

Dt. 24:1-4 & MDR Controversies

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Text:

Introduction:

- I. Moses' legislation concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 has been the subject of much **discussion, disagreement, and debate**
 - A. This was the case in the **time of Jesus** and even **earlier**
 - B. This is **still the case** today
- II. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is a **significant passage** because it is **referred** to or **alluded** to in other Bible passages:
 - A. The **OT** (Hos. 1:1-3:5; Isa. 50:1-3; Jer. 3:1-4:4; Mal. 2:10-16)
 - B. The **NT** (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:7-8; Mk. 10:3-5)
- III. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is a **challenging passage** that raises **several questions** that need to be **answered** if Moses' legislation is to be **properly understood**:
 - A. What is the exact **form** or **structure** of the passage?
 - B. What does "**some uncleanness**" mean?
 - C. What was the "**certificate of divorce**"?
 - D. Why was the wife "**defiled**" after her second marriage, and what does that mean?
 - E. Why was this an "**abomination**" before the Lord, and what does that mean?
 - F. Why or how did this "**bring sin upon the land**"?
 - G. What was the **purpose** of this legislation?
 - H. How does this passage **relate to other OT instruction** concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage?
 - I. How does this passage **relate to NT teaching** on marriage, divorce, and remarriage?
 - J. How does this OT instruction **apply**, if it applies, to NT Christians today?
- IV. These are **the questions** that we want to explore and attempt to answer in our study of this controversial passage

Body:

I. Deuteronomy 24

- A. What is the exact **form** or **structure** of the passage?
 1. OT covenant stipulations are stated in two basic forms: **apodictic** and **casuistic**
 - a. **Apodictic laws** (from the Greek *apo* "from" and *deiknumi* "to show") are stated in imperative terms ("You shall..." or "You shall not...")
 - 1) The **Ten Commandments** are apodictic laws
 - b. **Casuistic laws** (from the Latin *casus*, "case") are stated in the form of cases
 - 1) If certain circumstances **occur**, then a certain law must **apply** (Laney, 6)
 - 2) *Michael Grisanti*: "In OT legal material (as it occurs in ancient Near Eastern law codes), the legislation is commonly arranged in an '**if ... then**'"

format (called ‘**case law**’ or ‘**casuistic law**’). This kind of law often has three parts: **protasis** (description of condition[s]), **apodosis** (the actual legislation), and a **motive clause** (explaining the fundamental rationale for the law).” (Bold emphasis added, 2: 689)

2. Dt. 24:1-4 is an example of **Casuistic law** since it is a **long conditional sentence** with a **protasis**, an **apodosis**, and a **motive clause**¹
3. Unfortunately, the **precise location** of the protasis and the apodosis in this legislation has been the subject of some **discussion** and **dispute**, and this fact is reflected in the way this passage has been **translated** in various English versions
 - a. *Todd Scacewater*: “The ׀ at the beginning of verse 1 is translated variously as **temporal** (‘**when**’; ESV, KJV, NAU), **conditional** (‘**if**’; CSB, NET, NIV), and **hypothetically** (‘**suppose**’; NLT; NRS). The temporal translation ‘**when**’ probably renders a **better sense** than ‘if’ or ‘suppose,’ since the latter two connote a situation which may not have actually been occurring among the people.... This situation **probably was occurring**, and thus the need to address it.” (Bold emphasis added, 65, n. 3)
 - 1) **Temporal**: “**When**” (ASV; KJV; ERV; ESV; LEB; NAB; NASB; NKJV; RSV; YLT)
 - 2) **Conditional**: “**If**” (CSB; D-R; HCSB; Message; NET; NIV; TNIV)
 - 3) **Hypothetical**: “**Suppose**” (CJB; GNB; Nlrv; NLT; NRSV)
 - b. *William A. Heth*: “The Hebrew **construction** of Deuteronomy 24:1 is **sufficiently ambiguous** to **allow two readings** of the text. One is to read it like the NIV and all other modern translations (‘**and he writes her a certificate of divorce**’). These suggest that the writing of the certificate of divorce is just **one of the relevant facts of this case law** laid out in verses 1-3. The actual law, then, is not found until verse 4. The other is to read it like the KJV (‘**then let him write her a bill of divorcement**’). This would mean that **Moses commanded the giving of the bill of divorce**. This is how the Jewish teachers that Jesus debated read this law: “It has been said, “Anyone who divorces his wife **must give** her a certificate of divorce”” (cf. Matt. 5:31; Matt. 19:7// Mark 10:3). First-century Jews believed that **Moses commanded** the giving of a certificate of divorce, and that command included grounds for divorce (‘a matter of indecency’).” (Bold emphasis added, “Divorce and Remarriage for Two Reasons,” 11-12)
 - c. Some English versions place the **apodosis** (i.e. the “then” clause) in the middle of **verse 1**
 - 1) *KJV*: :¹ **When** a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: **then** let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house. ² And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife. ³ And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife; ⁴ Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the Lord:

¹ *Maurice Lusk*: “The structure of Deut. 24:1-4 must be understood in the light of the practice of structuring law codes in the ancient Near East. This particular structure is called a Casuistic (Case) Law structure. These laws are introduced in Hebrew by the conditional clause ‘if,’ ‘when,’ or ‘whoever.’ Following this is a general statement followed by specific circumstances which are applicable....” (18).

and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance. (cf. ASV; ERV)

- 2) *CSB*: ¹ “**If** a man marries a woman, but she becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, **he may write her a divorce certificate**, hand it to her, and send her away from his house. ² If after leaving his house she goes and becomes another man’s wife, ³ and the second man hates her, writes her a divorce certificate, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house or if he dies, ⁴ the first husband who sent her away may not marry her again after she has been defiled, because that would be detestable to the LORD. You must not bring guilt on the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. (cf. HCSB; NET)
- d. Since it is **grammatically possible** to translate this passage this way,² one could certainly view OT divorce as **permissible** (CSB; HCSB; NET) or even **commanded** (KJV; ASV; ERV)
- 1) This was evidently the way **the Pharisees** in the time of Christ understood this passage
 - a) They asked Jesus, “Why then did Moses **command** to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” (Mt. 19:7)
 - 2) However, Jesus’ response apparently **precludes this understanding**
 - a) He replied, “Moses, because of the **hardness of your hearts permitted** you to divorce your wives, but **from the beginning it was not so**” (Mt. 19:8)
- e. Most English versions place the **apodosis** at the beginning of **verse 3** or the beginning of **verse 4**
- 1) *LEB*: ¹ “**When** a man takes a wife and he marries her and then she does not please him, because he found something objectionable and writes her a letter of divorce and puts *it* in her hand and sends her *away* from his house, ² and she goes from his house, and she goes *out* and becomes *a wife* for another man, ³ and then the second man dislikes her and he writes her a letter of divorce and places *it* into her hand and sends her from his house, or if the second man dies who took her to himself as a wife, ⁴ her first husband who sent her *away* is not allowed to take her again to become a wife to him after she has been defiled, for that *is* a detestable thing before Yahweh, and *so* you shall not mislead into sin the land that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you *as an* inheritance. (cf. NRSV; NET)
 - 2) *NKJV*: ¹ “**When** a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, ² when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man’s *wife*, ³ if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, ⁴ **then** her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she

² *Joe Sprinkle*: “This [KJV] interpretation sees v. 1 as having both a protasis and an apodosis in which the apodosis actually adjures that the man divorce his wife if some ‘uncleanness’ is found in her. It is, to be sure, not impossible grammatically to take the Hebrew this way. The consensus of modern exegetes, however, is that the second half of v. 1 should be taken as the continuation of the protasis that continues through v. 3, followed by the apodosis in v. 4.”
“ (530).

has been defiled; for that *is* an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your God is giving you *as* an inheritance. (cf. NASB; ESV; NIV; RSV; NAB; NfV; TNIV)

- f. Translating the passage this way is **grammatically more probable**, and as a result, one certainly could not view OT divorce as **commanded** in this passage
- 1) *Todd Scacewater*: “Grammatically, verses 1-4 form **one long conditional sentence** with verses 1-3 acting as the **protasis** and verse 4 as the **apodosis**. If the woman commits the specific acts explicated in 24:1-3, then her actions are an abomination (24:4).” (Bold emphasis added, 64-65)
 - 2) *Todd Scacewater*: “Verses 1-3 contain **twelve consecutive waw conjunctions**, while verse 4 begins with **the negative command**, לא־יִיכַל (‘he shall not take’). KJV translates an apodosis into verse 1, ‘let him write her a bill of divorcement.’ But **modern interpreters unanimously understand verses 1-3 to be the protasis and verse 4 to be the apodosis**, which is **the most natural way to take the string of waw conjunctions**.” (Bold emphasis added, 64-65, n. 2)
 - a) *Literal Translation*: “**If** a man shall take a wife and he shall marry her and it shall come to pass that she shall not find favor (grace) in his eyes because he found in her a matter of uncleanness and he shall cut (write) for her a writing of divorcement and he shall give it in her hand and he shall send her from his house and she shall go out from his house and she shall go and she shall become to another man (a wife) and the other man shall hate her and he shall cut for her a writing of divorcement and he shall give it in her hand and he shall send her from his house or if the other man shall die who took her to him for wife, **then**, her first husband who sent her away shall not be able to return to take her to be to him for a wife after when she has been defiled because this is an abomination before Jehovah and thou shalt not cause the land to sin which Jehovah my God is giving to thee for an inheritance.” (Gary Headrick, via Lusk, 17)
 - b) *RSV*: ¹ “**When** a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, ² and if she goes and becomes another man’s wife, ³ and the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife, ⁴ **then** her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.
 - c) *YLT*: “¹ **When** a man doth take a wife, and hath married her, and it hath been, if she doth not find grace in his eyes (for he hath found in her nakedness of anything), and he hath written for her a writing of divorce, and given it into her hand, and sent her out of his house, ² and she hath gone out of his house, and hath gone and been another man’s, ³ and the latter man hath hated her, and written for her a writing of divorce, and given it into her hand, and sent her out of his house, or when the latter man dieth, who hath taken her to himself for a wife: ⁴ ‘Her former husband who sent her away is not able to turn back to take her to be to him for a wife, after that she hath become defiled; for an

abomination it is before Jehovah, and thou dost not cause the land to sin which Jehovah thy God is giving to thee—an inheritance.

- 3) *Joe Sprinkle*: “Taken this way, the text **does not command divorce** at all. Assuming a divorce has taken place, it **prohibits the remarriage** of the wife to her original husband if she subsequently married another man. This is the **universal interpretation among modern commentators** and translations (e.g. Keil, Craigie, Thompson, Mayes, Kalland, Merrill, RSV, NIV). **I have not run across any modern interpreter who defends the KJV.** Deuteronomy 24:1-4 appears to be a single complex law rather than two laws (as the KJV makes it).” (Bold emphasis added, 530)
- 4) *Richard M. Davidson*: “Deut 24:1-3 gives the *description of conditions* (**protasis**) in this **case law**; only v. 4 contains the **actual legislation** (**apodosis**), **forbidding** the woman’s former husband to **take her back** to be his wife under the circumstances described in vv. 1-3. Thus God is in no wise **legislating** or even **sanctioning** divorce in this passage.” (Bold emphasis added, 1)
- 5) If the apodosis comes in verse 3 or 4, this means that Dt. 24:1-4 is **not a broad law** on divorce and remarriage. It addresses only a **specific situation**
 - a) *Todd Scacewater*: “The law only addresses the **specific situation** in which **all conditions** described in verses 1-3 are **met**. For this law to apply, a woman must have been **married, divorced, remarried** to a second man different from her first husband, and then either **divorced** from or **widowed** by her second husband.” (Bold emphasis added, 65)
 - b) *Michael Grisanti*: “This law deals with a **specific case** and does not provide a **general rule** governing all possible instances of divorce and remarriage. These verses **do not establish divorce** either as a **right** or as a **requirement**; they do not **encourage** Israelite husbands to **put away** their wives because of ‘uncleanness’ but merely recognize that **contemporary practice**. This passage focuses on one issue: A woman who was **divorced** because of ‘uncleanness’ and **married** to a second man **may not return** to her first husband after divorce from or the death of her second husband. Moses is **regulating a current practice** in Israel—a practice Yahweh regards as ‘**detestable**’ . . . and one that all Israelites must avoid, lest they bring sin upon the land God has graciously given to them as an inheritance.
 “In other words, Moses is not in any sense saying that in the scenario addressed, divorce is **required, legitimated, sanctioned**, or even **encouraged** (Murray, *Divorce*, 14). In fact, **the legislation hinders the husband from divorcing his wife rashly**, since a divorce will likely occasion her **ritual defilement**, which will, in turn, make it religiously illegal to take her back. . . .” (Bold emphasis added, 689-690)
- 6) This also means that this law **does not condone** a man **divorcing** his wife, but it **presupposes** that the Israelites were **already doing so** (Scacewater, 65)
 - a) *Eugene H. Merrill*: “The grammatical evidence from the sequence of clauses (*ki* + *waw* conjunctive) does not demand that **remarriage here be necessarily sanctioned** just because divorce was allowed in the first place.” (Bold emphasis added, 4:318)
 - b) *John Peter Lange*: “The pointing in the original makes it clear that **Moses does not institute or command divorce**. The pointing in our version implies that he does so. He is merely **prescribing limitations**

or **regulations** to a **prevailing custom**, which was not in accordance with the institution of marriage, and was only permitted there in this limited sense, and under these restrictions, ‘for the hardness of their hearts.’” (Bold emphasis added, 176)

- c) *Walter Kaiser, Jr.*: “In fact, the **purpose** of the Mosaic regulation was neither to **encourage** divorce, **enjoin** it, nor to **approve** it; instead, it was given to **prescribe certain procedures** if and when it tragically took place. What it did do was to force the one divorcing his spouse to give his former wife the **protection** of a ‘**certificate of divorce**’ lest the one divorcing her engage in a type of polygamy--now claiming he was divorced, later claiming he was still married to her when he wanted to indulge his passions with his former ‘wife.’

