, crucify Him, crucify Him.” It was she therefore who herself revolted, rather than her husband who put her away and dismissed her; wherefore, reproaching her for falling away from him, it says in Isaiah, “Of what kind is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, with which I sent her away?” And He who at the beginning created Him “who is in the form of God” after the image, made Him male, and the assembly female, granting to both oneness after the image. And, for the sake of the assembly, the Lord—the husband—left the Father whom He saw when He was “in the form of God,” left also His mother, as He was the very son of the Jerusalem which is above, and was joined to His wife who had fallen down here, and these two here became one flesh. For because of her, He Himself also became flesh, when “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” and they are no more two, but now they are one flesh, since it is said to the wife, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members each in his part;” for the body of Christ is not something apart different from the assembly, which is His body, and from the members each in his part. And God has joined together these who are not two, but have become one flesh, commanding that men should not separate the assembly from the Lord. And he who takes heed for himself so as not to be separated, is confident as one who will not possibly be separated and says, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Here, therefore, the saying, “What God has joined together, a human must not separate,” was written with relation to the Pharisees, but to those who are superior to the Pharisees, it could be said, “What then God has joined together, let nothing separate it,” neither principality nor power; for God, who has joined together is stronger than all those which any one could conceive and name.

After this we will discuss the saying of the Pharisees which they said to Jesus, “*Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement and put her away?*” And with good reason we will bring forward for this purpose the passage from Deuteronomy concerning the bill of divorcement, which is as follows: “But if a man takes a wife and cohabit with her, and it shall be, if she do not find favor in his sight because he hath found in her a thing unseemly,” etc., down to the words, “and ye shall not pollute the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.”

Now I inquire whether in these things according to this law, we are to seek nothing in it beyond the letter seeing that God has not given it, or whether to the Pharisees who quoted the saying, “Moses commanded to give a bill of divorcement and put her away,” it was of necessity said, “Moses, for your hardness of heart, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it hath not been so.” But if any one ascends to the Good-Message of Christ Jesus which teaches that the law is spiritual, he will seek also the spiritual understanding of this law. And he who wishes to interpret these things figuratively will say that, just as it was said by Paul confident in the grace which he had, “A wife is bound for so long time as her husband lives, but if the husband be dead she is free to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord; but she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment, and I think that I also have the Spirit of God” (for here to the words, “after my judgment,” lest it should be despised as being without the Spirit of God, he well added, “and I think that I also have the Spirit of God,”) so also it would be possible for Moses, by reason of the power given to him to make laws, to the effect that he suffered for the hardness of heart of the people certain things, among which was the putting away of wives, to be persuaded in regard to the laws which he promulgated according to his own judgment, that in these also the legislation took place with the Spirit of

God. And he will say that, unless one law is spiritual and another is not such, this is a law, and this is spiritual, and its spiritual significance ought to be investigated.

Now, keeping in mind what we said above in regard to the passage from Isaiah about the bill of divorcement, we will say that the mother of the people separated herself from Christ, her husband, without having received the bill of divorcement, but afterwards when there was found in her an unseemly thing, and she did not find favor in his sight, the bill of divorcement was written out for her; for when the new covenant called those of the nations to the house of Him who had cast away his former wife, it virtually gave the bill of divorcement to her who formerly separated from her husband—the law, and the Word. Therefore he, also, having separated from her, married, so to speak, another, having given into the hands of the former the bill of divorcement; wherefore they can no longer do the things enjoined on them by the law, because of the bill of divorcement. And a sign that she has received the bill of divorcement is this, that Jerusalem was destroyed along with what they called the sanctuary of the things in it which were believed to be holy, and with the altar of burnt offerings, and all the worship associated with it. And a further sign of the bill of divorcement is this, that they cannot keep their feasts, even though according to the letter of the law designedly commanded them, in the place which the Lord God appointed to them for keeping feasts; but there is this also, that the whole synagogue has become unable to stone those who have committed this or that sin; and thousands of things commanded are a sign of the bill of divorcement; and the fact that “there is no more a prophet,” and that they say, “We no longer see signs;” for the Lord says, “He hath taken away from Judah and from Jerusalem,” according to the word of Isaiah, “Him that is mighty, and her that is mighty, a powerful giant,” etc., down to the words, “a prudent hearer.” Now, He who is the Christ may have taken the synagogue to wife and cohabited with her, but it may be that afterwards she found not favour in His sight; and the reason of her not having found favor in His sight was, that there was found in her an unseemly thing; for what was more unseemly than the circumstance that, when it was proposed to them to release one at the feast, they asked for the release of Barabbas the robber, and the condemnation of Jesus? And what was more unseemly than the fact, that they all said in His case, “Crucify Him, crucify Him,” and “Away with such a fellow from the earth”? And can this be freed from the charge of unseemliness, “His blood be upon us, and upon our children”? Wherefore, when He was avenged, Jerusalem was compassed with armies, and its desolation was near, and their house was taken away from it, and “the daughter of Zion was left as a booth in a vineyard, and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, and as a besieged city.” And, about the same time, I think, the husband wrote out a bill of divorcement to his former wife, and gave it into her hands, and sent her away from his own house, and the bond of her who came from the nations has been cancelled about which the Apostle says, “Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances, which was contrary to us, and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross;” for Paul also and others became proselytes of Israel for her who came from the nations. The first wife, accordingly, not having found favour before her husband, because in her had been found an unseemly thing, went out from the dwelling of her husband, and, going away, has become joined to another man, to whom she has subjected herself, whether we should call the husband Barabbas the robber, who is figuratively the slanderer, or some evil power. And in the case of some of that synagogue there has happened the former thing which was written in the law, but in the case of others, that which was second. For the last husband hated his wife and will write out for her some day at the consummation of things a bill of divorcement, when God so orders it, and will give it into her hands and will send her away from his dwelling; for as the good God will put enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between his seed and her seed, so will He order it that the last husband shall hate her.

Now there are those in whose case it has happened that the man dwells with them without having hated them, because they abide in the house of the last husband, who took to himself their synagogue as wife. But also in their case the latter husband dies, perhaps whenever the last enemy of Christ, death, is destroyed. But whichever of these things may happen, whether the former or the latter to the wife, the former husband, it says, who sent her away, will not be able to turn back and take her to be a wife to himself after she has been defiled, since “it is abomination,” it says, “before the Lord thy God.” These things will not seem to be consistent with this, “If the fullness of the nations be come in, all Israel shall be saved.” But consider if it can be said to this, that, if she shall be saved by her former husband returning and taking her to himself as wife, she will in any case be saved after she has been polluted. A priest, then, will not take to himself as a wife one who has been a harlot and an outcast, but no other, as being inferior to the priest, is hindered from doing so. But if you seek for the harlot in regard to the calling of the nations, you may use the passage, “Take to yourself a wife of sexual-immorality, and children of sexual-immorality,” etc.; for, as “the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless,” so he who, casting out his former wife, takes in due season “a wife of sexual-immorality,” having done it according to the command of Him who says, when it is necessary, and so long as it was necessary, “He shall not take a harlot to wife,” and, when it was reasonable, He says, “Take to yourself a wife of sexual-immorality.” For as the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath, and not the slave of the sabbath as the people are, so He who gives the law has power to give it “until a time of reformation,” and to change the law, and, when the time of the reformation is at hand, also to give after the former way and after the former heart another way and another heart, “in an acceptable time, and in a day of salvation.” And let these things be said according to our interpretation of the law in regard to the bill of divorcement.

**[SECTION OMITTED HERE ABOUT MARRYING ANGELS BEING FORBIDDEN]**

But, while dealing with the passage, I would say that we will be able perhaps now to understand and clearly set forth a question which is hard to grasp and see into, with regard to the legislation of the Apostle concerning ecclesiastical matters; for Paul wishes no one of those of the assembly, who has attained to any eminence beyond the many, as is attained in the administration of the sacraments, to make trial of a second marriage. For laying down the law in regard to overseers in the first Epistle to Timothy, he says, “If a man seeks the office of an overseer, he desires a good work. The overseer, therefore,

must be without reproach, the husbands of one wife, temperate, sober-minded," etc.; and, in regard to ministers, "Let the ministers," he says, "be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well," etc. Yea, and also when appointing widows, he says, "Let there be no one as a widow under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man;" and after this he says the things superadded, as being second or third in importance to this.