“But the **main teaching** of Deut 24:1-4 specially **forbids a man to remarry his first wife** after he had divorced her and she had remarried--even if her second husband had subsequently died or also divorced her.” (Bold emphasis added, 81)

- d) *Peter Craigie*: “In precise terms, there is **only one piece of legislation** in this passage, that contained in v. 4a. The first three verses, which form the grammatical **protasis**, specify exactly the **conditions** that must apply for the execution of the legislation in v. 4 (the **apodosis**). Thus, strictly speaking, **the legislation relates only to particular cases of remarriage**; the **protasis** contains **incidental information** about marriage and divorce, but **does not specifically legislate on those matters**. The verses do not **institute divorce**, but treat it as a practice already known....” (Bold emphasis added, 304-305)

- e) *R. Campbell*: “If Deut 24:1-4 is **properly rendered**, it cannot be understood as **initiating** the practice of divorce. **No Old Testament oracle or law institutes divorce**; Hebrew law simply **tolerated** the practice.” (Bold emphasis added, Testament Concerning Divorce,” 175, via Kaiser, Jr. “Divorce....” 81)

- a) *Richard M. Davidson*: “The OT passages related to the issue of divorce include at least **six different Hebrew expressions** occurring altogether **27 times**, plus several references to remarriage. Despite the numerous occurrences of Hebrew terms referring to divorce in the OT, the surprising fact is that the OT contains **no legislation** in which **divorce is prescribed!** Divorce is **tolerated, conceded, permitted**, but never **commanded, commended, or approved** by divine legislation.” (Bold emphasis added, 1)

1. *Note*: Other OT teaching on divorce seems to **belie** this statement (see below)

- b. Also, notice the **differences** in how the reference to the “**certificate of divorce**” is translated in verse 1:

1) Some English translations seem to **permit** or even **require** divorce:

- a) “**that** he shall write her a bill of divorcement” (ASV; ERV)
- b) “**he may** write her a divorce certificate” (CSB; HCSB)
- c) “**he shall write** a bill of divorce” (D-RB)
- d) “**then let him** write her a bill of divorcement” (KJV)
- e) “**then he may** draw up a divorce document” (NET)

- 2) Other English translations merely **report** a divorce:
- a) “**and** he writes her a certificate of divorce” (NKJV; NIV)
 - b) “**and** writes her a certificate of divorce” (NASB; ESV; TNIV)
 - c) “**and** writes her a letter of divorce” (LEB)
 - d) “**and so** he writes her a certificate of divorce” (NRSV)
 - e) “**and** he writes her a bill of divorce” (RSV)
 - f) “**and therefore** he writes out a bill of divorce” (NAB)
 - g) “**and** he hath written for her a writing of divorce” (YLT)
 - h) “**He** writes out divorce papers for her” (NCV)
 - i) “**So** he gives her a letter of divorce” (NIRV)
2. Casuistic law does not automatically or necessarily indicate **divine approval**
- a. *J. Carl Laney*: “Deuteronomy 12-26 contains the **detailed stipulations** of the covenant. This section **elaborates the basic demands** of Deuteronomy 5-11 by providing **examples** and **applications** in the **religious life** (12:1-16:17), **political life** (16:18-20:20), and **social life** (chaps. 21-26) of the nation. Apart from the case under consideration [Dt. 24:1-4, ksk], Deuteronomy 12-26 contains **31 examples of case law**. In **19** of these examples the **protasis** contains a situation that is either **immoral** or has **some negative connotation**.” (Bold emphasis added, 6-7)
 - 1) See Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 13:6-11; 13:12-18; 15:12-15; 17:1-5; 19:11-13; 19:16-19; 21:1-7; 21:10-14; 21:15-17; 21:18-21; 21:22-23; 22:13-21; 22:22; 22:23-27; 22:28-29; 24:7; 25:7-10; 25:11-12
 - b. *J. Carl Laney*: “The other **12** present situations that appear **morally neutral**.” (Bold emphasis added, 7)
 - 1) See Deuteronomy 14:24-25; 15:7-8; 15:16-18; 17:8-9; 18:6-8; 23:10-13; 23:21-23; 23:24-25; 24:5; 24:19-22; 25:1-3; 25:5-6
 - c. *J. Carl Laney*: “What is the **implication** for the study of Deuteronomy 24:1-4? Just as legislation on **harlotry** (23:18) in no way **authorizes harlotry**, so a law on **divorce and remarriage** is **not authorization** for them. The **presentation of the case** does not constitute **divine approval of the actions**, described. The **context** (including the apodosis) must be considered in order to discern whether the situation is merely being **described** or whether the actions described have **divine sanction**.” (Bold emphasis added, 7)
3. The **point** of Dt. 24:1-4:
- a. Not this: If you want to divorce your wife, that’s all right just as long as you give her a **certificate of divorce**
 - b. But this: If you divorce your wife and she remarries, you may not, under any circumstances, **marry her again**
4. **Contingency legislation** does not necessarily imply **approval** (cf. Dt. 22:28-29)
5. The **outlined procedure**:
- a. First, a man **marries** a wife (1)
 - b. Second, she engages in “**some uncleanness**” (1)
 - c. Third, she finds **no favor** in his eyes (1)

- d. Fourth, her husband writes her a **certificate of divorce** (1)
- 1) *Richard M. Davidson*: “According to Deut 24:1b, there were **three major elements in the divorce proceedings**. First, the husband wrote a **‘certificate of divorce,’** literally **‘document of cutting off** [*seper keritut*].’ Although there is no OT example of the actual wording of such a document, it has been suggested that the central divorce formula is contained in Yahweh’s statement of divorce proceedings against Israel in Hos 2:2 [Heb. v. 4]: **‘she is not my wife and I am not her husband!’** Such a statement would mean the **legal breaking** of the **marriage covenant** as much as the death of the marriage partner. The document no doubt had to be **properly issued** and **officially authenticated**, thus ensuring that the divorce proceedings were not done precipitously.
 “The bill of divorce may have also contained what in Rabbinic times was considered **‘the essential formula in the bill of divorce,’** i.e., **‘Lo, thou art free marry any man.’**” (Bold emphasis added, 9-10)
- e. Fifth, her husband **puts it** in her hand
- 1) *Richard M. Davidson*: “The second step of the divorce proceedings was to **‘put it** [the bill of divorce] **in her** [the wife’s] **hand’** (Deut 24:1). She must actually **receive notice** of the divorce directly in order for it to be effective. The Mishnah tractate Gittim deals with various kinds of **possible situations** which **might not qualify** as actually **putting the divorce certificate in the hand of the woman**. The effect, again, is the **protection** of the wife by ensuring that she has **access to**, and **concrete notification** of, the divorce document.” (Bold emphasis added, 10)
- f. Sixth, her husband **sends her out** from his house
- 1) *Richard M. Davidson*: “The third step is that the husband **‘sends her out of his house’** (Deut 24:1). The word **‘send’** [Heb. *slh* in the *Piel*] is elsewhere in the OT the closest one comes [*sic*] to a technical term for **‘divorce.’** By sending the wife away is intended the effectuation of the divorce process. The break is final and complete.” (Bold emphasis added, 10)
- g. Seventh, she **leaves** his house
- h. Eighth, she **marries** another man
- i. Ninth, her second husband **detests** her
- 1) **“Hate[s]”** (ASV; CSB; ESV; HCSB; KJV; YLT)
 - 2) **“Dislike[s]”** (LEB; NAB; NIV; NRSV; RSV)
 - 3) **“Rejects”** (NET)
 - 4) **“Turns against”** (NASB)
 - 5) **“Detests”** (NKJV)
- j. Tenth, her second husband writes her a **certificate of divorce**
- k. Eleventh, her second husband **puts it** in her hands
- l. Twelfth, her second husband **sends her out** of his house, or he **dies**
- m. Thirteenth, her first husband **cannot marry her again**, because she has been defiled
- 1) This is an **abomination** before the Lord

2) Remarriage to a former mate would bring “sin on the land”

6. *J. Carl Laney*: “It should be carefully noted that **divorce** is neither **commanded** nor **commended**. The **circumstances** leading to divorce are simply **described** as a part of the case under consideration. **The verses do not indicate that divorce is necessarily sanctioned under such circumstances.**” (Bold emphasis added, 5)
7. “The issue here is not **divorce** and its grounds *per se* but **prohibition of remarriage** to a mate whom one has **previously divorced.**” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)

B. What does “some uncleanness” mean?

1. “Some uncleanness” (‘*erwat dabar*’) is lit. “**nakedness of a thing**” (NKJV note):
 - a. *Daniel I. Block*: “Opinions on the meaning of this phrase range from ‘**anything at all,**’ to **adultery**, to a **physical defect**. Literally, ‘*erwat dābār*’ means ‘**nakedness of a thing.**’” (Bold emphasis added, 558)
 - b. *Brown, Driver, & Briggs*: “**n.f. nakedness, pudenda**;—abs. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם Ex 28:42 Lv 18:6; usually cstr. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם Gn 9:22 +, sf. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם Ex 20:23 (Ginsb), Lv 18:10; עַרְוַת הָאָדָם Is 47:3 +; תּוֹ- Lv 20:17, הַתּוֹ- 18:7 +; sf. 3 fpl. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם v 9, 10;— **1. pudenda**, of man, עַרְוַת הָאָדָם implying shameful exposure Gn 9:22, 23 (J); mostly of woman: fig. of Jerus. (c. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם) La 1:8; Ez 16:37; usually c. גִּלְיָהּ lit. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם i.e. be exposed to view Ex 20:23 (Ginsb; van d. H. v 26; E), so, as shameful punishment fig. of Egypt Is 20:4 (gloss according to Du Che Di-Kit), Bab. 47:3, of Jerus. Ez 16:37; 23:10, 29 (עַרְוַת הָאָדָם; all three obj. of act. vb.); chiefly euphem. for cohabit., עַרְוַת הָאָדָם Lv 18:6 + (v. גִּלְיָהּ **Pi. 1 a**); fig. of Jerus. (vb. pass.) Ez 16:36; עַרְוַת הָאָדָם in same meaning Lv 20:17^o (H; of both sexes); עַרְוַת הָאָדָם also 18:8, 10, 16 (H); עַרְוַת הָאָדָם cover nakedness Gn 9:23 (J), Ex 28:42 (P; עַרְוַת הָאָדָם), Ho 2:11 (fig. of Isr.), Ez 16:8 (of Jerus.); reviling words are עַרְוַת הָאָדָם 1 S 20:30 (cf. Doughty ^{i. 269}). **2.** עַרְוַת הָאָדָם *nakedness of a thing*, i.e. prob. *indecency, improper behaviour* Dt 23:15; 24:1 (v. Dr). **3.** fig. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם Gn 42:9, 12 (E), i.e. its exposed, undefended parts (Arabic عَوْرَةٌ (*awratun*)).” (788-789)
 - c. *Gesenius*: “f. (from the root עַרְוַת) -- (1) *nakedness*, Hos. 2:11; metaph. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם *the nakedness of the land*; i.e. a part of the land unfortified, easy of access; Arabic عَوْرَةٌ (ταίχος ἐγυμνωθή, Hom. Il. xii. 399), Gen. 42:9, 12. (2) *pudenda*; especially *when naked*, Gen. 9:22, 23; 1 Sam. 20:30. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם the nakedness of one’s father; i.e. the nakedness of one’s father’s wife, Lev. 20:11; compare Lev. 18:8, 16. (3) *shame, filthiness*. עַרְוַת הָאָדָם anything unclean (excrement), Deu. 23:15, (any defect found in a woman) Deut. 24:1; also *ignominy, dishonour*. Isa. 20:4, עַרְוַת הָאָדָם ‘the dishonour of Egypt.’” (653)
 - d. *Vine*: ‘*erwah* (6172 עַרְוַת), ‘nakedness; indecent thing.’ Thirty-two of the 53 occurrences of this noun are in the social laws of Lev. 18, 20. The rest of its appearances are scattered throughout the various periods of Old Testament literature with the notable exception of poetical literature.
“This word represents male or female sexual organs. In its first biblical appearance ‘*erwah* implies shameful exposure: ‘And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father... And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness

of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness' (Gen. 9:22-23). This word is often used of female nakedness (the uncovered sex organs) and is symbolical of shame. In Lam. 1:8 plundered, devastated Jerusalem is pictured as a woman whose nakedness is exposed. To uncover one's nakedness is a frequent euphemism for cohabitation: 'None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord' (Lev. 18:6).

"The phrase 'indecent thing' represents any uncleanness in a military camp or any violation of the laws of sexual abstinence—nocturnal emission not properly cleansed, sexual cohabitation and other laws of purity (for example, excrement buried in the camp): 'For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing [literally, 'a matter of an indecent thing'] in thee, and turn away from thee' (Deut. 23:14). In Deut. 24:1 *'erwah* appears to bear this emphasis on any violation of the laws of purity—if a groom is dissatisfied with his bride 'because he hath found some *uncleanness* in her,' he may divorce her. Obviously this evidence is not of previous cohabitation, since such a sin merits death (Deut. 22:13ff.).

"The 'undefended parts' or 'nakedness' of a land is represented by *'erwah* in Gen. 42:9: 'Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.'" (1:157-158)

- e. *Eugene H. Merrill*: "The noun *'erwa* bears the meaning of both '**nakedness**' or '**pudenda**' (i.e., the sexual organs), meanings no doubt to be combined here to suggest the **improper uncovering of the private parts**. Clearly this circumlocution is to be understood as a euphemism that may or may not include adultery (cf. Lev 18:6-18; 20:11, 17, 20-21; Ezek 22:10; 23:29; Hos 2:10), but not in this case." (Bold emphasis added, 4:318)
 - f. "¹ **tn** *Heb* '**nakedness of a thing**.' The Hebrew phrase עֲרַוּת דָּבָר (*'ervat davar*) refers here to **some gross sexual impropriety**.... Though the term usually has to do only with **indecent exposure of the genitals**, it can also include such behavior as **adultery** (cf. Lev 18:6-18; 20:11, 17, 20-21; Ezek 22:10; 23:29; Hos 2:10)." (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)
2. This expression is **variously translated** in our English versions:
 - a. "some **uncleanness**" (NKJV; D-RB; KJV)
 - b. "some **unseemly** thing" (ASV; ERV)
 - c. "some **indecent**" (NASB; ESV; RSV)
 - d. "something **objectionable**" (LEB; NRSV)
 - e. "something **indecent**" (NIV; CSB; NAB; TNIV)
 - f. "something **improper**" (HCSB)
 - g. "**nakedness** of anything" (YLT)
 - h. "**offensive** in some respect" (CJB)
 - i. "something **offensive**" (NET)
 - j. "something **bad**" (NCV)
 - k. "something **shameful**" (NIRV)
 3. *Joe Sprinkle*: "The key expression, literally '**a nakedness of a thing**' (*'ervat davar*), is **never defined**. Is it **literal nakedness**, or is it **metaphorical for shameful**

behavior of whatever sort? The word *erwā* is used elsewhere **metaphorically** of the “**nakedness**” of Egypt, meaning the “**private parts**” of Egypt that spies would seek out for weaknesses in her defenses (Gen 42:9, 12). It is used **literally** in reference to the **shameful or immoral exposure of the genitals**. For example, steps were prohibited for altars that Israelites would build since their use could lead to the indecent and inappropriate exposure of the worshiper’s private parts (Exod 20:26). ‘Nakedness’ is used **figuratively** of **Jerusalem’s nakedness** being exposed in the sense of Jerusalem’s being **disgraced** and **humiliated** by exposure (Lam 1:8; Ezek 16:37).” (Bold emphasis added, 530)

4. The expression *erwat dabar* appears only **one other time** in the OT (Dt 23:12-14)
 - a. *John Walton*: “The phrase עֲרֵוַת דָּבָר is **used only one other time** in the Old Testament. In Deut 23:15 it is **used euphemistically** to speak of **excrement** and presumably **other bodily wastes** that should not pollute the camp. This usage would suggest the hypothesis that, rather than representing a **general catalog** as suggested by Westbrook...it may be a **euphemism** in Deut 24:1 concerning **menstrual irregularities** that would render a woman **unclean**. There is legislation concerning this in Lev 15:25. Such a condition would certainly not be **the fault of the woman**, but it could be **legitimate grounds for divorce**. The **laws concerning uncleanness** would make it difficult for such a woman to **conceive a child** for she could be **perpetually unclean** and **prohibited from participating in intercourse** (Lev 15:14). Her condition would create a very convenient situation for a husband who saw it as an opportunity to either get out of a marriage that was not to his liking, or, following Westbrook, dismiss the woman and keep her dowry.” (Bold emphasis added, 14)
5. The **precise meaning** of the phrase *erwat dabar* is **uncertain**, and as a result, the ancient **Jewish rabbis** offered different interpretations:
 - a. **The Mishna**³ summarizes the various views of the Rabbis:
 - 1) Gittin 9:10: “The **House of Shammai** say, ‘A man should divorce his wife only because he has found grounds for it in **unchastity**, ‘since it is said, *Because he has found in her indecency in anything* (Dt. 24:).’ And the **House of Hillel** say, ‘Even if she **spoiled his dish**, ‘since it is said, *Because he has found in her indecency in anything*. **R. Aqiba** says, ‘Even if he found **someone else prettier than she**, ‘since it is said, *And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes* (Dt. 24:1).” (Bold emphasis added, Neusner, 487)
 - b. *John Walton*: “Much of the Jewish view of divorce in this period was derived in some way from Deut 24. The **school of Shammai** interpreted the עֲרֵוַת דָּבָר as **adultery**, while **Shammai** himself considered it to be **immoral conduct falling short of adultery**. **Hillel’s position** was much broader suggesting that the עֲרֵוַת דָּבָר could refer to **anything that the husband found offensive**. While **Hillel** himself considered this to refer to something such as a **physical deformity**, the school of Hillel had expanded the concept to include **just about anything**.” (Bold emphasis added, 15)
6. **Modern commentators** suggest various possibilities as well:

³ The Mishnah or Mishna (/ˈmɪʃnə/; Hebrew: מִשְׁנָה, ‘study by repetition’, from the verb shanah שָׁנָה, or ‘to study and review’, also ‘secondary’) is the first major written collection of the Jewish oral traditions known as the Oral Torah. It is also the first major work of rabbinic literature. The Mishnah was redacted by Judah ha-Nasi at the beginning of the third century CE in a time when, according to the Talmud, the persecution of the Jews and the passage of time raised the possibility that the details of the oral traditions of the Pharisees from the Second Temple period (536 BCE – 70 CE) would be forgotten.” (Wikipedia).

a. **Adultery**

- 1) *Todd Scacewater*: “The same phrase is used in Sus[anna] 1:63 (Theodotian revision): ‘therefore Chelcias and his wife praised God for their daughter Susanna, with Joacim her husband, and all the kindred, because there was no ἄσχημον πράγμα found in her.’ The allusion to Deut 24:1 is unmistakable. In the context of Susanna, the ἄσχημον πράγμα (**‘shameful thing’**) refers to **adultery**, which is therefore the probable meaning that the author of Susanna attaches to the phrase in Deut 24:1.” (Bold emphasis added, 67)

b. Some **ritual impurity**c. Some **physical deficiency** (e.g. barrenness)d. Some **sexual immodesty** (*The New Bible Commentary*, 221; *King James Version Bible Commentary*, 366)e. Some **shameful or repulsive act**f. Some **indecent exposure**g. Anything **indecent** or **unseemly** (*Faithlife Study Bible*)h. Some **indecent** or **impropriety of behavior**” short of illicit sexual intercourse (Murray, 12; Carson, 9:467)

7. Despite the claims of some, the term **“some uncleanness”** [*erwat dabar*] apparently cannot refer to:

a. **Adultery**

- 1) **Adulterers** caught in the act were to be **stoned to death** (Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:22)
- 2) A **betrothed virgin** and her lover were to be **stoned to death** (Dt. 22:23-24)
- 3) *Note*: Several commentators make this same observation, that **“some uncleanness” cannot refer to adultery** since adulterers were put to death⁴

b. **Pre-marital intercourse** (Dt. 22:20-21)c. **Secret adultery** (Num. 5:11-31)

- 1) **Bearing guilt** is associated with being **“cut off”** (Lev. 10:17)
- 2) Being **“cut off,”** at least sometimes, means being **“put to death”** (Ex. 31:14-15; Lev. 20:16-17; Jdg. 21:5-6)

d. A **rapist** was to be stoned to death (Dt. 22:25-27)

8. *Joe Sprinkle*: “The reason why **‘something indecent’** is **not specified** is that the law is not attempting to **define conditions** under which a person **may divorce**— though it assumes that such conditions exist. Instead the law is primarily concerned about

⁴ Wiersbe, *Be Equipped*, 146; *The Believers Study Bible*, n.p.; Deere, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:305; Thompson, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*, 5:266; Woods, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*, 5:249; Kalland, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 3:145; *The Faithlife Study Bible*, n.p.; Bratcher & Howard, 394; Bruce, 175; *The KJV Study Bible*, n.p.; *The KJV Bible Commentary*, 366; Merrill, 318; Constable, n.p.; *The Woman’s Study Bible*, n.p.; Wesley, 657; Grisanti, 689; Poole, 1:383; *New International Bible Commentary*, 274; *The Pulpit Commentary*, 380; Henry, 266; Morris, 120, n. 116; Davidson, 6; Laney, 6; Stott, 166; Gane, 44; Sprinkle, 531; Davidson, “Marriage,” 2; Carson, 9:467; Morris, 480; Williams, Matthew, 245; Constable on Mt. 19:8; Moore, 462; Pope, 1166; Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:144; Wenham, *Jesus, Divorce & Remarriage*, 28; Murray, 10; MacArthur, *The Divorce Dilemma*, 9; Kaiser, *Hard Sayings*, 175; Block, 557, n. 10.

prohibiting remarriage after a divorce if the woman subsequently remarries.” (Bold emphasis added, 531)

C. What was the “**certificate of divorce**”?

1. *Jay Bowman*: “The expression ‘**bill of divorcement**’, used in the New Testament and the Greek Old Testament, is a ‘**writing of standing-apart**’. The bill of divorcement was **not the divorce itself** but rather an **instrument** through which the sending away was done. Isaiah 50:1, ‘**Where is your mother’s bill of divorce by which I put her away?**’ (See ASV) Also, note Deuteronomy 24 where the **bill of divorcement** was the **evidence** that she had been **officially sent away** and was now legally eligible to marry another man. The divorce papers were not the divorce but the **means**, the **evidence** and the **consequence** of it. And, a trial is not of itself a divorce but the means of coming to a decision about it.” (Bold emphasis added, “Divorce And Remarriage, 9)
2. *Daniel I. Block*: “**Extrabiblical data** suggest the document included (1) a **dissolution of marriage formula**, ‘I am not/no longer your husband, and you are not/no longer my wife’ (cf. Hos. 2:2[4]. . .); (2) an **explicit declaration of release**, authorizing the woman to return home to her father’s household or to remarry (cf. Deut. 21:14. . .); (3) a **declaration of the return of the dowry. . .**” Bold emphasis added, 558, n. 13)
3. *J. Carl Laney*: “The essential words of this document became fixed in Jewish tradition and are recorded in the Mishnah, ‘**Behold, you are free to marry any man**’ (Gittin 9:3).” (Bold emphasis added, 6)
4. *Earl S. Kalland*: “The ‘**certificate of divorce**’—סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוּת (*sēper kerītut*, ‘**a writing of cutting off**’)—was a **formal document** or **writ of separation**. The man was to put this certificate ‘into her hand,’ בְּיָדָהּ (*beyādāh*); i.e., it was his responsibility to see that she had the document in her possession. He could not send her from his house until he had given her such a certificate.” (Bold emphasis added, EBC, 3:146)
5. An example of a “**certificate of divorce**” was discovered in the caves at Wadi Murabba’at south of Qumran. The papyrus (P.Mur. 19) was written around AD 72:
 - a. “On the first of Marheshvan, the year six, 158 at Masada: I divorce and repudiate of my own freewill today, I Joseph, son of Naqsan, from [. . .]h, living at Masada, you my wife, Miriam, daughter of Jonathan, [fro]m Hanablata, living at Masada, who have been up to this (time) my wife, so that you are free on your part to go and become a wife of any Jewish man that you please. And n[ow] you have from me a bill of repudiation and a writ of divorce. Now I give (back) [the dow]ry, and (for) all ruined and damaged goods and . . . [I reimburs]e you. So let it be determined and paid fourfold. And at (any) ti[me] that you say to me, I shall replace for you the document, as long as I am alive.” (Joseph Fitzmeyer, *Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, 139-141, via Pope, 609)

D. Why was the wife “**defiled**” after her second marriage, and what does that mean?

1. “**Defiled**” (*tame*’)
 - a. *Lexham Theological Wordbook*: “vb. **be unclean, become unclean**. *Describes the state of being unclean; often used in contexts explaining the various causes for uncleanness.*
 “The Pentateuch addresses both ritual and moral categories. The former are concentrated in Leviticus (e.g., Lev 11; 13; 15) and Num 19, where ritual instructions are detailed. However, moral categories are also attested in connection to rape (Gen 34:5, 13, 27), sexual deviance (Lev 18:20, 23), necromancy (Lev 19:31), sacrificing children (Lev 20:3), and murder (Num 35:34). In the prophets, ritual concerns are reflected in Isa 30:22 and Ezek 4:14;

9:7; 44:25, as well as moral concerns in relation to unclean land (e.g., Jer 2:7; Ezek 36:17-18), people (Jer 2:23; Ezek 20:7, 18, 43), or places (Jer 7:30; Ezek 5:11; 23:48). A notable feature is the likening of moral uncleanness to ritual uncleanness (e.g., Ezek 36:17; Hag 2:13).” (n.p.)

2. This word is used to describe **ceremonial or ritual uncleanness**:
 - a. Touching a **carcass** (Lev. 5:2-3; 11:24-31)
 - b. Touching anything that has been in contact with an **unclean carcass** (Lev. 11:32-36)
 - c. Touching the **carcass of a clean animal** (Lev. 11:39-40)
 - d. Contact with any **creeping thing** (Lev. 11:43-44)
 - e. Uncleanness after **child birth** (Lev. 12:2-5)
 - f. Uncleanness by **leprosy** (Lev. 13-14)
 - g. Uncleanness because of various **bodily discharges** (Lev. 15)
 - h. Uncleanness by eating something that **died naturally** (Lev. 17:15)
 - i. Etc.
3. This word is also used to describe the result or consequence of **moral defilement**:
 - a. **Shechem’s violation of Dinah**, Jacob’s daughter (Gen. 34:1ff, 5, 13, 27)
 - b. **Adultery** (Lev. 18:20)
 - c. **Incest** (Lev. 18:6ff, 24-30)
 - d. **Homosexuality** (Lev. 18:22, 24-30)
 - e. **Bestiality** (Lev. 18:23)
 - f. **Occult practices** (Lev. 19:31)
 - g. **Child sacrifice** (Lev. 20:1-3)
 - h. **Secret adultery** (Num. 5:11-14, 20, 27-29)
4. The morphological form of this term is **quite unusual**, and the **significance** of this has been discussed at length by some scholars
 - a. *Michael A. Grisanti*: “The verb הַטְּאָמָה (huttammā’á, ‘she has been defiled’) takes a **rare form**, the **Hothpael**, that has a **passive reflexive significance** and could be rendered in several ways: (1) ‘**she has been declared defiled**’ (McConville, 358; Warren, 43; J. Walton, ‘The Place of the *hutqattēl* within the D-Stem Group and Its Implications in Deuteronomy 24:4,’ *HS* 32 [1991]: 12— ‘**she has been made to declare herself unclean**’); (2) ‘**she has been made to defile herself**’ (Davidson, “Divorce and Remarriage in the Old Testament,” 12); or (3) ‘**she has been defiled**’ (Craigie, 305; Hall, 359). The **latter translation** seems **least likely** in light of the verbal form used here. Those who prefer this translation regard the second marriage as a nontechnical kind of adultery that would get worse if she remarried her husband.” (Bold emphasis added, 2:690)
 - b. *Michael A. Grisanti*: “Both of the first two alternatives place the **responsibility** of the **defilement** on the **husband’s shoulders**. According to the second view, the husband’s **decision to divorce** his wife has caused her to **marry again** and be in a **quasi-adulterous relationship** (Davidson, *ibid.*, 13). The first view does not

regard the second marriage as **adulterous in any sense**. The first husband's decision to divorce his wife brought **shame** on her and, consequently, **defiled** her with respect to any relationship with her first husband. Proponents of this translation **vary** on the **precise cause** of that **defilement**. This verb makes it clear that the **husband's decision** does occasion her **defilement**." (Bold emphasis added, 2:690)

- c. *Richard M. Davidson*: "The Hebrew for this clause is a single word *huttamm'ah*, from the root *m^E* 'to be or become unclean or defiled.' But the **grammatical form** employed in this verse is **very unusual** in the Hebrew Bible, used nowhere else with *tm'* and only a very few times with a very few verbs. This form is the **passive** of the *Hithpael*. Since the *Hithpael* normally conveys **the reflexive idea** ('**she defiled herself**') and is used reflexively in its occurrences with *tm'*, the **passive** or *Hothpael* in Deut 24:4 would probably best be translated as '**she has been made/caused to defile herself**.'"

"The word *tm'* in the reflexive occurring in the context of sexual activities leads us clearly to Leviticus 18, where we have not only the **reflexive form** of this word (vv. 24, 30), but the other two terms/concepts used in the motive clauses of Deut 24:4: the term '**abomination**' [*to^cebah*] (vv. 22, 26, 29) and the idea of bringing **defilement/sin** upon the land (vv. 25, 27, 28). Leviticus 18 is the only other chapter of the Hebrew Bible that combines these three terms/ideas in one context, and seems undoubtedly to be alluded to by Deut 24:4. It is crucial to note that in Leviticus 18 one 'defiles oneself' by having illicit sexual relations with another (v. 20, 24, including at least adultery, bestiality, homosexual practice). Deut 24:4 also probably alludes to Num 5:13, 14, 20, where the wife is specifically referred to as having 'defiled herself' by having illicit sexual relationships with another man than her husband.

"The implication of this connection between Deut 24:4, Leviticus 18, and Numbers 5 is that **the sexual activity** of the divorced woman with the second husband is **tantamount to adultery** or some other illicit sexual intercourse, even though she does not incur the death penalty or other punishment as in the cases of Leviticus 18." (Bold emphasis added, 12)

- d. *Richard M. Davidson*: "If the sexual intercourse of the woman with her second husband defiles her and is tantamount to adultery, **why is she free from punishment?** The answer seems to be found in the meaning of the *Hothpael* form of *tm'*: **she 'has been caused to defile herself**.' This apparently does not refer to the one she has had sexual intercourse with (i.e., her second husband) as the 'cause' of defilement, as is the case when a *Nifal* or even *Hithpael* form is used. **By utilizing the rare *Hothpael* (passive reflexive) form, another cause than the immediate defilement with her second husband seems to be implied.** This is highlighted by comparing this occurrence of the *Hothpael* with its other occurrences in the Hebrew Bible, where the same dynamic is functioning: **The ultimate cause, seemingly implicit in this rare grammatical form, is the first husband. The legislation subtly implicates the first husband for divorcing his wife.** Even though his action is **not punished**, and therefore is **tolerated**, the law makes clear that **his action does not have divine approval. His putting away his wife has in effect caused her to defile herself in a second marriage** in a similar way as if she were committing adultery." (Bold emphasis added, 12-13)
- e. *Richard M. Davidson*: "In v. 4, an **exceedingly rare Hebrew grammatical form** (*Hothpael*, or passive reflexive/causative of *tame'* "defile") provides an internal indicator that **divorce does not meet with divine approval**. When the husband divorces his wife the law explains that '**she has been caused** [by the first husband] **to defile herself** [i.e., commit what is tantamount to adultery]' when

she is forced to marry again (for financial support in a patriarchal society), although the remarriage is not punished as adultery because the blame is placed upon the first husband and not upon the wife. Thus **the breakage of the marriage bond** on grounds less than illicit sexual intercourse is shown to be **out of harmony with the divine will.**" (Bold emphasis added, "Marriage," 2)

5. Some measure of **moral defilement** was associated with a divorced woman if she **remarried**
 - a. Some argue that she is defiled with respect to **reconciliation** and **remarriage** with her first husband
 - 1) *John Murray*: "It should be noted that the divorced woman is not prevented from **returning** to her husband if she did not marry a second. It is only in the event of **remarriage** that **defilement** enters and the prohibition takes effect. It should also be noted that the law at this point does not prevent a woman from **marrying a third husband** in the event that the second husband divorces her or dies. But in no case may she **return to a former husband** if once **married to another.**" (Bold emphasis added, 13-14)
 - b. Some argue that she is defiled because she has **committed adultery** in her second marriage
 - 1) *John MacArthur*: "What constitutes that **defilement**? Only one thing is possible—she was **defiled** in the **remarriage** because there was **no ground** for the **divorce**. So when she **remarried**, she became an **adulteress** (Mt 5:31, 32) and is thus **defiled** so that her former husband can't take her back." (Bold emphasis added, *MacArthur Study Bible*)

E. Why was this an "**abomination**" before the Lord, and what does that mean?

1. "**Abomination**" (*to'eba*)
 - a. *Lexham Theological Wordbook*: "(*tô'ēbā*). n. fem. **abomination**. *The connotation of this word is something that is repulsive, but not necessarily evil in and of itself.*
 "This denotes something of a **physical, cultic, or ethical nature** which either **God or people abhor**, and has a **broad range of uses**, from the Egyptians' ritual abhorrence to **eating with Hebrews** (Gen 43:32) to someone being **physically repulsive** (Psa 88:8), **offering improper sacrifices** (Deut 17:1), **sexual perversions** (Lev 18:22–30), **eating unclean food** (Deut 14:3–8), and **performing human sacrifice** (Deut 12:31). As such, it occasionally refers to **idols or foreign deities** (Isa 44:19; 2 Kgs 23:13)." (Bold emphasis added, n.p.)
 - b. *Mounce*: "...118x. Regularly translated '**detestable thing, repulsive thing, abomination,**' *tô'ēbā* generally denotes persons or actions that are **morally or religiously offensive**, especially to God. Idolatry, for example, is an abomination to the Lord (Deut 7:25; 32:6; Jer 16:18; Mal 2:11)." (Bold emphasis added, 2)
2. The term is used to describe:
 - a. **Incest** (Lev. 18:1ff, 22)
 - b. **Homosexuality** (Lev. 18:22; 20:13)
 - c. **Bestiality** (Lev. 18:23, 26-30)
 - d. **Child sacrifice** (Dt. 12:31; 18:9-10)
 - e. **Idolatry** (Dt. 13:12-15; 17:1-4; 27:15; 32:16)
 - f. **Ritually unclean animals** (Deut. 14:3)

- g. **Occultic activities** (Deut. 18:9-14)
- h. **Transgender dressing** (Dt. 22:5)
- i. **Reconciliation and remarriage** after marriage to another (Dt. 24:4)
- j. **Pagan marriage** (Ezra 9:1-2)
- k. **Adultery** (Ezek. 16:22; 22:10-11; 33:26)
- l. Etc.

F. Why or how did this **“bring sin upon the land”**?

1. *J. A. Thompson*: “The idea that **unchastity defiled the land** is found in several other passages in the Old Testament (e.g. Lev. 18:25, 28; 19:29; Num. 5:3; Jer. 3:2, 9; Hos. 4:3).” (Bold emphasis added, 5:267)
2. Lev. 18:24-25: ²⁴ ‘Do not **defile yourselves** with any of these things; for by all these **the nations are defiled**, which I am **casting out** before you. ²⁵ For **the land is defiled**; therefore I visit the **punishment** of its **iniquity** upon it, and the **land vomits out its inhabitants**.
3. *Robert G. Bratcher & Howard A. Hatton*: “The land, that is, the country of Israel, is seen as having a **moral quality** that can be **polluted** by sin.” (Bold emphasis added, 396)
4. The simplest answer to all of these “Why” questions is simply: **“God said so”**

G. What was the **purpose** of this legislation? **Various purposes** have been suggested by scholars:

1. **To ensure the proper legal procedure**
 - a. This was apparently the view of **the Pharisees** who questioned Jesus about divorce (Mt. 19:3, 7; Mk. 10:2, 4)
 - b. This interpretation is **deficient** because:
 - 1) It is based an **improbable translation**
 - 2) *J. Carl Laney*: “Whatever the precise meaning of עָרַךְ, הָרַךְ, הָרַךְ, the grammar makes clear that Moses was **describing a case**, not **prescribing a course of action** for dealing with an offensive wife.” (Bold emphasis added, 6)
2. **To discourage divorce or to prevent frivolous divorce** (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:305)
 - a. *Jay Adams*: “The whole point of the four verses in question is to **forestall hasty action** by making it **impossible to rectify the situation** when divorce and remarriage to another takes place (cf. 1 Cor. 7:11).” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible*, 32, via Laney, 10)
 - b. *Joe Sprinkle*: “It **discourages divorce** since there was a good chance that one would not be able later to **remarry a wife one divorced**, and it **discourages remarriage** since a woman who so remarries is **‘defiled’** (v. 4), a term used elsewhere of **adultery** (Lev 18:20).” (Bold emphasis added, 531, n. 4)
 - c. *Keil & Delitzsch*: “The law that the first husband could not take his divorced wife back again, if she had married another husband in the meantime, even supposing that the second husband was dead, would necessarily **put a check upon frivolous divorces**. Moses could not **entirely abolish the traditional custom**, if only ‘because of **the hardness of the people’s hearts**’ (Matt. 19:8).” (Bold emphasis added, 1:950-95 1)

- d. *Robert B. Hughes & J. Carl Laney*: “The legislation of 24:1-4 neither **instituted** nor **condoned** divorce but simply **prohibited a particular type of remarriage after divorce**. A man could not remarry his divorced wife if, in the meantime, she had had an intervening marriage. Apparently the legislation was designed to **discourage divorce** and **prevent the establishment of an illicit union**.” (Bold emphasis added, 76)
- e. **Augustine** understood this as the purpose of Dt. 24:1-4
- 1) *Augustine*: “The Lord explains the intention of the law, which required a bill of divorce in every case where a wife was put away. The precept not to put away a wife is the opposite of saying that a man may put away his wife if he pleases; which is not what the law says. On the contrary, **to prevent the wife from being put away**, the law required this intermediate step, that **the eagerness for separation might be checked by the writing of the bill**, and the man might have **time to think of the evil of putting away his wife**. . . .” (Bold emphasis added, “Reply To Faustus The Manichaeon,” *Nicene Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1.4:249-250)
- f. This legislation would have been a **deterrent to divorce** for several reasons:
- 1) Divorce had to be based on **“some uncleanness,”** not “just any reason” (Mt. 19:3)
 - a) Although this was (mis)interpreted **quite broadly** by the school of Hillel, this was **not really justified** by the **meaning** of the term “some uncleanness” [*’erwa(h) dabar*]
 - 2) A bill of divorcement had to be **prepared**; therefore, a frustrated or angry husband could not send his wife away **willy nilly**
 - a) This preparation likely would have required a **scribe, time, and money**⁵
 - b) This may have caused a husband to **“think twice”** about divorce
 - 3) Everything had to be established by at least **two witnesses** (Dt. 19:15)
 - 4) The bill of divorcement had to be **put into the wife’s hand**
 - 5) Then, and only then, could she be **sent away**
 - 6) The divorcer could **never remarry** the divorcee
- g. This interpretation is **deficient** because:
- 1) This concession would **hardly deter** an angry husband determined to divorce his wife
 - a) *William A. Heth & Gordan J. Wenham*. “When a man divorced his wife, he would not **want her to return** to him. Since the law accurately mirrors his feelings when he is giving the divorce it can **hardly have discouraged him**.” (Bold emphasis added, 108)
 - b) *Joe Sprinkle*: “Against this view it is hard to see how this law would **hinder an angry husband** from divorcing his wife. A possible future remarriage would not be on his mind. Moreover it is only after marriage to another man that she is **‘defiled,’** and that defilement

⁵ *Robert James Utley*: “This legal procedure would have several requirements: (1) it took some amount of time; (2) it took a priest or Levite to write it; (3) it probably required the return of the dowry. Hopefully, these procedures would give the couple a chance to reconcile.” (*The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*, 2:111).

reflects to her **remarrying her first husband**, not necessarily in relationship to **other men**.... If **remarriage** is **adultery**, why is it not a **capital offense** or, at least, why is there no **condemnatory aside**? This view appears to try to read the NT into the text.” (Bold emphasis added, 531, n. 4)

2) The major deterrent to divorce was probably **financial**

a) Usually the husband forfeited the **dowry** when he divorced his wife and sometimes, he had to make **divorce payments** as well (Laney, 10; Heth & Wenham, 108)

3. **To discourage adultery** (Thompson, 5:267)

a. *Peter Craigie*: “After she has been *defiled*—the language (*defiled*) suggests **adultery** (see Lev. 18:20). The sense is that the woman’s remarriage after the first divorce is **similar to adultery** in that the woman **cohabits with another man**. However, if the woman were then to **remarry her first husband**, after divorcing the second, the analogy with adultery would become even more complete; the woman **lives** first with **one man**, then **another**, and finally returns to **the first**. Thus the intent of the legislation seems to be to **apply certain restrictions** on the already existing practice of divorce.” (Bold emphasis added, 305)

4. **To protect the second marriage**

a. *R. Yaron*: “When the divorcee has married another man, we have before us the possibility of **tension within the ‘triangle’** which has come into being. The first husband may wish to **get back** his wife, having repented of dismissing her, the wife may **draw comparisons** between her two husbands unfavourable to the second one, and may **indulge in overtures disruptive** of the second marriage. Or, nothing of the kind may have actually happened, but the second husband may go through **agonies of jealousy and apprehension**, making life a hell for the wife also. All these possibilities are avoided once the reunion is prevented.” (Bold emphasis added, R. Yaron, “The Restoration of Marriage,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 17 (1966): 1-11, via Laney, 10)

b. *Joe Sprinkle*: “[T]he purpose of this regulation is to **support and stabilize the second marriage** from a destabilizing **love triangle** involving the woman and the two husbands. Such a love triangle is **‘defiling’** since it is a kind of **incest**. To protect against such a contingency **all possibility of remarriage is prohibited**.” (Bold emphasis added, 531, n. 4)

c. *David E. Garland*: “The legislation on divorce certificates **protected wives** from **brutal abandonment**. It freed a wife from the **accusation of adultery** when she, out of necessity, remarried; and it prevented the first husband from destroying her new marriage by trying to **reclaim her**. It deterred anything that might look like **wife-swapping**. The law was therefore intended to **keep the social upheaval** associated with divorce **to a minimum**.” (Bold emphasis added, 379)

d. The **structural parallels** between this text and Dt. 21:10-14 suggest that their purpose was to **protect a vulnerable woman** in a marital relationship from abuse by her first husband (Block, 557)

e. This interpretation is **deficient** because:

1) It fails to explain why the rule would apply after **the death** of the second husband

2) It does not adequately account for the **strong language** in the motive clause (i.e. “she has been **defiled**,” “an **abomination** before the Lord,” and “bring **sin** upon the land”)

5. To prevent a type of incest

- a. The reasons the husband should not take back his former wife (i.e. defilement, abomination, and pollution of the land) occur repeatedly in connection with the **sexual offenses** listed in Leviticus 18 and 20 (Gordon Wenham, "The Restoration of Marriage Reconsidered," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 20 (1979): 36-40, via Laney, 10-11)
- b. Gordon Wenham's argument:
 - 1) Marriage establishes a close and lasting "**one flesh**" relationship (Gen. 2:24) that **does not terminate with divorce**
 - 2) Marital intercourse makes a man and wife as **closely related** as parent and children
 - a) *William A. Heth & Gordon Wenham*: "**Sexual intercourse** not only creates **vertical blood relationships** through the procreation of children, but **horizontal ones** as well: the partners to a marriage become one flesh. These **horizontal relationships** are **just as enduring** as the vertical ones." (Bold emphasis added, 110)
 - 3) If a man may not **marry his sister-in-law** because she has in effect become **his sister** (Lev. 18:16; 20:21), may he **remarry his former wife**?
 - 4) Dt. 24:1-4 uses the **logic of incest laws** to prohibit the restoration of the first marriage
 - 5) To reconstitute the first marriage would be a "**type of incest**" which is prohibited (Lev. 18:6-18)
- c. This interpretation is **deficient** because:
 - 1) It is **highly speculative**
 - 2) It would not be **readily apparent** to the average reader
 - a) How many Israelites would have seen a **connection** between the "**one flesh**" of the marriage union and the **incest laws** of Lev. 18?
 - 3) Is **remarriage** to one's spouse after an intervening marriage **actually incest** or not?

6. To protect a divorced woman

- a. *William Luck*: "The passage "intends to **protect a stigmatized woman** from further abuse by her offending first husband." (*Divorce and Remarriage: Recovering the Biblical View*, 64 via Laney, 11)
- b. *David Atkinson*: "This would **make public the termination** of the first marriage, and so promote a **sense of social responsibility**, and also--and perhaps more importantly--give the divorced woman **rights in law**, by **protecting her** against the capital charge of **adultery** if she remarried." (Bold emphasis added, *To Have and to Hold*, 104, via Laney, 9)
- c. *John Walton*: "In Deut 24:1-4 it is not **adultery** or even **divorce** that is the point of the legislation. Rather, it represents an attempt to **preserve the dignity and self-respect** of a woman in a very vulnerable position." (Bold emphasis added, 15)
- d. *Michael Grisanti*: "Obtaining a ת.ת.ר.פ.ר.ס. (sēper kēritut, '**certificate of divorce**,' lit., '**a writing of cutting off**') was essential for the woman to **protect her status** in the eyes of other Israelites. This document '**certified**' the **divorce**, **allowed her to remarry**, and **spared her from accusations** (and the penalty) of adultery. Generally in the ancient Near East, a husband could **reclaim an**

abandoned wife until she had a **certificate of divorce** from him....” (Bold emphasis added, 2:690)

- e. *Walter Wessel & Mark Strauss*: “The primary purpose of the command was to **protect** the wife from arbitrary divorce. A man could not divorce his wife and then accuse her of **adultery** or **claim her back** after she remarried. Nor could he remarry her for **financial gain** when, following a second divorce, she received her **dowry** back, or after she gained a **widow’s inheritance**.” (Bold emphasis added, 9:857)
- f. *Daniel I. Block*: “The certificate was **vital** for the woman, especially if the document **relinquished** the **husband’s rights** to her and her dowry and authorized her to **return to her family of origin** or to **marry another man**. From the man’s perspective, the record of the **returned dowry** would prevent the woman’s family from **making further claims** against him.” Bold emphasis added, 558-559)
- g. This interpretation is **deficient** because:
 - 1) It introduces **speculation** and **hypothesis**
 - 2) The passage does not make any comment as to the **husband’s character** [?]

7. To deter greedy profit by the first husband

- a. Westbrook argues that the key to understanding Dt. 24:1-4 lies in the **financial consequences** of its dissolution
 - 1) *John Walton*: “Westbrook’s own opinion (1986:396-404) is that the law is motivated by a concern that **the first husband is using the law to his own financial profit**. Examination of ancient Near Eastern and Misnaic legislation is used to demonstrate that the first husband would not have been required to **return the woman’s dowry** or **make financial settlement** because he had **just cause for divorce**. On the other hand, the **second husband**, whether discontent or dead, would have **returned the woman’s dowry** and either made a **divorce settlement** or passed on **some inheritance**.” (Bold emphasis added, 13)
- b. *Joe Sprinkle*: “[T]he primary purpose of this passage is **economic**. Comparative analysis of ancient Near Eastern and later Jewish marriage contracts suggests that if a man **divorces** his wife on the basis of a **well-recognized violation** of the marriage covenant he could send her away **without relinquishing her dowry**. On the other hand, in the case of a **purely subjective divorce**—divorce because the husband just **does not like his wife anymore**—the husband would be obliged to **return the woman’s dowry** to her. Westbrook argues that in the first case in v. 1 the woman was **sent away without dowry** because of the **‘something indecent’** found in her. With the second marriage, however, she was **sent away** just because the second husband **‘disliked’** (*sn*) her, and so she would have **taken her dowry with her**. Westbrook thinks the law is preventing the man from **taking advantage** of the woman, **remarrying her for her dowry**. The point is not that the woman is **unclean** but that the first husband has **asserted** that she is **unclean** and has **profited** from that claim by **confiscating her dowry**. Hence, having profited from **declaring her unclean** he now wants to claim her to be **‘clean’** for marriage so as to again **claim her assets**, the dowry of the second marriage.” (Bold emphasis added, 531-532, n. 4)
- c. **Two kinds of divorces** were recognized in various ancient Near Eastern law codes

- 1) If a wife was guilty of **socially recognized misconduct**, her husband was **justified** in **divorcing** her without **any financial consequences** to himself
 - a) This principle would apply to the **first marriage** in Dt. 24:1
- 2) In other cases of divorce, the wife was **entitled to a financial settlement**
 - a) At the very least her **dowry** would be **restored**
 - b) This principle would apply to the **second marriage** in Dt. 24:3
 1. Here **no guilt** on the wife's part is stated or implied
- 3) *Joe Sprinkle*: “The **Code of Hammurapi** (sections 138-140) states that the **dowry must be returned** to a woman **before divorce**. If she had **no dowry, one mina** (60 shekels) of silver was to be given as a **divorce settlement** (20 shekels for commoners). The **Laws of Urnammu** (section 11) indicate that if a woman committed **adultery** before the **divorce** she **forfeited the divorce settlement**. Cf. also the **Middle Assyrian Laws** (sections 37-38) where the **father keeps the bride price** of the **divorced woman**—though Assyrian law seems to **leave up [sic] to the husband** whether any of the **dowry** is to be **returned**.” (Bold emphasis added, 546, n. 43)
- d. The **first husband divorced** his wife because of her “**indecentcy**” and thus **escaped the normal consequences** (He paid her **no divorce money** and probably **kept her dowry**)
- e. Now that she was a **wealthy widow or divorcee**, the first husband would forget his original objections and **seek to remarry** her
- f. The effect would be that **the first husband profited twice** – first by **rejecting** his wife and then by **remarrying** her
- g. “By charging his wife with **some indecentcy**, the first husband **acquired her dowry**—her father's marriage present to her—when he divorced her. Remarrying, she was given a **second dowry**. This example then implies that, when her second marriage ended (either through death or through more trivial grounds of divorce), she was able to **keep her second dowry**. The first husband is forbidden to remarry her to **acquire her second dowry**. This law protects the woman from **exploitation** by her first husband.” (Bold emphasis added, The ESV Study Bible, 365)
- h. Dt. 24:1-4 seeks to **prevent** this unjust enrichment
- i. This interpretation is **deficient** because:
 - 1) It is based on considerable **hypothesis** and **speculation**. Westbrook reads an awful lot between the lines
 - a) This passage says nothing about a **dowry** or the desire of the first husband to **remarry** his first wife for her **dowry**⁶

⁶ *John Walton*: “While Westbrook has provided a very reasonable explanation of how a scenario such as that in Deut 24 could take place, he has not successfully demonstrated that it is the intention of the law to prevent the profiteering schemes of the first husband. The protasis does not mention any financial arrangement that the woman may have benefitted from as a result of the second marriage. Furthermore, the law could have simply ruled that no dowry would be necessary for the second marriage to the first husband and could have prohibited him from absorbing any of the woman's assets under his control. Most notable, however, is that this interpretation, as with all of the others, fails to take account of the distinctiveness of the *hutqattel* form. By translating ‘after she has been defiled’ as Westbrook and most others do, there is no clear line of distinction between the *hutqattel* and the *quttal*. The apodosis clearly states that the situation expressed by this verb is the reason for the legislation.” (13-14).