And, in the Epistle to Titus, "For this cause," he says, "I left you in Crete in order that you should set in order the things which were lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I gave you charge. If any one is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children, that believe"—of course—and so on. Now, when we saw that some who have been married twice may be much better than those who have been married once, we were perplexed why Paul does not at all permit those who have been twice married to be appointed to ecclesiastical dignities; for also it seemed to me that such a thing was worthy of examination, as it was possible that a man, who had been unfortunate in two marriages, and had lost his second wife while he was yet young, might have lived for the rest of his years up to old age in the greatest self-control and chastity. Who, then, would not naturally be perplexed why at all, when a ruler of the assembly is being sought for, we do not appoint such a man, though he has been twice married, because of the expressions about marriage, but lay hold of the man who has been once married as our ruler, even if he chance to have lived to old age with his wife, and sometimes may not have been disciplined in chastity and temperance? But, from what is said in the law about the bill of divorcement, I reflect whether, seeing that the overseer and the elder and the minister are a symbol of things that truly exist in accordance with these names, he wished to appoint those who were figuratively once married, in order that he who is able to give attention to the matter, may find out from the spiritual law the one who was unworthy of ecclesiastical rule, whose soul did not find favor in the eyes of her husband because there had been found in her an unseemly thing, and she had become worthy of the bill of divorcement; for such a soul, having dwelt along with a second husband, and having been hated by such an one, can no longer, after the second bill of divorcement, return to her former husband. It is likely, therefore, also, that other arguments will be found by those who are wiser than we, and have more ability to see into such things, whether in the law about the bill of divorcement, or in the apostolic writings which prohibit those who have been twice married from ruling over the assembly or being preferred to preside over it. But, until something shall be found that is better and able by the excessive brilliancy of the light of knowledge to cast into the shade what we have uttered, we have said the things which have occurred to us in regard to the passages.

But, even if we have seemed to touch on things too deep for our capacity in the passages, nevertheless, because of the literal expression these things must further be said, that some of the laws were written not as excellent, but as by way of accommodation to the weakness of those to whom the law was given; for something of this kind is indicated in the words, "Moses for your hardness-of-heart allow you to put away your women;" (Matthew 19:8) but that which is pre-eminent and superior to the law, which was written for their hardness of heart, is indicated in this, "But from the beginning it has not been so." But in the new covenant also there are some legal injunctions of the same order as, "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives;" for example, because of our hardness of heart, it has been written on account of our weakness, "But because of sexual-immoralities, let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband;" (1 Corinthians 7:2) and this, "Let the husband render unto the wife her due, and likewise also the wife unto the husband." (1 Corinthians 8:3) To these sayings it is accordingly subjoined, "But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment." (1 Corinthians 7:6) But this also, "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband lives, but if her husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord," (1 Corinthians 7:39) was said by Paul in view of our hardness of heart and weakness, to those who do not wish to desire earnestly the greater gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31) and become more blessed. **But now contrary to what was written, some even of the rulers of the assembly have permitted a woman to marry, even when her husband was living, doing contrary to what was written,** where it is said, "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband lives," and "So then if while her husband lives, she shall be joined to another man she shall be called an adulteress," (Romans 7:3) not indeed altogether without reason, for it is probable this concession was permitted in comparison with worse things, contrary to what was from the beginning ordained by law, and written.

But perhaps some Jewish man of those who dare to oppose the teaching of our Savior will say, that when Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his own wife, saving for the cause of sexual-immorality, makes her an adulteress," (Matthew 5:32) He also gave permission to put away a wife like as well as Moses did, who was said by Him to have given laws for the hardness of heart of the people, and will hold that the saying, "Because he found in her an unseemly thing," (Deuteronomy 24:1) is to be reckoned as the same as sexual-immorality on account of which with good cause a wife could be cast away from her husband. But to him it must be said that, if she who committed adultery was according to the law to be stoned, clearly it is not in this sense that the unseemly thing is to be understood. For it is not necessary for adultery or any such great indecency to write a bill of divorcement and give it into the hands of the wife; but indeed perhaps Moses called every sin an unseemly thing, on the discovery of which by the husband in the wife, as not finding favor in the eyes of her husband, the bill of divorcement is written, and the wife is sent away from the house of her husband; "but from *the* beginning it has not been so." (Matthew 19:8) After this our Savior says, **not at all permitting the dissolution of marriages for any other sin than sexual-immorality alone,** when detected in the wife, "Whoever RELEASES his own woman, except for the cause of sexual-immorality, makes her an adulteress." (Matthew 5:32) But it might be a subject for inquiry if on this account he hinders any one putting away a wife, unless she be caught in sexual-immorality, for any other reason, as for example for poisoning, or for the destruction during the absence of her husband from home of an infant born to them, or for any form of murder whatsoever. And further, if she were found despoiling and pillaging the house of her husband, though she was not guilty of sexual-immorality, one might ask if he would with reason cast away such an one, seeing that the Savior forbids any one to



put away his own wife saving for the cause of sexual-immorality. In either case there appears to be something monstrous, whether it be really monstrous, I do not know; for to endure sins of such heinousness which seem to be worse than adultery or sexual-immorality, will appear to be irrational; but again on the other hand to act contrary to the design of the teaching of the Savior, every one would acknowledge to be impious. I wonder therefore why He did not say, Let no one put away his own wife saving for the cause of sexual-immorality, but says, “Whosoever shall put away his own wife, except for the cause of sexual-immorality, makes her an adulteress.” (Matthew 5:32) **For confessedly he who puts away his wife when she is not a fornicator, makes her an adulteress, so far as it lies with him,** for if, “when the husband is living she shall be called an adulteress if she be joined to another man;” (Romans 7:3) **and when by putting her away, he gives to her the excuse of a second marriage, very plainly in this way he makes her an adulteress.** But as to whether her being caught in the act of poisoning or committing murder, furnishes any defense of his divorce of her, you can inquire yourselves; for the husband can also in other ways than by putting her away cause his own wife to commit adultery; as, for example, allowing her to do what she wishes beyond what is fitting, and stooping to friendship with what men she wishes, for often from the simplicity of husbands such false steps happen to wives; but whether there is a ground of defense or not for such husbands in the case of such false steps, you will inquire carefully, and deliver your opinion also in regard to the difficult questions raised by us on the passage. And even he who withholds himself from his wife makes her oftentimes to be an adulteress when he does not satisfy her desires, even though he does so under the appearance of greater gravity and self-control. And perhaps this man is more culpable who, so far as it rests with him, makes her an adulteress when he does not satisfy her desires than he who, for other reason than sexual-immorality, has sent her away—for poisoning or murder or any of the most grievous sins. **But as a woman is an adulteress, even though she seem to be married to a man, while the former husband is still living, so also the man who seems to marry her who has been put away, does not so much marry her as commit adultery with her according to the declaration of our Savior.**

Now after these things, having considered how many possible accidents may arise in marriages, which it was necessary for the man to endure and in this way suffer very great hardships, or if he did not endure, to transgress the word of Christ, the disciples say to him, taking refuge in celibacy as easier, and more expedient than marriage, though the latter appears to be expedient, “*If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.*” And to this the Savior said, teaching us that absolute chastity is a gift given by God, and not merely the fruit of training, but given by God with prayer, “All men cannot receive the saying, but they to whom it is given.” Then seeing that some make a sophistical attack on the saying, “To whom it is given,” as if those who wished to remain pure in celibacy, but were mastered by their desires, had an excuse, we must say that, if we believe the Scriptures, why at all do we lay hold of the saying, “But they to whom it is given,” but no longer attend to this, “Ask and it shall be given you,” and to that which is added to it, “For every one that asks receives”? For if they “to whom it is given” can receive this saying about absolute purity, let him who wills ask, obeying and believing Him who said, “Ask and it shall be given you,” and not doubting about the saying, “Every one that asks receives.” But when there you will inquire who it is that asks, for no one of those who do not receive has asked, even though he seems to have done so, since it is not lawful to say that the saying, “Every one that asks receives,” is a lie. Who then is he that asks, but he who has obeyed Jesus when He says, “If ye stand praying, believe that ye receive, and ye shall receive”? But he that asks must do everything in his power that he may pray “with the spirit” and pray also “with the understanding,” and pray “without ceasing,” keeping in mind also the saying, “And He spoke a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint, saying, There was in a city a judge,” etc. And it is useful to know what it is to ask, and what it is to receive, and what is meant by “Every one that asks, receives,” and by “I say unto you though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he needs.” It is therefore added, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you,” and so on. Further, let the saying, “All men cannot receive the saying but they to whom it is given,” be a stimulus to us to ask worthily of receiving; and this, “What son is there of you who shall ask his father for a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent,” etc. God therefore will give the good gift, perfect purity in celibacy and chastity, to those who ask Him with the whole soul, and with faith, and in prayers without ceasing.

And it is possible to apply these words also to our nearest kinsfolk, who are our members, as it were; being considered to be our members, because of the close relationship; whether by birth, or from any habitual friendship, so to speak; whom we must not spare if they are injuring our soul. For let us cut off from ourselves as a hand or a foot or an eye, a father or mother who wishes us to do that which is contrary to piety, and a son or daughter who, as far as in them lies, would have us revolt from the assembly of Christ and the love of Him. But even if the wife of our bosom, or a friend who is kindred in soul, become stumbling-blocks to us, let us not spare them, but let us cut them out from ourselves, and cast them outside of our soul, as not being truly our kindred but enemies of our salvation; for “whosoever hates not his father, and mother,” and the others subjoined, when it is the fitting season to hate them as enemies and assailants, that he may be able to win Christ, this man is not worthy of the Son of God. And in respect of these we may say, that from a critical position any lame one, so to speak, is saved, when he has lost a foot—say a brother—and alone obtains the inheritance of the kingdom of God; and a maimed one is saved, when his father is not saved, but they perish, while he is separated from them, that he alone may obtain the benedictions. And so also any one is saved with one eye, who has cut out the eye of his own house, his wife, if she commit sexual-immorality, lest having two eyes he may go away into the Gehenna fire.

So much then for the more common understanding of the two or three whom the Word exhorts to be in agreement. But now let us also touch upon another interpretation which was uttered by some one of our predecessors, exhorting those who were married to sanctity and purity; for by the two, he says, whom the Word desires to agree on earth, we must understand the husband and wife, who by agreement defraud each other of bodily intercourse that they may give themselves unto prayer; when if they pray for anything whatever that they shall ask, they shall receive it, the request being granted to them by the Father in heaven of Jesus Christ on the ground of such agreement. And this interpretation does not appear to me to cause dissolution of marriage, but to be an incitement to agreement, so that if the one wished to be pure, but the other did not desire it, and on this account he who willed and was able to fulfill the better part, condescended to the one who had not the power or the will, they would not both have the accomplishment from the Father in heaven of Jesus Christ, of anything whatever that they might ask.

“But Herod laid hold on John and bound him in prison and put him away,” by this act signifying that, so far as it depended on his power and on the wickedness of the people, he bound and imprisoned the prophetic word, and prevented him from continuing to abide a herald the truth in freedom as formerly. But this Herod did for the sake of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John said unto him, “It is not lawful for thee to have her.” Now this Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraia and of Trachonitis. Some, then, suppose that, when Philip died leaving a daughter, Herodias, Herod married his brother’s wife, though the law permitted marriage only when there were no children. But, as we find nowhere clear evidence that Philip was dead, we conclude that a yet greater transgression was done by Herod, namely, that he had induced his brother’s wife to revolt from her husband while he was still living.

It is a good thing, and first in value, if a woman can possess the grace of virginity. If she cannot do this, but she happens to lose her husband, let her persevere as a widow. If fact, she should have this idea in mind not only after the death of her husband, but even while he is still living. Then, if what she wills and proposes does not occur, she will be crowned by the Lord and can say, “If something happens in the course of life, although I do not hope for it, I shall do nothing else but persevere uncorrupted as a widow.” But now second, third, and fourth marriages—and I keep my silence about even more—are found in the Assembly. We know that such a union will eject us from the kingdom of God. Not only sexual-immorality, but also second marriage, excludes someone from office in the Assembly. Anyone twice married may be neither an overseer, nor an elder, nor a minister, nor a widow. Perhaps in this sense will a twice-married man be ejected from the assembly of the first-born and the spotless, the Assembly, which has neither spot nor wrinkled—not to be cast into eternal fire, but to be denied a place in the kingdom of God.

### **Julius Africanus (c. 160~240AD)**

As the law did not prevent a widow,<sup>30</sup> whether such by divorce or by the death of her husband, from marrying another.

### **Methodius (c. 300AD)**

Come, now, and let us examine more carefully the very words which are before us, and observe that the apostle did not grant these things unconditionally to all, but first laid down the reason on account of which he was led to this. For, having set forth that “it is good for a man not to touch a woman,” he added immediately, “Nevertheless, to avoid sexual-immorality, let every man have his own wife”—that is, “on account of the sexual-immorality which would arise from your being unable to restrain your voluptuousness”—and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 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. Defraud ye not one the other, except it tie with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to prayer; and come together again, that the Adversary tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.” And this is very carefully considered. “By permission” he says, showing that he was giving counsel, “not of command;” for he receives command respecting chastity and the not touching of a woman, but permission respecting those who are unable, as I said, to chasten their appetites. These things, then, he lays down concerning men and women who are married to one spouse, or who shall hereafter be so; but we must now examine carefully the apostle’s language respecting men who have lost their wives, and women who have lost their husbands, and what he declares on this subject.

“I say therefore,” he goes on, “to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.” Here also he persisted in giving the preference to continence. For, taking himself as a notable example, in order to stir them up to emulation, he challenged his hearers to this state of life, teaching that it was better that a man who had been bound to one wife should henceforth remain single, as he also did. But if, on the other hand, this should be a matter of difficulty to any one, on account of the strength of animal passion, he allows that one who is in such a condition may, “by permission,” contract a second marriage; not as though he

<sup>30</sup> [ANF footnote] Here Africanus applies the term “widow” to one divorced as well as to one bereaved

expressed the opinion that a second marriage was in itself flood,(10) but judging it better than burning. Just as though, in the fast which prepares for the Easter celebration, one should offer food to an other who was dangerously ill, and say," In truth, my friend, it were fitting and good that you should bravely hold out like us, and partake of the same things, for it is forbidden even to think of food to-day; but since you are held down and weakened by disease, and cannot bear it, therefore, 'by permission,' we advise you to eat food, lest, being quite unable, from sickness, to hold up against the desire for food, you perish." Thus also the apostle speaks here, first saying that he wished all were healthy and continent, as he also was, but afterwards allowing a second marriage to those who are burdened with the disease of the passions, lest they should be wholly defiled by sexual-immorality, goaded on by the itchings of the organs of generation to promiscuous intercourse, considering such a second marriage far preferable to burning and indecency.

But yet if it shall please you who find chastity hard to bear, rather to turn to marriage; I consider it to be profitable for you to restrain yourselves in the gratification of the flesh, not making your marriage an occasion for abusing your own vessels to uncleanness.

And thus, from the time of Abraham, the custom of marrying with sisters has ceased; and from the times of the prophets the contracting of marriage with several wives has been done away with.

Lest, however, we should seem prolix in collecting the testimonies of the prophets, let us again point out how chastity succeeded to marriage with one wife, taking away by degrees the lusts of the flesh, until it removed entirely the inclination for sexual intercourse engendered by habit.