- 2) It does not deal adequately with the **key terms** “abomination” and “sin on the land”
- 3) It implies that the first divorce and remarriage were **permissible**, which may not have been the case “**since she has been defiled**” (Dt. 24:4) (Laney, 12)
8. **To prevent remarriage to the first husband**
- a. This is the purpose that is **clearly stated** in the legislation
 - b. It is also **presupposed** in Jeremiah 3:1-5
9. It seems to me that this legislation probably had **multiple purposes**:
- a. To **prevent remarriage** to the first husband
 - b. To **discourage divorce**
 - c. To **protect** the divorced wife
- H. Does Dt. 24:1-4 **prescribe** or **describe** divorce procedures in Israel? Several factors suggest that it is the latter:
1. The **probable structure** of the passage (i.e. protasis in verses 1-3 and apodosis in verse 4) indicates that this legislation was **descriptive** rather than **prescriptive** with respect to **divorce procedure**
 2. If this is correct, Dt. 24:1-4 does not **institute divorce**. It simply acknowledges it as **taking place** (not necessarily with **divine approval**)
 3. Though divorce was “**permitted**” in the sense that it was **not specifically prohibited by law**, divorce was **not looked on with favor** by the OT Scriptures (Isa. 54:6; Mal. 2:10-16)
 4. Ancient Near Eastern divorce laws typically included **financial stipulations**, and there are none in Moses’ legislation in Dt. 24:1-4
 5. **Later usage** of a text (e.g. the interpretations of the Jewish Rabbis and the Pharisees) do not **determine** the **contextual meaning** of the earlier text
 - a. Jesus **disputed** the Pharisees’ understanding of Dt. 24:1-4 (Mt. 19:3-8)
 - b. He declared that Moses’ legislation was **not in keeping with God’s original intention for marriage**. It was merely a **concession** because of **hard hearts**
 - 1) *James B. Hurley*: “Thus, whereas the Pharisees had taken **Moses’ concession** of divorce as **God’s design**, Jesus took it as a **regulatory measure** to deal with the result of sin.” (*Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 101, via Laney, 14)
 - c. *Daniel I. Block*: “That Moses *permitted* divorce may simply mean that he **left customary procedures in place**; he was not making a (new) ruling on this matter.” (Bold emphasis added, 557)
 6. This passage presents both **husbands** as **parallel cases** (Dt. 24:1, 3)
 - a. *Daniel I. Block*: “The **repetition** of the last three lines in verses 1b and 3 suggests the **preceding actions are equivalent**, which means that if we interpret the second series **conditionally**, the first is neither a **command** nor **permission**.” (Bold emphasis added, 557)
- II. **Deuteronomy 24:1-4 And Other OT Instruction On Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage**
- A. God said **nothing about divorce** when He **instituted** the marriage relationship

1. Gen. 2:24:²⁴ Therefore a man shall **leave** his father and mother and be **joined** to his wife, and they shall become **one flesh**.
2. If **God's silence** has always been **prohibitive**, rather than **permissive**, then the **thunderous silence** of God in the very beginning implicitly forbids homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, polygamy, polyandry, concubinage, prostitution, and divorce⁷
 - a. That God's silence is **prohibitive**, rather than **permissive**, logically follows from His repeated instructions **not to tamper** with His word
 - 1) Do all things according to **the pattern** (Ex. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; 31:11; 39:42-43)
 - 2) Do not **go beyond** (Num. 22:18; 24:13)
 - 3) Do not **add to** or **subtract from** (Dt. 4:1-2; 12:32; Pr. 30:5-6)
 - 4) Do not **turn aside** to the right hand or to the left (Dt. 5:32-33; 17:11, 18-20; 28:13-14; Josh. 1:7; 23:6; Pr. 4:26-27)
 - b. Furthermore, the **prohibitive** nature of God's silence is implicitly and explicitly indicated by various other Bible passages (cf. 2 Sam. 7:1-7; Heb. 7:14)
 - 1) When God **said nothing**, the faithful **did nothing** (until they received instruction from God)
 - a) Observing the **Passover** (Num. 9:1-14)
 - b) Punishing a **blasphemer** (Lev. 24:10-12)
 - c) Punishing a **Sabbath-breaker** (Num. 15:32-36)
 - d) Binding **circumcision** on the Gentiles (Acts 15:24)
 - 2) God **punished presumption**
 - a) **Nadab & Abihu** (Lev. 10:1-3)
 - b) **Uzzah & the ark** (2 Sam. 6:1-11; 1 Chr. 13:1-14; 15:2, 12-15; cf. Num. 4:15; 7:6-9)
 - c) **David & the temple** (2 Sam. 7:1-7; 1 Chr. 17:1-6)
 - d) **Uzziah & the incense** (2 Chr. 26:16-21; cf. Num. 16:39-40)
 - e) **Israel & their child sacrifices** (Jer. 19:4-6)
 - f) **Pharisees & their traditions** (Mk. 7:6-9)
 - c. *Note:* **Jesus' interpretation** of this passage (Mt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-9) **confirms** this understanding of Gen. 2:24
3. God wills that **one man** be married to **one woman** for **one lifetime**
4. Marriage is a **"till death do us part"** relationship
5. *Joe Sprinkle:* "In Gen 2:24 it is not **'one flesh' alone** that defines the **marriage relationship**. Marriage also involves a man's **leaving** his father and mother and

⁷ *F. D. Bruner:* "If God had supremely intended *solitary* life, God would have created humans one by one; if God had intended polygamous life, God would have created one man and several women (Chrys., 62:1:382); if God had intended homosexual life, God would have made two men or two women; but that God intended monogamous heterosexual life was shown by God's creation of one man and one woman." (*The Churchbook*, 670-671, via Blomberg, Matthew, 22, n. 5)

cleaving to his wife. The **leaving** is **not physical**—culturally in Israel it was usually the **wife** who **left** her parents behind, not the husband—but **psychological**, consisting of **transferring** to his wife his **first loyalty**. And the **cleaving** refers to **Israel’s covenant** with God, implying that a **covenant relationship**, not just sex, is involved.” (Bold emphasis added, 543)

a. *Dabaq* (“**cleave**”) is explicitly a **covenant term** when Israel is told to **cleave** to the Lord in affection and loyalty (Dt. 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; 30:20) (Sprinkle, 543, n. 31)

B. However, there were **three “marriage” practices** that **deviated** from God’s original intention for marriage⁸

1. **Polygamy** was allowed and tolerated

a. There were several who **practiced polygamy** in OT times

- 1) **Lamech** and his two wives: Adah & Zillah (Gen. 4:23)
- 2) **Abraham** with Sarah and his concubines Hagar and Keturah (Gen. 16; 25:1-2)
- 3) **Jacob** with Leah and Rachel (Gen. 29:15-30)
- 4) **Esau** with three wives (Gen. 26:34; 36:2; 28:9)
- 5) **Gideon** with his “many wives” (Jdg. 8:30)
- 6) **Elkanah** with Hannah and Peninnah (1 Sam. 1:2)
- 7) **David** with seven named wives (1 Sam. 18:17-30; 25:38-43; 2 Sam. 3:2-5) and additional unnamed ones (2 Sam. 5:13)
- 8) **Solomon** and his royal harem (1 Kgs. 3:1; 11:3; Cant. 6:8)
- 9) **Rehoboam** with his eighteen wives (2 Chr. 11:21)

b. However, there were **certain regulations** evidently designed to curb the practice

- 1) Wives were to be **treated equally** (Ex. 21:9-11)
- 2) Sexual intercourse brought **ceremonial uncleanness** till evening (Lev. 15:18)
- 3) A man was not to **marry sisters** (Lev. 18:18)
- 4) Kings were not to **multiply wives** (Dt. 17:17)
- 5) The right of **primogeniture** was to be respected (Dt. 21:15-16)
- 6) **Monogamy** was highlighted as God’s original intention (Pr. 5:18-19; Mal. 2:14-15)

c. Furthermore, **polygamy** created **problems** for those who practiced it

- 1) There was **friction** between Sarah and Hagar (Gen. 16:1-6)
- 2) There was **rivalry** between Rachel and Leah (Gen. 29:21-30)
- 3) Esau’s wives brought **grief** to Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 26:34)
- 4) Peninnah **provoked** Hannah (1 Sam. 1:1-2, 6)
- 5) Solomon’s wives **turned his heart away** from God (1 Ki. 11:1-13)

⁸ For a good discussion of ancient marital practices and sexual sin that deviated from marriage as it was ordained by God, see Pope, Appendix: Redefining Marriage, 1136-1184.

2. **Concubinage** was also allowed and tolerated
 - a. There were several who **practiced concubinage** in OT times
 - 1) **Nahor** (Abraham's brother) and Reumah (Gen. 22:23-24)
 - 2) **Abraham** and Hagar (Gen. 16:1-3) and Keturah (Gen. 25:1, 5-6; 1 Chr. 1:32)
 - 3) **Jacob** and Bilhah and Zilpah (Gen. 35:22)
 - 4) **Eliphaz** and Timna (Gen. 36:12)
 - 5) **Gideon** and his concubine (Jdg. 8:31)
 - 6) **Levite** and his concubine (Jdg. 19)
 - 7) **Saul** and Rizpah (2 Sam. 3:7)
 - 8) **David** and his concubines (2 Sam. 5:13; 15:16)
 - 9) **Solomon** and his 300 concubines (1 Kgs. 11:3)
 - 10) **Rehoboam** and his 60 concubines (2 Chr. 11:21)
 - 11) **Ahasuerus** and his concubines (Est. 2:14)
 - 12) **Belshazzar** and his concubines (Dan. 5:2-3, 23)
 - b. Like polygamy, it created **problems**, too
 3. **Levirate marriage** was commanded (Dt. 25:5-10; Ruth 4)
 - a. It was instituted to **preserve** a man's lineage, to **support** and **protect** his widow, and to **perpetuate** the family property within the immediate family (*Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, 4:567)
 - b. I also cannot help but wonder if Levirate marriage was instituted, in part, to preserve the **Messianic lineage** of Christ⁹
 - 1) Neglected Levirate marriage led to **Tamar's conception** by Judah, her father-in-law (Gen. 38), and Tamar was in the lineage of Jesus (Mt. 1:3)
 - 2) Levirate marriage was involved in **Ruth's marriage to Boaz** (Ruth 3:9-13; 4:1-14), and Ruth was in the lineage of Jesus (Mt. 1:5)
 - 3) Some attempt to **harmonize** the different genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke by suggesting **other Levirate marriages**, although many reject this explanation¹⁰
 4. These **concessions** were apparently allowed, for reasons known only to God, because of man's **ignorance** and **hardness of heart**
 - a. Acts 17:30-31: ³⁰ Truly, these **times of ignorance** God **overlooked**, but now commands all men everywhere to **repent**,³¹ because He has appointed a **day** on which He will **judge** the world in **righteousness** by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."
 - b. Mt 19:8: ⁸ He said to them, "Moses, because of the **hardness of your hearts**, permitted you to divorce your wives, but **from the beginning it was not so**."
- C. There were **other MDR regulations** besides Dt. 24:1-4

⁹ None of the Bible dictionaries I consulted make this suggestion.

¹⁰ See Meyer, 57; Carson, 9:90; Sloman, 74; France, 33, n. 21; Morris, 21.

1. If a **Hebrew servant** was **given a wife** by his master, his wife and children had to **remain** with the master when he was released in the seventh year (Ex. 21:2-6)
 - a. However, the Hebrew servant could **choose to remain** with his master, his wife, and his children and not go free
 - b. In that case, he **relinquished his right to freedom forever** (Ex. 21:5-6)
2. If a master **divorced his slave wife** because she did not please him, she was to be **redeemed and not sold** (Ex. 21:7-8)
3. If a **slave wife** were not **treated equally**, she could **go free** (Ex. 21:11)
 - a. *Joe Sprinkle*: “The expression ‘**she is to go free**’ can mean no less than **formal divorce**. The point being made is that if this woman, **sold as a slave-wife**, is no longer to be a wife she cannot be **kept as a slave** on the pretext that she is the man’s wife. Instead she is to be **given her freedom**. The purpose of this law, then, was **humanitarian**: to assure that a woman sold for the purpose of marriage would not be taken advantage of by being reduced instead to ordinary slavery. Thus under these conditions, and for the sake of the woman involved, God commanded the Israelite unwilling to give the woman full wifely privileges to **divorce** her without return of the original bride price.” (Bold emphasis added, 534)
4. If a man and an un-betrothed virgin engaged in **pre-marital sex**, the man was to pay the “**bride-price**,” and she was to become his **wife**. If her father refused to allow the marriage, the man was to pay the “**bride-price**” (Ex. 22:16-17)
 - a. *Note*: This instruction indicates that **sexual relations alone do not constitute marriage**
5. A **priest** was not to marry a **harlot**, a **defiled woman**, or a **divorced woman** (Lev. 21:7; cf. Ezek. 44:22)
6. The **high priest** was to marry a **virgin** of his own people, and he could not marry a **widow**, a **divorced woman**, a **defiled woman**, or a **harlot** (Lev. 21:14)
 - a. Would these prohibitions (Lev. 21:7, 14) imply that **other men could marry divorced women**?
7. The **daughter of a priest**, who was **widowed** or **divorced**, without a child, who returned to her father’s house, could **eat her father’s food** (Lev. 22:13)
8. Any **vow** of a **widow** or a **divorced woman** would stand (Num. 30:9)
9. A man who **captured a women** in war, **married** her, and then **divorced** her was to **set her free**; she was not to be **sold** or **treated brutally** because she had been **humbled** (Dt. 21:10-14)
 - a. *Joe Sprinkle*: “But if after marriage he is not pleased with her, the text says he cannot treat her as a **slave** and **sell her** to someone else. Instead she has all the rights of a **freeborn wife**. If he no longer wants her as a wife, he must ‘**let her go wherever she wishes**’ (*wesillahtah lenapsah*). The expression ‘**let her go wherever she wishes**’ must imply ‘**divorce her**.’ The piel of *slh* is commonly used for **divorce** (Deut 22:19, 29; 24:1, 3; Jer 3:1). So if he is unwilling to **treat her as a wife**, God commands that he **divorce her**.
 “This command to divorce has a **humanitarian purpose** of preventing the **sexual abuse** of captive women. One who desires a beautiful captive woman cannot rape her and leave her. That man must **marry her** to **have her**. And if he no longer **wants her as a wife** he cannot **sell her as a slave**, which morally would be tantamount to **rape** and **abandonment**. She must be treated with dignity as a **full- fledged wife** and returned to **freedom** if not treated as a wife.