### **Lactantius (c. 240~320 AD)**

But if the opportunity of this glory shall be wanting, faith will have its reward even in peace. Therefore let it be observed in all the duties of life, let it be observed in marriage. For it is not sufficient if you abstain from another's bed, or from the brothel. Let him who has a wife seek nothing further, but, content with her alone, let him guard the mysteries of the marriage-bed. chaste and undefiled. For he is equally an adulterer in the sight of God and impure, who, having thrown off the yoke, wantons in strange pleasure either with a free woman or a slave. But as a woman is bound by the bonds of chastity not to desire any other man, so let the husband be bound by the same law, since God has joined together the husband and the wife in the union of one body. **On this account He has commanded that the woman shall not be put away unless convicted of adultery, and that the bond of the conjugal compact shall never be dissolved, unless unfaithfulness has broken it.** This also is added for the completion of chastity, that there should be an absence not only of the offence, but even of the thought. For it is evident that the mind is polluted by the desire, though unaccomplished; and so that a righteous man ought neither to do, nor to wish to do, that which is unrighteous. Therefore the conscience must be cleansed; for God, who cannot be deceived, inspects it. The breast must be cleared from every stain, that it may be a temple of God, which is enlightened not by the gleam of gold or ivory, but by the brightness of faith and purity.

For men who have many mistresses can be called nothing else than luxurious and prodigal. And likewise women who are in the possession of many men, must of necessity be not adulteresses, because they have no fixed marriage, but prostitutes and harlots.

We are likewise commanded not to commit adultery; but by this precept we are not only prohibited from polluting the marriage of another, which is condemned even by the common law of nations, but even to abstain from those who prostitute their persons.

### **The Council of Aries (314 AD)**

As regards those who find their wives to be guilty of adultery, and who being Christian are, though young men, forbidden to marry, we decree that, so far as may be, counsel be given them not to take other wives, while their own, though guilty of adultery, are yet living.

### **The Pseudo-Apostolic Canons (325 AD)**

Let not an overseer, or minister, dismiss his wife under pretense of religion; but if he dismisses her, let him be excommunicated; and if he persists, let him be deposed.

He who has been twice married after immersion, or who has had a concubine, cannot become a overseer, elder, or minister, or any other of the sacerdotal list.

He who married a widow, or a dismissed woman, or a whore, or a maidservant, or an actress cannot be an overseer, elder, or minister, or any other of the sacerdotal list.

He who has married two sisters, or a niece, cannot become a clergyman.

### **Basil the Great (375 AD)**

The man who has deserted his wife and goes to another is himself an adulterer **because he makes her commit adultery; and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress, because she has caused another woman's husband to come over to her...** The woman who lives with an adulterer is an adulteress the whole time.

Our Lord is equal, to the man and woman forbidding **RELEASING, except in the case of sexual-immorality;** but custom requires women to retain their husbands, though they be guilty of sexual-immorality. **The man deserted by his wife may take another, and though he were deserted for adultery,** that the other woman who afterward takes him is guilty of adultery; but the wife is not allowed this liberty. **And the man who deserts an innocent wife is not allowed to marry.**

That he, who having another man's wife or spouse taken away from him, marries another, is guilty of adultery with the first, not with the second.

She who marries a man who was deserted for a while by his wife, but is afterward released upon the return of the man's former wife, commits sexual-immorality, but ignorantly: she shall not be prohibited marriage, but it is better that she do not marry.

**A woman released from her man, ought to remain unmarried, in my judgment.** The Lord said, "If any one leave his wife, except for the cause of sexual-immorality, he causes her to commit adultery;" thus, **by calling her adulteress, he excludes her from intercourse with another man.** For how can the man being guilty, as having caused adultery, and the woman, go without blame, when she is called an adulteress by the Lord for having intercourse with another man?

He who **RELEASES** his woman from *him*, and marries another, is an adulterer, he shall be a mourner one year, a hearer two years, a prostrator three years, a co-stander one year, if they repent with tears.

### **CONCLUSION OF THIS SECTION**

And I suppose that from here on, we should refrain from continuing to state more opinions, as I believe that from this point on we have crossed over the territory from the early church and into the opinions of men who were too estranged from the Good-Message, and were in union with Constantine and were soon corrupted by heretics such as Augustine and the so-called assembly at this age became very spoiled. But, if one wishes, they may go on to Chrysostom John of Antioch (344~407 AD), Ambrosiaster (387 AD), Jerome (396 AD), Augustine (419 AD), and so on, and be beset with a plethora of varying opinions of men too numerous to delve further into depth with.

## PART012: MENNO SIMONS ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

All quotations are from “The Complete Writings of Menno Simons” translated from the Dutch by Leonard Verdun and Edited by J.C. Wenger. 1956 by Mennonite Publishing House. (Note, the discourses have other names in “The Complete Works of Menno Simons” and different page numbers.)

We acknowledge, teach, and assent to no other marriage than that which Christ and his apostles publicly and plainly taught in the New Testament, namely, one man and one woman (Matt. 19:4), and that they may not be divorced except in case of adultery (Matt. 5:32); for the two are one flesh, but if the unbelieving one depart, a sister or brother is not under bondage in that case. (1 Cor. 7:15) (Foundation of Christian Doctrine, pg200)

I have likewise asserted that in this kingdom and under this King, no other marriage is in effect, save that between one man and one woman as God in the beginning had ordained in the case of Adam and Eve; and Christ has once more formulated it that these two shall be one flesh, and that they shall not divorce [other translation “separate”], except for the cause of fornication. (Matt. 5: 32). (Foundation of Christian Doctrine, pg217)

Undoubtedly, it is well known to us all, dear brethren, that the first commandment of the second table is an unusually strong and solemn commandment, Honor your father and your mother. We know that all they had to die according to the law of Moses, who cursed, struck, or disobeyed father or mother. We know too that the bond of undefiled, honorable matrimony is so firm and fast in the kingdom and government of Christ, that no man may leave his wife, nor a wife her husband, and marry another (understand arightly what Christ says), except it be for adultery [other translated says “fornication”]. (Matt 19:9). Paul also holds the same doctrine, that they shall be so bound to each other that the man has no power over his own body, nor the woman over hers. (1 Cor 7:4). But these regulations, the first concerning parents and the second concerning wedlocks, stand fast and firm and cannot nor may not be altered or broken by any man so long as we can in God and with God, in a good conscience, observe and keep them, as the aforementioned regulations require, without transgressing the holy Word. But it is incontrovertible that if this cannot be, then the spiritual must not make way for the carnal, but the carnal must make way for the spiritual. (Instruction on Excommunication, Pg970)

Then, Menno Simons, in answer to a slander by a critic who is accusing them of having their woman in common, writes:

In the fifth place some of them invent the report, that we practice polygamy and that we have our women in common; that we say to each other, “Sister, my spirit desires your flesh”.

Answer: As to polygamy we would say, the Scriptures show that before the law some of the patriarchs had many wives, yet they did not take the same liberty under the law that they had before the law. For Abraham, who was before the law, had his own sister for wife, as he himself testifies before Abimelech, the king, saying, “And yet she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. (Gen. 20:13). Jacob had two sisters for wives, Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. (Gen. 23). These liberties to marry their own sister and to marry two sisters at once were afterwards strictly forbidden in Israel under the law. (Lev. 18).

Each era had its own liberty and usage according to the Scriptures, in the matter of marriage. And under the New Testament, we are not pointed by the Lord to the usage of the patriarchs before the law nor under the law, but to the beginning of creation, to Adam and Eve (which word we sincerely desire to obey). Therefore we teach, practice and consent to no other *arrangement* than the one which was in the beginning in Adam and Eve, namely, one husband and one wife, as the Lord's mouth has ordained. (Matt. 19).

We say one husband and one wife, and not one husband and two, three, or four wives, and these counted as one, as they charge us, alas, without any truth. These two, one husband and one wife, are one flesh, and cannot be separated from each other, to marry again, otherwise than for adultery, as the Lord says. (Matt. 5: 19; Mark 10; Luke 16.)