“The text **does not condone** the man’s choice of no longer accepting this woman as his wife. **His reasons may well be morally unjustified.** But if for whatever reasons he **rejects** her as wife, the text prescribes **divorce** and **release** as preferable to her **continued subjugation.**” (Bold emphasis added, 535)

10. A husband who **falsely accused** his bride of **pre-marital sex** was to be **punished**, fined **100 shekels of silver**, and he **could not divorce** his wife (Dt. 22:13-19)
 - a. **“Chastise”** (ASV; KJV; NAB; NASB; YLT)
 - b. **“Punish”** (CSB; HCSB; NET; NIV; NKJV; NRSV)
 - c. **“Whip”** (ESV; RSV)
 - d. **“Discipline”** (LEB)
 - e. If the accusation proved to be **true**, his bride was to be **stoned to death**
 - f. *Joe Sprinkle*: “The formulation of this law clearly assumes that were the penalty not imposed an Israelite **could divorce** his wife.” (Bold emphasis added, 533)
11. The **rapist** of an **un-betrothed woman** was to pay her father **50 shekels of silver**, **marry** the woman, and he **could not divorce** her (Dt. 22:28-29)
 - a. *Note*: Once again, this instruction indicates that **sexual relations alone do not constitute marriage**
 - b. *Joe Sprinkle*: “Again, were it not for the original offense it would be assumed that he **could divorce** her.” (Bold emphasis added, 533)

D. Sexual sin was **explicitly forbidden**

1. **Adultery** (Ex. 20:14; Dt. 5:18)
2. **Homosexuality** (Lev. 18:22)
3. **Bestiality** (Ex. 22:19; Lev. 18:23; Dt. 27:21)
4. **Prostitution** (Dt. 23:17-18)
5. **Incest** (Dt. 22:30)
 - a. Chart: “Lev. 18 & Prohibited Sexual Relationships”

E. Sexual sin was **punished** severely (usually by capital punishment)

1. **Fornication** with a betrothed concubine was punished by scourging [KJV; NKJV] or compensation [LEB; NET] (Lev. 19:20)
2. **Homosexuality** was punished by death (Lev. 20:13)
3. **Incest** was punished by death (Lev. 20:14, 17)
4. **Bestiality** was punished by death (Lev. 20:15-16)
5. The **daughter of a priest**, who profaned herself by playing the harlot, was to be **burned with fire** (Lev. 21:9)
6. A **suspected adulteress** was given the **bitter water test** (Num. 5:11-31)
 - a. If she were proven **guilty**, her **belly** would **swell**, her **thigh** would **rot**, and she would become a **curse** among her people (Num. 5:27) and **bear her guilt** (Num. 5:31)
 - b. If she was proven **innocent**, then she would be **free** and could **conceive children** (Num. 5:28)

7. A bride who was guilty of **pre-marital sex** was to be **stoned to death** (Dt. 22:20-21)
 - a. *Note:* Capital punishment was to be administered **carefully** only after “**due process**”
 - 1) It was to be administered only on the testimony of **two or three witnesses** (Dt. 17:6; 19:15)
 - 2) The witnesses were to be the **first ones to cast a stone** (Dt. 17:7)
 - 3) A false witness was to receive **commensurate punishment** (Dt. 19:16-19)
 8. **Adulterers** were to be **put to death** (Dt. 22:22)
 9. **Adulterers** (involving a betrothed woman) were to be **stoned to death** (Dt. 22:23-24)
 10. The **rapist** of a betrothed woman was to be **put to death**, but the woman was not to be punished (Dt. 22:25-26)
 11. The **rapist** of an un-betrothed woman was to pay her father **50 shekels of silver**, **marry** the woman, and he **could not divorce** her (Dt. 22:28-29)
- F. Foreign wives were **divorced** as a requirement of repentance
1. God prohibited the Israelites from **marrying pagan women** (Ex. 34:11-16; Dt. 7:1-5)
 2. Some among the **remnant** that returned from Babylonian captivity **married pagan women**
 - a. In the days of **Ezra** (Ezra 9:1-2)
 - b. In the days of **Nehemiah** (Neh. 13:23-24)
 3. **Divorce** was the agreed upon **solution** for this sin
 - a. In the days of **Ezra** (Ezra 10:2-4, 10-12)
 - b. In the days of **Nehemiah** (Neh. 13:25-27, 30)
 4. This solution was **not explicitly commanded** in the law of Moses, but it would have been a **requirement of repentance** which is a **prerequisite** for **forgiveness** (1 Ki. 8:47-50 // 2 Chr. 6:37-39; Pr. 28:13; Isa. 1:16-18; 55:6-7; Ezek. 14:6; 18:30; 33:11)

III. Deuteronomy 24 And Other Related OT Passages

A. Hosea 1:1-2:1

1. YHWH instructs Hosea to **take a “wife of harlotry”** and “**children of harlotry**” (Hos. 1:1-2)
 - a. Hosea/Hoshea means “**God saves/delivers**” (Guenther, 38)
 - 1) Hosea is a shortened form of **Hoshaiah** (Jer. 42:1) which means “**YHWH has delivered**” (Faithlife Study Bible)
 - 2) It is related to the names “**Joshua,**” “**Hoshea,**” and “**Jesus**” (*King James Version Bible Commentary*, 1662)
 - b. The common verb “**take**” [*laqah*] is used elsewhere to describe **marrying a wife** (e.g., Gen. 4:19; 6:2; 11:29; 12:19; 24:3, 67; Ex. 6:20; Dt. 24:1; Jer. 29:6)
 - c. The term “**harlotry**” [*zenunim*] “refers broadly to **extramarital sex**, including **adultery and prostitution.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Faithlife Study Bible*)

- 1) “The noun זְנוּנִים (zénunim) means ‘**prostitute; harlot**’ (*HALOT* 275-276 s.v. זְנוּנִים). The term does not refer to mere **adultery** (cf. NIV; also NCV, TEV, CEV ‘unfaithful’) which is expressed by the root נָאֵף (na’af, ‘adultery’; *HALOT* 658 s.v. נָאֵף). The plural noun זְנוּנִים (zénunim, literally, ‘**harlotries**’) is an example of the **plural of character** or **plural of repeated behavior**. The phrase ‘**wife of harlotries**’ (אִשְׁתֵּי זְנוּנִים, ‘eshet zénunim) probably refers to a **prostitute**, possibly a **temple prostitute** serving at a Baal temple.” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)
- d. YHWH’s command to take a “**wife of harlotry**” has been interpreted in two vastly different ways:
- 1) It has been interpreted **figuratively** by some
 - a) Explanation:
 1. The story of Hosea and Gomer is a literary **parable** or an **allegory** (Calvin, Keil)
 2. The account is a **dream** or a **vision** (Ibn Ezra, Maimonides)
 3. The whole narrative is simply a **stage play** (Kaufman)
 - b) Arguments For A Figurative Interpretation:
 1. First, it would have taken **years** to accomplish this “acted parable”
 2. Second, God **prohibited priests** from marrying a **harlot** (Lev. 21:7, 13-14)
 3. Third, God would **not require** a prophet to engage in such **bizarre behavior**
 4. Fourth, a holy and righteous God would not/could not require Hosea to **marry an immoral woman**
 5. Fifth, such a marriage would have **nullified Hosea’s effectiveness** as a prophet
 - c) Arguments Against A Figurative Interpretation:
 1. First, there are other instances when God required His prophets to do certain things over an **extended period of time**
 - a. Isaiah was told to walk “naked and barefoot **three years**” (Isa. 20:3)
 - b. Ezekiel was told to lie on his left side for **390 days** and then his right side for **40 days** beside a clay tablet depicting the city of Jerusalem (Ezek. 4:1-6)
 2. Second, the **prohibitions** that God prescribed for priests **did not apply** to other Israelites
 - a. A **priest** was not to **marry a harlot**, but **Salmon married Rahab** the harlot (Mt. 1:5; cf. Josh. 2:1)
 - b. A high priest was to **marry a virgin**, but in some cases certain Israelite men were expected to **marry non-virgins** (Ex. 22:16-17; Dt. 22:28-29)

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- c. A high priest could not **marry a widow**, but other Israelites could and did:
 1. **Boaz** married Ruth (Ruth 1:4-5 & 4:13)
 2. **David** married Abigail (1 Sam. 25:39-43) and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:26-27)
 - d. Priests could not marry a **divorced woman**, but God apparently **tolerated** this among other Israelites (Dt. 24:1-4)
 - e. Although Hosea was a **prophet**, there is no indication that he was a **priest**
3. Third, God has required various people to do **exceedingly difficult things** throughout Bible history
- a. He commanded **Abraham** to offer Isaac (Gen. 22:1ff)
 - b. He commanded **Aaron** not to mourn the deaths of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1ff)
 - c. He commanded **Isaiah** to walk naked and barefoot for three years (Isa. 20:3)
 - d. He commanded **Jeremiah** not to marry (Jer. 16:1-4)
 - e. He commanded **Jeremiah** to carry a yoke on his shoulders (Jer. 27:1-2)
 - f. He commanded **Ezekiel** to do several “strange” things:
 1. He was to lie on his **left side** then his **right side** next to a clay tablet portraying Jerusalem (Ezek. 4:1-8)
 2. He was to **eat his food by weight** and **drink water by measure** (Ezek. 4:9-17)
 3. He was to **cut his hair and beard** with a sword, **divide the hair in three parts**, and then **dispose of it in three different ways** (Ezek. 5:1-4)
 4. He was to **dig** through the **wall** of his house (Ezek. 12:1-16)
 5. He was **not to mourn** when his wife died (Ezek. 24:15-18)
4. Fourth, it is not for finite human beings to **question** or **challenge** the requirements of a holy God
- a. God’s ways are **not our ways** (Isa. 55:8-9)
 - b. From our finite human perspective, there are many things that God **allows** or **requires** that are difficult, if not impossible, for us to **understand**
 1. The suffering of **Joseph, Job, and Jesus**
 2. The **problem of evil**
 3. Etc.

- c. Furthermore, the nonliteral, allegorical view does not really solve the alleged **moral difficulty** posed by God's command to marry an immoral woman
1. *David A. Hubbard*: "[T]he **moral problem** encased in God's command that a prophet should **marry a harlot** (or a woman who would become one) is **not eased** by an **allegorical reading**. A **divine command** that is **reprehensible** in **actual experience** is **no less so** in an **illustrative story**. Moreover, something of the **poignancy, power** and **pathos** is **drained** from the book, if we are not dealing with an **actual story** where a **suffering prophet** learns and teaches volumes about the **pain** of a God whose people have **played false** with him." (Bold emphasis added, 24:59)
5. Fifth, how would Hosea's story have had much of an **impact** on his audience if they knew that **none of it was true**?
- a. *G. Herbert Livingston*: "These views ignore the **special role** that the Lord assigned **Hosea's marriage**. Hosea was not called to **model** an **ideal marriage** in Israel; his **unhappy marriage** was to present to Israel a **human parallel** to the **nation's shattered covenant relationship** with God." (Bold emphasis added, ECB, 3:605)
6. Sixth, this account is presented as a **straightforward narrative**; it is not represented as a **vision** or a purely **symbolic act**
- a. Hosea's story does not in any sense resemble the **vision accounts** of other prophets (cf. Isa. 6; Ezek. 1; Amos 7:7-9)
7. Seventh, the **specific details** of Hosea's home life point to **fact** rather than **fiction**
- a. There is no **figurative** or **symbolic significance** attributed to the names of Gomer and her father (Hos. 1:3)
 - b. The **births** of Gomer's three children are reported in a straightforward manner (Hos. 1:3-4, 6, 8-9)
 - c. Mentioning the **weaning** of Lo-Ruhamah would be a **superfluous detail** in an allegory or vision (Hos. 1:8) (Constable, n. 22; Wood, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 7:172)
 - d. Reporting the **exact amount** for Gomer's purchase (Hos. 3:2) suggests a real event (Hubbard, 24:59)
 - e. Etc.
8. Eighth, YHWH's instructions to Hosea **parallel** His instructions to Isaiah
- a. At least two of Isaiah's children have symbolic names
 1. **Shear-Jashub** means "a remnant shall return" (Isa. 7:1-9)
 2. **Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz** means "speed the spoil, hasten the booty" (Isa. 8:1-4)

- b. Isaiah and his children were **signs** from YHWH to Israel (Isa. 8:18) like Hosea's children
 - c. As is the case with Hosea, the role of Isaiah's children is introduced by **commands** from YHWH to Isaiah (Isa. 7:3; 8:1, 3)
 - d. With both Hosea and Isaiah, there are **third-person accounts** (Hos. 1:2-9; cf. Isa. 7:3-8) and **first-person reports** (Hos. 3:1-5; cf. Isa. 6:1-8)
 - 1. There are also **other examples** of these two patterns in the OT (cf. Jer. 1:4-19 & 20:1-6; Amos 7:1-9 & 7:10-17) (Hubbard, 24:60)
 - e. Isaiah's **marriage** to a prophetess (Isa. 8:3) also served a **symbolic role**
 - f. YHWH also instructed Isaiah to engage in "**bizarre behavior**" (Isa. 20:1-6) (Dearman, 82)
9. Ninth, the **burden of proof** is on the shoulders of those expositors who posit an allegory, a parable, a dream, or a vision
- 2) It has been interpreted **literally** by others
- a) Explanation:
 - 1. Hosea married a woman named Gomer who is described as a "wife of harlotry"
 - a. The meaning of this expression is variously interpreted (see below)
 - b) Arguments For A Literal Interpretation:
 - 1. *Note*: These arguments are basically the same as the arguments against a figurative interpretation (see above)
 - c) Arguments Against A Literal Interpretation:
 - 1. *Note*: These arguments are basically the same as the arguments for a figurative interpretation (see above)
- e. The expression "**wife of harlotry**" has been variously interpreted:
- 1) Gomer **dressed like a harlot**
 - a) Explanation:
 - b) Evaluation:
 - 1. There is **no real evidence** to substantiate this explanation
 - 2) Gomer was of **illegitimate birth**
 - a) Explanation:
 - b) Evaluation:
 - 1. There is **no real evidence** to substantiate this explanation
 - 3) Gomer was a **faithful wife**
 - a) Explanation:
 - 1. Chapter 1 is only a **metaphor** of Israel's sin

2. In chapter 3 Hosea shows **kindness** to a **prostitute** (not his wife) as a **prophetic symbol** of **God's compassion** on **Israel**; but this had nothing to do with his **real marriage**

3. The story of Gomer's infidelity is a **fabrication to make a point**

b) Evaluation:

1. If Hosea and Gomer were **happily married**, it would be **preposterous** for Hosea to **make up the story** of Gomer's adultery just to **make a point** to Israel
2. Hosea could not possibly have preached that Israel's apostasy **paralleled** Gomer's adultery if everyone knew that **Gomer was innocent**
3. Hosea's people could have said something like this: "Here is a man **so judgmental** that he **wrongly accuses** his own wife of **adultery!** Why then should we **pay attention** to him when he points an **accusing finger** at us?"