This is our real position, doctrine, and practice concerning marriage, as we here confess with the Holy Scriptures. And by the grace of God, it will ever remain the position of all pious souls, no matter what false charges and slander may be preferred against us. For we know and confess truly, that it is the express ordinance, command, intent and unchangeable, plain word of Christ.

But as to the charge of the shameful immorality of having our wives in common, we reply with Solomon, that we should not answer fools in accordance with their folly, lest we become like unto them; yet we have to do it lest they think they are wise and right. (Prov. 26:4,5).

Kind reader, I am heartily ashamed to touch upon such accursed charges of harlotry and wicked abandon before the ears of blushing, pious persons. For they are not only in opposition to the Scriptures but also to all reason, sense and honor. But since they not only make us out to be wretched scoundrels, but also dogs and swine; and in order that

the pious, virtuous hearts who, if possible, would rather die ten deaths than commit such abominations, may see how they are spit upon by some shameless slanderers; therefore it is no more than reasonable to defend our reputation in a Christian manner to the praise of the Lord, and to ward off such slander from us as much as we may.

We hereby testify, now and forever, in this place, before God, that we, with the angel of the church of Ephesus, hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which, also, God hates. (Rev. 2:6). We teach, as from the mouth of the Lord, "That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already broken his marriage vow in his heart. (Matt 28) And with Paul, That the adulterers and fornicators cannot inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6).

We are plainly taught by the Scriptures, and as, by the grace of the Lord, we not only believe so, but also teach others in this way with the authority of the divine word. And besides, since we are in constant danger of apprehension, prison and death; are tied to the stake by threes and fours, by sixes and sevens; are garroted, burned and drowned, and unmercifully murdered and killed, therefore, judge whether we would practice such frightful abominations and immorality, at which every reasonable person should stand astounded, and which, according to many Scriptures, are rewarded by everlasting death and eternal, unquenchable, hell fire. Oh, what miserable men we should be! It is shameful slander! No, no. We trust, that in our weakness, by the grace of the Lord and according to our gift, we have made our bodies and members into a temple and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. We trust, by the grace and assistance of the Lord, that we will never in all our days fellowship again with harlots and immoral wretches—we mean such who do not repent. (Rom. 1; 1 Cor. 6; Gal. 5; Eph. 5; Heb. 13; Rev. 21.) (Reply to False Accusations, pg560~562)

He also has a few other comments on his stance against polygamy:

...not because we want to practice polygamy or expect a kingdom of earth. (Foundation of Christian Doctrine, pg 129)

Also, when, contrary to the teachings of Paul, you condemn marital intimacy with a woman either pregnant or barren, and, under this pretense, indirectly commend Jewish polygamy and also practice it, and under the pretext of ascetic discipline introduce other carnal comminglings. (Sharp Reply to David Joris, pg1020)

The following quotation is part of an answer to a question which he is being asked, "Should husband and wife shun each other on account of the ban, also parents and children?" (That is, referring to being excommunicated.) The topic of the situation was not about divorce, but he does briefly mention his stance on it in passing:

Some object to this, saying that there is no divorce but by reason of adultery. This is just what we say, and therefore we do not speak of divorce but of shunning, and that for the aforementioned reasons. To shunning Paul has consented, although this is not always coupled with adultery, but not to divorce. For divorce is not allowed by the Scriptures except for adultery. Therefore we shall not to all eternity consent to it for other reasons. (Account of Excommunication, pg479)

In part of a section of Menno Simon's writings, in which he states that, "if you would not lose your soul" a man is required to marry a girl whom he has had sexual relations with, he writes:

In the fourth place I ask: Whether there is any one who, with a good conscience, can transgress and break the command of God? If you say 'yes', then you deny the Scriptures, which teach, that we shall walk in the ways of the Lord and keep his commandments. But if you say 'no', then I tell you the fourth time, that she is, and must be your wife; for it is the command of God, firmly based upon love, that if you have lain with a virgin, you should marry her and never forsake her, as heard.

Behold, my reader, here you are more than plainly taught what the word of the Lord teaches in regard to this matter. And if you continue so ungodly as to transgress the command of the Lord by disgracing one, and marrying another, you may read what your end and sentence will be, in case you do not repent. [Other translation reads here, "read the consequences in 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10, unless you sincerely repent."]

I do not mean to say that a person who has in days gone by ignorantly done so, to leave the wife whom he afterward married, and take in her stead the disgraced one; not at all, for I doubt not but that the merciful Father will graciously overlook the errors of those who have ignorantly done so, and who will now fear and gladly do what is right. But I write this, that every one should guard himself against such disgrace, and reflect more profoundly upon the command of the Lord and of love, and observe how Christ is so wholly despised by the world. (True Christian Faith, pg379)

Also, in 1554 seven Dutch Mennonite elders and ministers held a conference at Wismar and adopted nine rules to guide the congregations of the brotherhood, one of these is:

If a believer and an unbeliever are in the marriage bond together and the unbeliever commits adultery, then the marriage tie is broken. And if it be one who complains that he has fallen in sin, and desires to mend his way, then the brethren permit the believing mate to go to the unfaithful one to admonish him, if conscience allows it in view of the state of the affair. But if he be a bold and headstrong adulterer, then the innocent party is free—with the provision, however, that she shall consult with the congregation and remarry according to the circumstances and decisions in the matter, be it well understood. (The Wismar Articles of 1554, pg1041)

## PART013: AN EXAMPLE OF A SITUATION

Now, let us examine a real situation. A woman releases/divorces the man to whom she is married for a reason *other* than sexual-immorality (he had done nothing wrong, and most definitely did not commit any sort of sexual-immorality). There are no commandments from Jesus or anyone else who would grant permission for one to release/divorce their spouse for any other reason than an account of sexual-immorality. And this woman, not only released/divorced the man whom she was married to, but almost instantly began to seek out other men and herself committed sexual-immorality. Now although the man did not release/divorce her himself, since she had committed sexual-immorality, he, using the exception which Jesus taught, would have been blameless in this situation had he released/divorced her himself. For in the case of this separation/divorce, the man is in the position as the innocent victim. The man had been released/divorced by the woman whom he had been married to for reasons other than sexual-immorality, while she herself had committed sexual-immorality. And because of this, the man may seek to be married to another woman, if he so wishes.

Now let us examine all of the verses in order to see that this situation would not violate a single one of them.

So let the entire body of believers behold the word of God without any deviation. And let it be found, that not one person, in the heaven and on the earth, would be able to hold either this man and the new woman whom he married in *any* guilt whatsoever, and will be unable to speak out against such a union, nor will they be able to justify any hesitation or doubt on their part.

Therefore what God has joined together, a human must not SEPARATE. (Matthew 19)	The man did not SEPARATE, the woman SEPARATED from him.
If anyone RELEASES his woman from <i>him</i> (not on <i>grounds</i> of sexual-immorality) and marries another he commits adultery. (Matthew 19:9)	The man did not RELEASE his woman; this entire passage does not apply to the man. But, because of her committing of sexual-immorality, the man would have been justified in doing so. (So, if the man had done this, the exception clause of this passage renders this clause void.)
If anyone RELEASES his woman from <i>him</i> and marries another he commits adultery against her. (Mark 10:11)	The man did not RELEASE his woman, so this entire passage did not apply. (But if the man had done so, it would have been rightfully done under the exception clause of Matthew 19.)
And if she RELEASES her man from <i>her and</i> marries another, she commits adultery. (Mark 10:12)	A man is not a woman, so this does not apply to him. Also, he if he does not plan to marry a woman who had been RELEASED from her man, there is definitely no problems in any way. (But according to our study in Matthew 19, if she had not been RELEASED for sexual-immorality, then the former man would have taken the guilt for her adultery by marrying him. And even if this did apply to the man, he did not RELEASE her, she RELEASED him.)
He RELEASES his woman from <i>him</i> (except for an account of sexual-immorality), makes her commit adultery. (Matthew 5:32a)	The man did not RELEASE his woman; this entire passage does not apply to him. (But, because of her committing of sexual-immorality, he would have been justified in doing so.)
And if a <i>man</i> marries a <i>woman</i> RELEASED from a <i>man</i> he commits adultery. (Matthew 5:32b)	The man is not a woman, so this does not apply to him. Also, he if he does not plan to marry a woman who has been RELEASED from a man, it still does not (see above).
Every one who RELEASES his woman from <i>him</i> and marries another commits adultery. (Luke 16:18)	The man did not RELEASE his woman, so this entire passage does not apply to him.