4) Gomer participated in **fertility rites**

a) Explanation:

1. *Allen R. Guenther*: "While the children may all be the **offspring** of **Hosea** and **Gomer**, they are appropriately designated **children of promiscuity** because Gomer was going to the **Baal shrine** to ensure her **fertility**. She may have engaged in **sacred prostitution** to **guarantee conception**, or she may simply have brought an **offering** and a **prayer** to request this blessing. The phrase **children of whoredom** is applied to **all three children** (2:4), including Jezreel, who was born *to* Hosea." (Bold emphasis added, 43-44)

b) Evaluation:

1. *Duane A. Garrett*: "Wolff argues that the text does not mean that she was **unusually immoral** but that she had participated in a **specific rite of sexual initiation prior to her marriage**. He argues that a young woman attached to the fertility cults presented herself in the shrine prior to marriage. There she **lost her virginity** in **sexual union** with **strangers**. Afterward she wore **symbolic jewelry** that gave proof that she had been initiated. This could have been a **one-time event**, and Gomer may not have been **habitually promiscuous**. Intriguing as this reconstruction may be, it really has **very little evidence** to substantiate it. Besides the fact that we do not know if **any such ritual really existed**, Hosea never says **Gomer took part in it**. Rather, he implies that she was **habitually licentious**." (Bold emphasis added, 19A:52)

5) Gomer was a **sacred prostitute**

a) Explanation:

1. Evidence elsewhere in the book suggests that Gomer was a **prostitute** (cf. Hos. 2:2b, 5b) (Garrett, 19A:51, n. 38)
2. In ancient Hebrew society, a **sexually loose woman** more likely than not would have **taken payment** for her sexual favors (Garrett, 19A:51)

- a. *Duane A. Garrett*: “Even so, we must not think of her as a **prostitute in modern terms**—a **call girl** or **streetwalker**—but should think of her more as an **immoral girl** who depended on **gifts** from her lovers.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:51)

b) Evaluation:

1. Hosea did not use the more common word “**harlot**” [*zona*]
 - a. *David Hubbard*: “The **technical vocabulary** available to describe persons set apart for such religious duties within the fertility cults is **not employed** to describe Gomer, though it does describe the cultic consorts of Israel’s men in 4:14 (Heb. *qēdēšā*; cf. Gen. 38:21-22; Deut. 23:18).” (Bold emphasis added, 24:61)
2. The term “**harlotry**” [*zenunim*] implies that Hosea was more interested in conveying her **behavior** and **character** than her **profession** (Garrett, 19A:51)
3. The picture of **family life** sketched in Hosea’s accounts does not fit well with the **lot of a sacred prostitute** (Hubbard, 24:61)

6) Gomer was guilty of **spiritual adultery**

a) Explanation:

1. Gomer was guilty of **spiritual adultery** [i.e. idolatry] against YHWH, not **sexual adultery** against Hosea (Stuart)
2. Gomer was a **spiritual harlot** simply because she lived in the apostate nation of Israel which was **unfaithful to YHWH**
 - a. *James E. Smith*: “The phrase seems to be explained in the clause ‘**because whoring, the land whores away from Yahweh.**’ Any **female citizen of the northern kingdom** would be a **wife of whoredom** simply by virtue of living in the **apostate northern kingdom**. Therefore the phrase ‘**wife of whoredom**’ does not indicate anything regarding the **character** of the woman.” (Bold emphasis added, 210)

b) Evaluation:

1. Such preaching would only have **confused** Hosea’s audience
 - a. They might have reasoned: “Even if Gomer has **worshiped the Baals**, why does Hosea regard this as **unfaithfulness against himself**? Has he begun to think of himself as God?” (Garrett, 47)
2. If Gomer and her children bore the **taint of adultery** simply and only because they were **members of a depraved society**, could not the same thing have been **said about Hosea**? (Garrett, 47)
3. The details of Hosea’s story as it unfolds point to **literal sexual unfaithfulness**

7) Gomer became **immoral after** Hosea married her (Hailey, Constable)

a) Explanation:

1. The reference to Gomer’s immorality (Hos. 1:2) is **proleptic**

2. Perhaps Gomer had **immoral “tendencies”** before Hosea married her (Hubbard, Wood), and then later after their marriage, she committed adultery
3. The expression **“a wife of harlotry”** describes her **character**, not necessarily her **conduct**
 - a. *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “The expression is similar to others in Hebrew that describe a **married woman’s character** (e.g., ‘wife of one’s youth,’ ‘a quarrelsome wife’ [‘a wife of quarrelings’], ‘a wife of noble character’” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1379)
4. This explanation provides a **clear parallel** with God’s own relationship with His people: they were **faithful** at first and then later became **unfaithful** (Ezek. 16:1ff, 15ff)
 - a. *Homer Hailey*: “From the **parallel** between **Hosea** and **Gomer** and between **Jehovah** and **Israel**, it is more probable that she was **not a harlot** at the time of Jehovah’s instruction to him, but a typical daughter of the age, who, after marriage, was so influenced by her surroundings and environment that **she became immoral.**” (Bold emphasis added, *A Commentary On The Minor Prophets*, 136)
 1. **Hosea** is analogous to **YHWH**
 2. **Gomer** is analogous to **Israel**
 3. **Gomer’s lovers** are analogous to **idols**
 - b. *Tom Constable*: “[T]he best view seems to be that Hosea’s wife **became unfaithful** to him **after they got married**, and that Yahweh told him that she would do this before they got married. This view posits a situation that was **most similar** to the **relationship** that existed between **Yahweh** and **Israel**, which Hosea’s marital relations illustrated (cf. 2:2, 4; 4:12; 5:4). **Israel became unfaithful** to Yahweh **after previous faithfulness**; Israel was **not unfaithful** when Yahweh **married** her (at Sinai). She was a **brand new bride freshly redeemed** out of Egyptian slavery (cf. Jer. 2:2-3).” (Bold emphasis added, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*)
5. This explanation preserves the **holiness** of God’s character and the **standards** of His word
 - a. A **holy and righteous God** could not/would not command Hosea to **marry an immoral woman**
6. This explanation allows Hosea’s marriage to Gomer to serve as a **visible spiritual lesson** for God’s people (Patterson & Hill, 12)
 - a. This analogy is designed not just to get **Hosea to empathize** with **God**, but to get the **Israelites to empathize** with **Hosea** so they would come to realize what they were doing to YHWH
 - b. *J. Sidlow Baxter*: “This means that **human sin hurts the great, loving heart of God**. In its deeper aspect, sin does not merely **break God’s law**, it **breaks His heart**. Calvary says SO.” (Bold emphasis added, *Explore The Book*, 4:95)

b) Evaluation:

1. Would it really have been **easier** for Hosea to **marry** a woman that he knew was **going to be promiscuous** over against a woman who **already was**?
2. The expression “**a wife of harlotry**” [’ēšet zēnûnîm] cannot be credibly translated “**a woman with immoral tendencies**”
 - a. *Warren Wiersbe*: “If Hosea had married a **pure woman** who later became **unfaithful**, ‘wife of whoredoms’ in [Hos.] 1:2 has to mean ‘a wife **prone to harlotry** who will commit it later’ but this seems to be a **strained reading** of the verse.” (Bold emphasis added, *Be Amazed*, 13)
 - b. This expression does not describe what she **might do** but what she **actually does** (Garrett, 19A:51)
 - c. *Duane A. Garrett*: “[W]hether or not she was a **prostitute**, she was not simply a girl who one might suspect would **someday turn immoral**.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:51)
3. Was Israel really **perfectly pure**, before her marriage to YHWH? **Idolatry** was a part of Israel’s history before the **Sinai covenant**
 - a. **Terah**, Abraham’s father, served other gods (Josh. 24:2)
 - b. **Rachel** stole Laban’s household idols (cf. Gen. 31:19, 30, 32, 34-35)
 - c. **Jacob** commanded his family to put away their foreign gods (Gen. 35:2, 4)
 - d. **The Israelites** engaged in idolatry while in Egypt (Ezek. 20:5-10; 23:8; Amos 5:25-26)
 - e. **Joshua** commanded the Israelites to put away their gods (Josh. 24:14-15)
4. If Gomer were **not already promiscuous**, how would Hosea know that she would become a “**wife of harlotry**”?
 - a. It’s certainly possible that **he knew** simply because **God told him**, but is this the **best explanation**?

8) Gomer was **immoral before** Hosea married her (Garrett, McComiskey)

a) Explanation:

1. This would seem to be the **most natural sense** of the language
 - a. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “The most **natural reading** of the Hebrew, however, is that God asks Hosea to **marry a woman of ill repute**. The character trait depicts what she **is**, not what she **will become**. It is possible that her immorality is connected to her devotion to the **ba’al cult**, but that idea is not **explicit** in this text.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:228)
2. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “The word combination here is **not the designation** for a **prostitute** (*zônâ* or *’iššâ zônâ*; cf. Jos 2:1; Jdg 11:1; 1 Ki 3:1; etc.). *Zēnûnîm* is an abstract plural that describes a **character trait** (cf. ‘woman of contention’ in Pr 21:9; 27:15; GKC

§128s-v). In other words, this is a **promiscuous woman**.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:228)

3. *Warren Wiersbe*: “Since the **Jews** were **idolatrous** from the **beginning** (Josh. 24:2-3, 14), it seems likely that Gomer would have to be a **prostitute** when she **married Hosea**; for this would **best symbolize** Israel’s relationship to the Lord.” (Bold emphasis added, *Be Amazed*, 13)
4. If Gomer were **not already promiscuous**, how would Hosea have known that she had **immoral tendencies** or that she would become a **“wife of harlotry”**?

a) Evaluation:

1. This view is **not required** by the text
 - a. *Tom Constable*: “If this is what the Lord meant, it would have been **more natural** for Him to say ‘take to yourself a **harlot**’ (Heb. *zonah*) or **‘prostitute.’**” (*Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*)
2. Hosea 1 does not describe **any immoral conduct** on Gomer’s part; her immorality is not revealed until Hosea 2 (*King James Version Bible Commentary*, 1663)
 - a. Response: **Immorality** may be **implied**:
 1. “Bore **him** a son” (Hos. 1:3)
 2. “Bore a daughter” (Hos. 1:6)
 3. “Bore a son” (Hos. 1:8)
3. This view does not **fit the history of Israel** who was **pure** before her **unfaithfulness** to YHWH
 - a. The Hebrew term **“harlotry”** [*zunuzim*] refers elsewhere in Hosea to **Israel** under the figure of a married woman (Hos. 2:2, 4; 4:12; 5:4)
 - b. Israel was **faithful** to YHWH at first (Jer. 2:2-3; cf. Hos. 2:14-15; 9:10) but later became **unfaithful** (Jer. 3:1-9)
4. This view does not **fit the spirit** of Hosea 2 where Gomer becomes **dissatisfied** and **leaves** Hosea’s home to **enter harlotry**
 - a. Question: Is Hosea 2 talking about Gomer, Israel, or both?
5. This view is contrary to **biblical morality** (see above)

b. **“Children of harlotry”** has been variously interpreted:

- 1) Children born as a result of **Gomer’s immorality** before she married Hosea

a) Explanation:

1. The fact that Hosea is commanded to **“take”** both a “wife of harlotry” and “children of harlotry (a single verb governing both objects) favors this view
2. These children would have been **born before** Hosea married Gomer, and therefore they were **not the named children** in the text

3. The plural terms “**brethren**” and “**sisters**” (Hos. 2:1) could indicate that Gomer had **other children** before she married Hosea, since only **one daughter** was born (Hos. 1:6) after that marriage

b) Evaluation:

1. It seems **highly unlikely** that the “children of harlotry” were **born before** Hosea married Gomer, and therefore were not the **named children** in the text
 2. *Duane A. Garrett*: “The phrase **בְּנֵי זְנוּנֵי אִשָּׁתִּי** [“children of harlotry,” ksk] is **grammatically identical** to **אִשָּׁתִּי זְנוּנֵי יִם** [“wife of harlotry,” ksk]. One might therefore argue that they have the **same meaning**, but this places **grammatical parallelism** above **common sense** in that it **ignores context**. A **woman** and a **child** are **not the same**, and **בְּנֵי זְנוּנֵי יִם** [“harlotry, ksk] does not necessarily **relate** to them in the **same way**.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:52, n. 43)
 3. Also, the plural terms “**brethren**” and “**sisters**” (Hos. 2:1) appear to include the **Israelites**, not just **Hosea’s children** (Garrett, 19A:53)
- 2) Children **belonging to Baal** (because Gomer was attached to a fertility shrine)

a) Explanation:

b) Evaluation:

1. It is not clear that Gomer was attached to a fertility shrine, much less that Hosea’s own children were in any way **consecrated to Baal** (Garrett, 19A:52)

3) Children born into an **apostate nation**

a) Explanation:

1. *James E. Smith*: “Again, the children are called ‘**children of whoredom**’ because they would be **citizens** of an **apostate kingdom**, not because their **birth was illegitimate** in any way.” (Bold emphasis added, 210)

b) Evaluation:

1. This explanation is dependent on the view that Gomer was guilty of **spiritual adultery** (see above)
2. If that view of Gomer is **incorrect**, then this view of her children would also be **incorrect**

4) Children born as a result of **Gomer’s immorality** after she married Hosea

a) Explanation:

1. Hosea never accuses his children of **sexual immorality**
2. They never appear in the book as anything other than **children** (Garrett, 19A:52)

b) Evaluation:

5) Children who **bear the disgrace** of Gomer’s immorality

b) Explanation:

1. *Duane A. Garrett*: “Although ‘**children of promiscuity**’ could mean ‘**illegitimate children,**’ in this context it seems to mean ‘**children who bear the disgrace of their mother’s behavior.**’ That is, this phrase **anticipates** that **Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, and Lo-Ammi** would **bear the reproach** of their mother’s conduct (see 2:4-5 [Hb. 2:6-7]). In short, v. 2 commands Hosea to build a family with an **immoral woman**, but it does not necessarily mean **she already has children.**” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:53)
2. *Tom Constable*: “Probably the phrase means ‘**children of a wife who is marked by harlotry.**’ It seems to me that the children in view were the **children born to Hosea and Gomer**, and they became known as **children of harlotry** when their mother **became a harlot.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*)
3. The expression “**children of harlotry**” is similar to other expressions that primarily point to a **quality** in the **parent** rather than the **offspring**
 - a. “Son of his old age” (Gen. 37:3)
 - b. “Children of one’s youth” (Psa. 127:4)

b) Evaluation:

c. YHWH explains **the reason** for His command (Hos. 1:2c)

- 1) “The term ‘**the land**’ is frequently used as a **synecdoche** of **container** (the land of Israel) for the **contained** (the people of Israel).” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)
 - 2) *Duane A. Garrett*: “The ‘promiscuity’ of the ‘land’ is itself **metaphorical** for **apostasy.**” (cf. Ex. 34:15; Lev. 17:7; 20:5, 6; Dt. 31:16; Jdg. 8:27, 33; 21:17; 1 Chr. 5:25; Ezek. 6:9; 20:30; 23:30; Hos. 4:15; Psa. 106:39) (Bold emphasis added, 19A:54)
 - 3) Hosea’s marriage will **mirror** YHWH’s relationship with His people (cf. Hos. 2:2-5)
2. Hosea married **Gomer**, the daughter of Diblaim (Hos. 1:3)
 3. Gomer bore a **son**, and he was named **Jezreel** (Hos. 1:3-4)
 - a. “She conceived and **bore him** a son” would seem to suggest that **Hosea fathered** this son
 - b. **Jezreel**¹¹ means “God **sows**”¹² (cf. Jer. 31:10; Zech. 10:9)
 - 1) Ordinarily this term would suggest **fruitfulness** and **prosperity** (cf. Hos. 2:22-23)

¹¹ Jezreel was another name of the fertile valley of Esdraelon SE of Mount Carmel, NE and E of the mountain of Megiddo, and W of the Hill of Moreh and Mount Gilboa. Jezreel was also the name of a town at the eastern end of the valley near Mt. Gilboa where Ahab had a palace (1 Ki. 21:1).

¹² *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “This name is derived from the verb *zrʿ* in combination with the divine epithet ʾēl (‘God’) and means ‘God sows.’” (8:230).

James E. Smith: “In a negative sense this name means ‘God scatters.’ In a positive sense it means ‘God sows.’” (211).