And the one who marries a <i>woman</i> RELEASED from a man commits adultery. (Luke 16:18)	The man is not a woman, so this passage does not apply to him. Also, he if he does not plan to marry a woman who has been RELEASED from a man, it still does not (see above).
But to the married, I give this instruction (not I, <i>but</i> instead the Lord): a woman should not SEPARATE from a man – but and if she does SEPARATE, she must either remain an unmarried- <i>individual</i> or become reconciled to the man. (1 Corinthians 7:10~11a)	The man is not a woman, so this passage does not apply to him. Also, he if he does not plan to marry a woman who has been SEPARATED from her man, it still does not (see above).
And a man should not DISMISS a woman. (1 Corinthians 7:11b)	The man did not DISMISS his woman.
To the rest I say (not the Lord): if any brother has a woman who is an unbeliever, and she is willing to go on living with him, he should not DISMISS her. (1 Corinthians 7:12)	The man was willing to go on living with his woman. The man did not DISMISS her. But since she was unwilling to go on living with him, this passage does not apply.
And if any woman has a man who is an unbeliever, and he is willing to go on living with her, she should not DISMISS the man. (1 Corinthians 7:13)	The man is not a woman, so this passage does not apply to him.
But if the unbeliever SEPARATES, let him SEPARATE. The brother or sister is not enslaved in such cases; but God has called you to peace. (1 Corinthians 7:15)	The woman was an unbeliever and she SEPARATED from the man. The man is commanded to let her SEPARATE. And now the man is no longer enslaved.
Now about the virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is faithful. Therefore, this is what I think best because of the present distress: that it is beautiful for a human to remain as he is. Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE. Are you RELEASED from a woman? Then do not seek for a woman. But and if you marry, you do not sin, and if the virgin marries, she does not sin; but such people will experience a tribulation in the flesh, and I would like to spare you that. (1 Corinthians 7:25~28)	The man is no longer BOUND to a woman, so he does not have to worry about seeking to be RELEASED. But the man is RELEASED of a woman, so Paul advises him not to look for a woman. But, if he does happen to marry, it is not sin.
Now to the unmarried and to the widows, I say: it is beautiful for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control they should marry, for it is better to marry than to be on fire. (1 Corinthians 7:8~9)	The man is unmarried, so if he is unable to exercise self-control, it is better for him to marry. (And this is the case with most men, who will have a strong desire to be married again.)
A woman is BOUND to her man as long as he lives. But if the man falls asleep, she is free to be married to whomever she wants, provided that it be in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7:39)	The man is not a woman, so this passage does not apply to him. And if he does not plan to marry a woman who has been previously married, this would not apply either. (Regardless, if it also applied in the opposite way, the absence of the ‘exception clause’ here does not suddenly nullify it when it is clearly stated elsewhere.)
Are you unaware, brothers (for I am speaking to people who know the law), that the law has	The man is not a woman, so this passage does not apply to him. And if he does not plan to marry a

jurisdiction over a human as long as one lives? For a married woman is BOUND by a law to the living man; but if the man dies, she is set free from the law in respect to the man. Therefore, while the man is alive she will be called an adulteress if she consorts with another man. But if the man dies, she is free from that law, and she is not an adulteress if she consorts with another man. (Romans 7:1~3)

woman who has been previously married, this does not apply either.  
(See above.)

Even on the literal level of these verses in this situation, the man would not violate a single one. And if the now unmarried man decided to marry a virgin (or a non-released woman), she would not be violating a single one of these passages on a literal level. Now, from our previous discussions, we do understand that a second marriage is permissible for the following reasons: release on grounds of sexual-immorality, a wife who has been put away for a reason other than sexual-immorality (although this is adultery, but the original sinful husband who wrongfully releases her from him takes the guilt for this and not the remarrying wife), and if an unbelieving man or woman separates leaving the innocent spouse behind.

But one will say, “You made a marriage vow to your wife. You must keep it.”

First, as we saw in a previous section, covenants *can* be broken if one party is unfaithful to the terms.

Second, vows are forbidden to be made by Jesus, and the doing so at a marriage is a concept foreign to anything written in the holy writings even under the Old Covenant where such things were not restricted by God. All that may be observed is that a man decides to take a woman for himself and there is general agreement that she belongs to him.

Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the Evil One. (Matthew 5:37)

But, even had vows been made, there is a mutual understanding that a covenant is broken when one party is unfaithful to the terms of that covenant—as may be seen with the covenant which was made between God and his people Israel, when he withdraw promises from them because of their unfaithfulness, even if he never stated an exception clause; for a covenant is understood as conditional.

So as we can see, this situation does not violate a single verse. And anyone who condemns something which God does not condemn, should fear that he might fall under the same judgment from God. Therefore, let not man interfere with the will of God, by barricading God’s smooth roads with the traditions of men.

## APPENDIX: HOW LONG TO WAIT BEFORE MARRYING?

With the amount of congregations which have abandoned the Christ and have polluted themselves with the ways of the world with uncommitted dating and other absurd excuses for intimacy outside of marriage—including intimate touching, holding hands, “belonging” to one another without any sort of commitment, being upset when your dating partner (whom you have made no commitment with) decides to date someone else, etc.—I have felt that issues such as these need to be more strongly delved into in order to ascertain the truth from the holy writings, and the heart of God, regarding the proper time to marry.

Firstly, I will state, that if you are not married, you have no commitment to the other person, and you need to stop pretending as if there was. She is not your woman. She does not belong to you. She is a sister. And unless you are married to her, she needs to be treated with the same purity as if she were your own sister, and altogether, as if she were your own sister:

It is a good thing for a man not to touch a woman. (1 Corinthians 7:1)

For:

this is the will of God, your holiness: that you refrain from sexual-immorality, that each of you know how to acquire a woman for himself in holiness and honor, not in lustful passion as do the nations who do not know God.

(1 Thessalonians 4:3~6)

And:

When men and women marry, the union should be made with the consent of the overseer, so that the marriage may be according to the Lord and not merely out of lust. Let all be done to the glory of God. (Ignatius:Polycarp 2:12)

Therefore, if we wish to acquire a wife, this must not be done because we are lustfully drawn to her, but that she must be acquired with fullness of purity and holiness. And that woman must be fully devoted to the Lord, someone who we would not be unequally yoked with, becoming a shackle about our legs instead of a helpmeet.

For as Paul instructs:

Do not be yoked with those who are different, with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

(2 Corinthians 6:14)

And:

But if the man falls asleep, she is free to be married to whomever she wants, provided that it be in the Lord.

(1 Corinthians 7:39)

But is marriage what we should be seeking? For Paul writes to us:

Now to the unmarried and to the widows, I say: it is beautiful for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control they should marry, for it is better to marry than to be on fire. (1 Corinthians 7:8~9)

Paul instructs that it is a good thing for them to remain single, but if they cannot commit to singleness due to a lack of “self-control” they should marry.

And furthermore, although the Lord himself did not issue this command, Paul himself, who had been commissioned by God to teach, was given the authority still to issue forth what was best for the situation:

Now about the virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is faithful. Therefore, this is what I think best because of the present distress: that it is beautiful for a human to remain as he is. Are you BOUND to a woman? Do not seek a RELEASE. Are you RELEASED from a woman?

Then do not seek for a woman. But and if you marry, you do not sin, and if the virgin marries, she does not sin; but such people will experience a tribulation in the flesh, and I would like to spare you that.

But I declare to you, brothers, the season is running out. From now on, let those having women act as not having them, and those weeping as not weeping, and those rejoicing as not rejoicing, and those buying as not owning, and those using the world as not using it fully. For the world in its present form is passing away. But I want you to be free of concerns.

The unmarried *individual* is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But the one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please the woman, and he is divided.

And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both the body and the spirit. But a *woman* who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please the man.

Now I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you, *but* instead for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction.

But if anyone thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if a critical moment has come and so it has to be, let him do as he wants. He is committing no sin; let them get married.

But the one who stands firm in his heart, who is not under compulsion but has power over his own will, and has made up his mind to keep his virgin, will be doing well. (1 Corinthians 7:25~38)

So Paul begins here by stating that he would prefer them to obey this instruction because of the “present distress.” And what is this “present distress”? That “the season is running out. For the world in its present form is passing away.” Paul wants men’s focus to be completely upon the Lord and not divided between temporal relationships and anxieties. He is urging them to strive for celibacy.

But what is his reason for permitting marriage? As he mentioned above (“if they cannot exercise self-control”), so too, the same reason applies: if “he is behaving improperly toward his virgin and if a critical moment has come,” but the one who “stands firm in his heart, who is not under compulsion but has power over his own will.”

And who is the virgin belonging to this man? Surely one he is betrothed to, for if they were already married, then Paul’s previous command would have been imposed:

The man should fulfill his duty toward his woman; but, likewise, the woman toward the man. The woman does not have authority over her own body, *but* instead the man *does*; and similarly the man does not have authority over his own body, *but* instead the woman. Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by mutual consent for a time, to be free for prayer, and then return to one another, so that the Adversary may not tempt you through your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:3~5)

Which, once again, Paul speaks of having sex, because the Adversary will tempt them because of their lack of self-control. The reason for getting married has to do with being unable to have self-control over your own lust.

Let us pause here briefly. In modern English, the word “lust” has an evil connotation, but in Greek this is not so. In most languages, “lust” simply means “desire” and that is precisely what the Greek word here means. You can either “lust/desire” after something good, or something evil. Therefore, you can either have “lust/desire” for a wife, or a whore, for sexual-immorality or purity, for righteousness or wickedness. In the context of everything except for the modern English concept of the word, lust is not wrong, what you lust after dictates whether your lust is wrong.

Now, returning to where we left off, we have the example when Paul is commanding Timothy on enrolling widows into a special service of the holy ones. He states:

Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years old, married only once, with a reputation for good works, namely, that she has raised children, practiced hospitality, washed the feet of the holy-ones, helped those in distress, involved herself in every good work.

But exclude younger widows, for when their sensuality estranges them from Christ, they want to marry and will incur condemnation for breaking their first pledge. And furthermore, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies as well, talking about things that ought not to be mentioned.

So I would like younger widows to marry, have children, and manage a home, so as to give the adversary no pretext for maligning us. For some have already turned away to follow the Adversary. (1 Timothy 5:9~15)

And what is the reason that young women must be remarried? Because of sensuality which causes them to desire this very thing. Paul does not permit *any* women under sixty years old to be in this category, because he does not trust that a single one of them will be bereft from this pattern—it is the nature for a woman to desire to bear children, which is why God placed in man a desire for sex. And some of those who tried to be celibate, when they could not control their sexual urges, failed and were no longer followers of the Christ. And we are to watch out for those who urge us to celibacy when we are unable to control this passion:

Now the spirit explicitly says that in the last times some will turn away from the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and demonic instructions, through the hypocrisy of liars with branded consciences. They forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.  
(1 Timothy 4:1~3)

Let us see that the teachings of the Christ himself parallel this very same thing. For when the disciples heard from him that a man was not allowed to divorce his wife, they cried out:

“If that is the case of the human with the woman, it is better not to marry.”

But he spoke to them, “Not all can accept the account, *but* instead *only* those to whom it has been granted.

“For some are eunuchs because they were born so; and some, because they were made so by the humans; and some, because they have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of the heaven. Whoever is able to accept this ought to accept it.”  
(combination of Matthew 19:3~12 & Mark 10:2~12)

Again, Jesus confirms that not everyone can accept this saying, only those who are eunuchs. Jesus is stating that anyone who is a eunuch, for the three reasons mentioned above, has not been given the gift of marriage. And why eunuchs? Because they have no method of reproduction. Again, marriage is related to the act of sex.

Although the holy writings do not testify to such a concept, I wonder if God purposely designed for men alone to be endowed with the gift of celibacy. For:

“...she will be saved through childbearing, provided women persevere in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”  
(1 Timothy 2:15)

And all of the women who were barren, were troubled when they were unable to, and earnestly begged God that he would do so. Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah was one of these. In harmony with many others in the writings, when her prayer was finally answered, she spoke:

So has the Lord done for me at a time when he has seen fit to take away my disgrace before others. (Luke 1:25)

Now it is true that there are holy women that for whatever reason are married and unable to bear children for their entire life, and die without any natural offspring. But since I know that this is true, and that God would not hold a woman out of eternal life because of something which she could not control, then the only satisfactory explanation of being “saved through childbearing” that I can discover is that God wants the heart of the woman to be in that position, that she is doing nothing to hinder such an activity to take place. For God said:

“Be fruitful and multiply.” (Genesis 9:1)

As there are no verses in the holy writings which I am aware of that would refute this conclusion, then I must conclude, stating that if you are able to control your desire to have sex, then do not seek for a wife. But if you are not, then get married and do not unreasonably delay, needlessly placing yourself in a state of tempting passion.

But I want everyone to be even as I am. Instead, each has a particular gift from God, indeed one of one kind, but one of another.  
(1 Corinthians 7:7)

## **EXAMPLES:**

Before this appendix is concluded, I would like to note some examples of marriages within the holy writings. As the New Testament is rather barren of such examples, we must turn to those that have been preserved within the Old Testament. Unfortunately, many of the situations revolving around such marriages are not included with the writings (how long they waited beforehand, the exact reason for the marriage, etc). But, I shall present four particular marriages here that are elaborated in more detail, therefore showing that a lengthy engagement period is not necessary, and also to show that it is not shameful to admit that a reason for getting married is because of the desire for sexual intercourse.

## **ISAAC & REBECCA**

Abraham had now reached a ripe old age, and Yahweh had blessed him in every way. Abraham said to the senior servant of his household, who had charge of all his possessions: "Put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not procure a woman for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I live, but that you will go to my own land and to my kindred to get a woman for my son Isaac."

The servant asked him: "What if the woman is unwilling to follow me to this land? Should I then take your son back to the land from which you migrated?"

"Never take my son back there for any reason," Abraham told him. "Yahweh, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and the land of my kin, and who confirmed by oath the promise he then made to me, 'I will give this land to your descendants' – he will send his messenger [angel] before you, and you will obtain a woman for my son there. If the woman is unwilling to follow you, you will be released from this oath. But never take my son back there!"

So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore to him in this undertaking. The servant then took ten of his master's camels, and bearing all kinds of gifts from his master, he made his way to the city of Nahor in Aram Naharaim. (Genesis 24:1~10)

Meanwhile Isaac had gone from Beer-lahai-roi and was living in the region of the Negeb. One day toward evening he went out in the field, and as he looked around, he noticed that camels were approaching.

Rebekah, too, was looking about, and when she saw him, she alighted from her camel and asked the servant, "Who is the man out there, walking through the fields toward us?"

"That is my master," replied the servant. Then she covered herself with her veil.

The servant recounted to Isaac all the things he had done. Then Isaac took Rebekah into his tent; he married her, and thus she became his woman. In his love for her Isaac found solace after the death of his mother Sarah. (Genesis 24:62~67)

Isaac married Rebekah, a woman whom he had never met, on the first day that he had met her. And all of this was ordained of God, therefore showing that it is not necessary to wait for many years or even months to take time to know the person for a marriage to be acceptable in the sight of the Lord.

## **JACOB & RACHEL**

As soon as Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Laban, with the sheep of his uncle Laban, he went up, rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well, and watered his uncle's sheep. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and burst into tears. He told her that he was her father's relative, Rebekah's son, and she ran to tell her father.

When Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he hurried out to meet him. After embracing and kissing him, he brought him to his house. Jacob then recounted to Laban all that had happened, and Laban said to him, "You are indeed my flesh and blood."

After Jacob had stayed with him a full month, Laban said to him: "Should you serve me for nothing just because you are a relative of mine? Tell me what your wages should be."

Now Laban had two daughters; the older was called Leah, the younger Rachel. Leah had lovely eyes, but Rachel was well formed and beautiful. Since Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel, he answered Laban, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

Laban replied, "I prefer to give her to you rather than to an outsider. Stay with me."

So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, yet they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my woman, that I may consummate my marriage with her, for my term is now completed." (Genesis 29:10~21)

Although Jacob was obviously interested in having Rachel as a wife from the first day he met her, it was not until a full month later that he made it known to her father that he wanted her as a wife. But then, on his own accord, Jacob offered to work for seven years before he married her. With his desire for her, I am not sure what compelled him to offer that, but he did. This is an example where a marriage was not immediately consummated. However, when the time was up, he was not shy to let Rachel's father know that he was ready to have sexual intercourse with her.

Because of our society, it almost seems that if you want to marry someone for sexual intercourse that you are in sin. I do agree, that if sexual intercourse is the *only* reason to marry someone that is wrong, for we are instructed to marry believers, and also someone who will see as being a mutual benefactor in our walk with the Lord. But, it seems that we must go out of our way to deceive ourselves and those around us that we desire to have intercourse with someone we are interested in.

## **BOAZ & RUTH**

In this example, it is clearly seen that Boaz married Ruth within a day. Although he had previously watched her grazing in his fields for a few days, this was terribly far from being a long-term relationship. And they scarcely had any contact prior to her coming to him. (It should also be noted that there is no marriage contract noted, no vows, not even mention of a celebration.)

He [Boaz] asked, "Who are you?"

And she [Ruth] replied, "I am your servant Ruth. Spread the corner of your cloak over me, for you are my next of kin."

He said, "May Yahweh bless you, my daughter! You have been even more loyal now than before in not going after the young men, whether poor or rich. So be assured, daughter, I will do for you whatever you say; all my townspeople know you for a worthy woman. Now, though indeed I am closely related to you, you have another relative still closer. Stay as you are for tonight, and tomorrow, if he wishes to claim you, good! let him do so. But if he does not wish to claim you, as Yahweh lives, I will claim you myself. Lie there until morning."

Naomi then said [to Ruth], "Wait here, my daughter, until you learn what happens, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today."

Boaz then said to the elders and to all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have acquired from Naomi all the holdings of Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon. I also take Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, as my woman, in order to raise up a family for her late man on his estate, so that the name of the departed may not perish among his kinsmen and fellow citizens. Do you witness this today?"

All those at the gate, including the elders, said, "We do so. May Yahweh make this woman come into your house like Rachel and Leah, who between them built up the house of Israel. May you do well in Ephrathah and win fame in Bethlehem. With the offspring Yahweh will give you from this girl, may your house become like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

Boaz took Ruth. When they came together as man and woman, Yahweh enabled her to conceive and she bore a son.  
(Ruth 3:9~13,18 / 4:9~13)

## **TOBIT & SARAH**

And *the messenger Raphael* said to him, "We must pass the night in the house of Reuel. And the human is from the house of our father, and he has a beautiful daughter named Sarah. And he has no son, and he has no one else but Sarah alone. And you are more closely related to her [than all other men, and you have the right to inherit her, and all that belongs to her father.] Take her as your wife, for it is your right. And the maiden is sensible, and courageous, and very beautiful; and her father loves her dearly and is an honorable man."

And he said, "Since the inheritance of her father has been determined for you, a right decision has been made for you that you might take her. Now listen, my brother; this very night you shall speak about the maiden; you shall betroth her and take her as your wife. And when we return from Rhages, we shall celebrate the wedding. For I know that Reuel will not be able to withhold her from you, because he knows that you have more right than any other

man<sup>31</sup> to betroth and to take his daughter. For he knows that, if he were to give her to another man, he will perish according to the ordinance of the Book of Moses. For he will realize that you have the right beyond any other man to marry his daughter. And now, listen to me, my brother, and let us speak about this maiden tonight, and we shall arrange her engagement to you. When we return from Rhages, we shall take her and bring her back with us to your home.”

And when Tobiah heard the accounts of Raphael and learned that she was his sister, and of the seed of the house of his father, he fell deeply in love with her, and his heart clung to her exceedingly. (Tobit 6:11~13,19)

Then, on the first night Tobit had ever met her:

And Reuel called his daughter Sarah, and she came to him. And taking her by the hand, he gave her over to him, and said, “Take her to be your wife according to the law and according to the judgment written in the Book of Moses. Take her and bring her in good-health to your father. And may the God of the heavens make you successful on the way with his peace!”

And *Reuel* called her mother and said, that she was to bring a book. And he wrote up a cohabitation written-contact *in* a book to the effect, that he was giving her to him as a wife according to the judgment of the Law of Moses, and he sealed it. Afterward they began to eat and drink.

And Reuel called his wife Edna and said to her, “My sister, prepare the spare room and bring her there.”  
(Tobit 7:13~15)

The parents themselves even prepared the bedchambers for their first night of intercourse, which was on the first night that either of them had ever met. Therefore, it should also be noted that the parents were not shy about the idea of sexual intercourse.

## DAVID & ABIGAIL

To summarize First Samuel, Chapter 25: David asked if Nabal would be able to provide for him and his men whatever he could manage. Nabal issued a harsh response. In reprisal, David sought to kill Nabal. In response, Nabal’s wife Abigail went to intercede before David, pleading that he not destroy their household. David had never before met this woman, but he accepted her entreaty and withheld his rage against the household of Nabal. But:

When Abigail came to Nabal, there was a drinking party in his house like that of a king, and Nabal was merry because he was very drunk. So she told him nothing at all before daybreak the next morning. But then, when Nabal had become sober, his woman told him what had happened. At this his courage died within him, and he became like a stone. About ten days later Yahweh struck him and he died.

On hearing that Nabal was dead, David said: “Blessed be Yahweh, who has requited the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and who restrained his servant from doing evil, but has punished Nabal for his own evil deeds.”

David then sent a proposal of marriage to Abigail.

When David’s servants came to Abigail in Carmel, they said to her, “David has sent us to you that he may take you as his woman.”

Rising and bowing to the ground, she answered, “Your handmaid would become a slave to wash the feet of my lord’s servants.”

She got up immediately, mounted an ass, and followed David’s messengers, with her five maids following in attendance upon her. She became his woman.  
(1 Samuel 25:36~42)

David only knew this woman for but ten days. And she had only just been bereaved of her husband before she got married. Therefore, no mourning period is needed, nor is a length of days needed before deciding whether marriage should be or not.

But, let each man be his own judge; yet, let us heed these examples, as well as the admonitions of Paul of the dangers of waiting too long.

## ADULTERY OF THE HEART

I also find this to be an appropriate place to mention a passage from the Good-Messages:

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<sup>31</sup> literally “human”



You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with DESIRE has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27~28)

Since we have already defined adultery (in a previous section) as a man (whether married or unmarried) who has sexual intercourse with a woman who is already married, then adultery would still retain its original meaning here unless Jesus specifically changed it. Therefore, this passage refers only to someone who is desiring someone else's wife, not someone who is desiring a non-married woman to marry.

The commandment runs:

You shall not DESIRE your neighbor's woman. (Exodus 20:17)

Not, "you shall not DESIRE a woman." In both cases, the same Greek word is used EPITHUMEO, which does not have an evil connotation in itself, only depending on the context. Therefore, it is evil to DESIRE someone else's wife, but not evil to DESIRE a wife of your own. Also, the same Greek word is used for "wife/woman" in both of these passages.

As we can see from the examples above, it is implied that a man will DESIRE the woman that he is to marry. This is not a prohibition against DESIRE except for another man's wife. Jesus is stating here that even to DESIRE another man's wife, without actually committing the act of adultery, is adultery itself of the heart, for:

from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, **adultery**, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy. (Matthew 15:19)