- 2) However, the related verb can mean “**scatter**” and suggest **judgment** through **forced dispersion** (cf. Zech. 10:9)
- a) YHWH would **scatter** His people from Him in the **Assyrian and Babylonian exiles**, and then “**sow**” them unto Himself (Hos. 2:22-23)
- c. YHWH would avenge the **blood of Jezreel** on the house of Jehu (Hos. 1:4b)
- 1) The term “**avenge**” [pqd] literally means “**visit**”:
- a) “The verb פָּקַד (paqad, ‘to visit’) has a very **broad range of meanings**: (1) ‘to pay attention to; to look at’ (a) favorably: **to look after; to provide for; to care for**; (b) unfavorably: **to seek vengeance for; to punish for**; (2) militarily: (a) ‘to muster; to enroll’; (b) ‘to inspect; to review’; (3) leadership: (a) ‘to rule over; to oversee’; (b) Hiphil: ‘to appoint an overseer’ (see BDB 823 s.v. פָּקַד; HALOT 955-58 s.v. פָּקַד). In this context, the nuance ‘to punish’ or ‘to take vengeance’ (see 1b above) is most appropriate. Cf. KJV, ASV ‘I will avenge’; NAB, NASB, NRSV ‘I will punish.’” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)
- b) Positively: “**look after**” or “**care for**” (Ruth 1:6; Psa. 8:4)
- c) Negatively: “**punish**” or “**avenge**” (Ex. 20:5; Hos. 2:4, 13; 4:9, 14; 8:13; 9:9; 12:2) (Hubbard, 24:68)
- 2) The **bloodshed**¹³ of Jezreel has been variously interpreted:
- a) The **bloody deeds** of Ahab’s house
1. Jezebel’s persecution and execution of **YHWH’s prophets** (1 Ki. 18:4; 2 Ki. 9:7)
 2. Jezebel’s orchestrated execution of **Naboth** (1 Ki. 21:1-16)
 - a. I believe this view must be **rejected**, because these were atrocities perpetrated by the house of **Ahab**, not the house of **Jehu**
- b) Judgment to come in the **Valley of Jezreel**
1. Jezreel was a place widely known for **military activity** (Hos. 1:5)
 - a. The site of battles fought by **Deborah** (Jdg. 4-5) and **Gideon** (Jdg. 6-7)
 - b. The site of **Saul’s encampment** before his disastrous defeat by the Philistines (1 Sam. 29:1)
 - c. The site where Jehu cut off the **house of Ahab** (2 Ki. 9:24-10:11)
- c) **Bloody acts** carried out during the Jehu dynasty that are **unrecorded** in Kings or Chronicles
1. The **Mesha Stele** narrates **several battles** with Israel that are not mentioned in the OT

¹³ “The plural form of דָּם (dam, ‘blood’) refers to ‘bloodshed’ (BDB 196 s.v. דָּם 2.f).” (The NET Bible First Edition Notes).

2. The **Tell Dan inscription** narrates **fighting** between Israel and Aramean forces that are not easily correlated with the OT
 3. Hosea makes obscure references to **transgressions** in various places (Hos. 6:7-9; 9:15; 10:9, 14)
- d) **Jehu's ruthless massacre** of the house of Ahab (2 Ki. 9-10)
1. This had been **prophesied** by Elijah (1 Ki. 21:21-24), **commanded** by Elisha (2 Ki. 9:5-10), and **commended** by YHWH (2 Ki. 10:30)
 2. So why did this bloodshed need to be **avenged**?
 - a. Although Jehu did the will of YHWH, he did it with **selfish motives**
 1. *Richard D. Patterson & Andrew E. Hill*: "His manipulation of events to suit his own **selfish ends** is illustrated in the **Black Obelisk** of Shalmaneser III of Assyria, where his **submission**, accompanied by **heavy tribute** to the Assyrian king, is recorded." (Bold emphasis added, CBC, 10:14)
 2. *Homer Hailey*: "One may **do** the command of the Lord and yet be in **rebellion** against Him, doing the thing commanded because it is what the **individual desires** and not because it is what **God desires**." (Bold emphasis added, *Minor Prophets*, 137)
 3. *E. B. Pusey*: "[I]f we do what is the **Will of God** for **any end of our own**, for any thing except God, we do, in fact, **our own will, not God's**." (Bold emphasis added, 1:21)
 4. God condemned and eventually judged **Assyria** for the **arrogant manner** in which she served as God's tool to punish the nations (Isa. 10:5-19)
 - b. Although Jehu opposed **Baal worship**, he supported **calf worship** in Bethel and Dan (2 Ki. 10:29)
 - c. Although Jehu destroyed the house of Ahab, he did not **carefully obey** YHWH (2 Ki. 10:31) (Hubbard, 24:69)
 - d. Although Jehu destroyed the house of Ahab, his **zeal** for bloodshed **went too far**
 1. Jehu destroyed the house of Ahab by killing **Joram**, king of Israel (2 Ki. 9:24), **Jezebel** (2 Ki. 9:27-28), and the **70 sons of Ahab** (2 Ki. 10:1-11)
 2. But he also killed **Ahaziah**, king of Judah (2 Ki. 9:27-28), **42 of Ahaziah's relatives** (2 Ki. 10:12-14), and several **worshippers of Baal** (2 Ki. 10:18-28)
 3. YHWH told Jehu that his **sons** would rule to the **fourth generation** (2 Ki. 10:28-31)
 4. Jehu's dynasty included **Jehu** and **four generations** of kings
 - a. **Jehu** (2 Ki. 9:1-10:36)
 - b. **Jehoahaz** (2 Ki. 13:1-9)

c. **Jehoash** [Joash] (2 Ki. 13:10-25; 2 Ki. 14:8-16; 2 Ch. 25:17-24)

d. **Jeroboam II** (2 Ki. 14:23-29)

e. **Zechariah** (2 Ki. 15:8-12)

5. This prophecy was fulfilled when **Shallum assassinated Zechariah** (2 Ki. 15:8-12) (Dearman, 93-94)

e) **Judgment on Israel** like the judgment on the house of Ahab

1. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “At first glance, this verse **contradicts** God’s relatively **positive verdict** on Jehu’s actions (2 Ki 10:30). Why would Israel be **penalized** for what Yahweh apparently had **approved** a century earlier? If, however, one interprets the verb *pqd* (GK 7212) not as ‘punish’ but as ‘visit,’ the translation then reads: ‘**I will bring the bloodshed of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu**’ (cf. 2:13). That is, **the monarchy of Hosea’s day will suffer the same fate as that suffered by the house of Ahab** and others. It will be eliminated violently by divine judgment.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:230)

d. YHWH would **bring an end** to the kingdom of Israel (Hos. 1:4c-5)

1) “The proper name יִזְרְעֵל (yizré’e’l, ‘Jezreel’) **sounds like** יִשְׂרָאֵל (yisra’el, ‘Israel’). This **phonetic wordplay** associates the **sin at Jezreel** with the **judgment on Israel**, stressing **poetic justice**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)

a) *James E. Smith*: “Israel, the ‘**prince of God**,’ would become Jezreel, ‘**scattered by God**’ (1:4a).” (Bold emphasis added, 211)

2) What happened to **Jehu** became a **sign** of what was going to happen to **Israel**

3) Just as surely as the **house of Jehu** came to an end, so would the **kingdom of Israel**

4) “**I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel**” (Hos. 1:5) suggests three things:

a) First, the first-person verbs “**I will**” indicate that this **destruction** will come from **YHWH**

b) Second, breaking the bow indicates the **destruction** of Israel’s **military power** (cf. Psa. 46:9; Ezek. 39:3-5)

c) Third, this judgment will occur in the **Valley of Jezreel**

1. Various possible fulfillments have been suggested:

a. **Zechariah’s assassination by Shallum** (752 BC) (2 Ki 15:8-12)

1. *Duane A. Garrett*: “If an ancient Greek translation of 2 Kgs 15:10 is correct, Shallum killed Zechariah at **Ibleam**, a town located in a southern part of the **valley of Jezreel**. This is appropriate. It implies that the **dynasty ended, as it had begun**, with the assassination of the ruling house in the valley of Jezreel. Not only was

poetic justice done to Jehu's line, but Hosea's prophecy was **completely fulfilled**." (Bold emphasis added, 19A:58-59)

- b. The disaster of the **Syro-Ephraimite War** (734-733 BC) (2 Ki. 15:27-31)
 1. *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: "The general fulfillment of this prophecy came in 734-722 B.C. when the **Assyrians overran Israel** and reduced it to a province within their empire (2 Kings 15:29; 17:3-5). The **Jezeel plain** in particular was probably conquered in 733 B.C. by Tiglath-Pileser III. This valley, which had been the scene of a **great military victory** under Gideon (Jud. 6:33; 7), again became a **symbol** of national **disgrace** and **defeat**, as it had been after Saul's death (1 Sam. 29:1, 11; 31)." (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1381)
 - c. The **fall of Samaria** (722 BC) (2 Ki. 17:1-41)
4. Gomer bore a **daughter** and she was named **Lo-Ruhamah** (Hos. 1:6)
- a. "She conceived again and **bore a daughter**" might imply that **Hosea was not the father**
 - 1) This is certainly a **reasonable inference** since there is no reference to Hosea's fatherhood
 - 2) However, this is not conclusive since "**linked parallel accounts tend to become increasingly shorter**, as happens here with the omission of the Lord in the second birth narrative" (Bold emphasis added, Guenther, 43)
 - a) When **Jacob's children** were born, sometimes he was identified as the father (Gen. 30:5, 7, 17, 19), and sometimes he was not (Gen. 29:32, 33, 34, 35; 30:23) although that is made clear by the context
 - b) Since **Hosea** is **identified** as the **father** of **Jezeel** (Hos. 1:3-4), a **similar identification** may not have been **necessary** for the last two children
 - c) *Duane A. Garrett*: "Furthermore, we should not **jump to the conclusion** that she was **not really his daughter** but was the product of one of Gomer's liaisons. It is true that the text merely says that Gomer '**gave birth to a daughter**' here in apparent contrast to '**she bore him a son**' in v. 3. But v. 6 is **more abbreviated** than vv. 3-4, and it **does not repeat the obvious**." (Bold emphasis added, 19A:60)
 - 3) On the other hand, **four arguments** support the possibility/probability that Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi were **not fathered by Hosea**
 - a) First, since the accusation is that of **unfaithfulness**, the phrase "**to him**" becomes **critical** to the very essence of the message
 1. *Allen R. Guenther*: "It is unlikely that the author would have **omitted a phrase for economy of expression** if that phrase **determined the interpretation** of the narrative." (Bold emphasis added, 43)
 - b) Second, the **names** of the second and third child reinforce the view that Hosea is not their father
 - c) Third, the statements of Hos. 2:4-5 connect the mother's **shameless promiscuity** with their **conception**

1. *Note:* This passage may be talking about Israel rather than Gomer

d) Fourth, the judgment speech of Hos. 5:1-7 uses the metaphor of **unfaithfulness** and **prostitution** to accuse Israel (Guenther, 43)

b. **Lo-Ruhamah** means “**not loved**,” “**no mercy**” or “**not pitied**”

- 1) *Tom Constable:* “This was an **outrageous name** for a daughter.” Bold emphasis added, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*)
- 2) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.:* “‘**Ruhamah**,’ from the verb *rāḥam*, describes **tender feelings of compassion**, such as those expressed by a **parent** for a child (cf. 1 Kings 3:26; Ps. 103:13; Isa. 49:15) or by a **man** for his younger brother (cf. Gen. 43:30). At Sinai the Lord described Himself (Ex. 34:6) as ‘**the compassionate ... God**’ (*‘ēl raḥûm*) who is willing to forgive iniquity (Ex. 34:6).” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1381)
- 3) *Allen R. Guenther:* “The full **consequences of covenant disloyalty** are about to come **crashing down** on the Northern Kingdom, the house of Israel. *Lo-ruhamah* implies that the **covenant curses** are descending on Israel in **all their fury** to drag the nation off into exile....” (Bold emphasis added, 44)

c. YHWH will **no longer have mercy** on the house of Israel

- 1) Despite His compassion, the time comes when YHWH will no longer leave the **guilty unpunished** (Ex. 34:6-7)

d. YHWH will utterly **take them away**

- 1) This statement is basically **translated** in two different ways:
 - a) God will not “**pardon**” (ASV) or “**forgive**” (ESV; LEB; NET; NASB; NIV; NRSV; RSV)
 1. *J. Andrew Dearman:* “The verb *nāśā* has the basic meaning of ‘**to lift up**,’ ‘**to bear**.’ One of its senses is ‘**forgive**,’ as in **bear or take away sin and guilt**. It is used with this meaning in Hos. 14:2 (MT 3) and elsewhere (e.g., Exod. 32:32; 34:7; Mic. 7:18), and that is its **probable use here** in v. 6. In the context of 1:6 it is **judgment** and **not forgiveness** that is at hand. Thus the rendering proposed assumes that the **negative particle *lō*** in the previous phrase (‘I will *no longer* be merciful’) does double duty and **modifies this last clause as well**. The strength of this rendering (*and I will certainly not forgive them*) is the parallel with the divine self-disclosure in Exod. 34:6-7....” (Bold emphasis added, 96)
 - b) God will “**take them away**” (CSB; HCSB; KJV; NKJV; YLT)
 1. *J. Andrew Dearman:* “One could also render the last phrase of 1:6: ‘**I will certainly take [forgiveness] away from them**.’ This rendering does not employ the negative from the previous clause and it interprets *lāhem* (‘to them’) as an indirect object. Yet another option would be, ‘**I will certainly take them away [to judgment or to exile]**.’ The verb is used again in 14:2 (MT 3) in the context of YHWH’s forgiveness of ‘iniquity.’” (Bold emphasis added, 96, n. 52)

- 2) Scholars have dealt with this difficult statement in various ways:

- a) Some translate this difficult line as a **modal construction**: “I will no longer show mercy to Israel *by forgiving them*” (cf. ASV; ESV; NASB; NIV; RSV)
1. But if this is the meaning, it is **unlike any other Hebrew** in the Bible (Garrett, 19A:60)
- b) Some argue that the negative in “I will **no** longer have mercy....” controls everything that follows:
1. *Richard D. Patterson & Andrew E. Hill*: “[T]he earlier negative of v. 6 (**‘I will no longer,’** NLT) **controls all that follows**, so that both Israel and Judah may expect God’s **judgment**, not his deliverance.” (Bold emphasis added, CBC, 10:13)
 2. In this interpretation the whole of verses 6-7 is an **oracle of doom** for both Israel and Judah
 - a. “I will **no longer show love** to the house of Israel, **nor will I forgive them** at all, **nor will I show love** to the house of Judah, **nor will I save them** by Yahweh their God”
 3. But the **grammar** of the text does not lend itself to this interpretation. **“I will no longer” controls only the single phrase** “have mercy on the house of Israel” (Garrett, 19A:60)
- c) Some argue that the verb [*nasa*] should be translated something like **“take away”** or **“carry away”**
1. God will take Israel away into **exile** (cf. CSB; HCSB; KJV; NKJV; YLT)
 2. God will take away His **compassion** from Israel
 3. *Duane A. Garrett*: “Once again, however, this stratagem forces the Hebrew to say something one would **not naturally** take it to mean. As it stands, *nāsā’* can only mean ‘forgive.’” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:61)
- d) Some argue that the text means exactly what it appears to say: God will **forgive** Israel
1. *Duane A. Garrett*: “The most obvious meaning of the line is, **‘But I will certainly forgive them.’** This, of course, would be a complete **non sequitur** after the previous line, a pronouncement that God would no longer show compassion on Israel.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:60)
 2. *Duane A. Garrett*: “We are thus left with the astonishing possibility that the text means exactly what it says: **‘I will completely forgive them.’** How is it possible that Hosea (speaking for God) could in the same breath say, **‘I will no longer show love to the house of Israel’** and **‘I shall completely forgive them’**? It is jolting, but it is not unusual for an author who routinely sets assertions about **God’s terrible wrath** directly and without transition beside statements of **his absolute love**.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:61)
 - a. E.g. Hos. 1:9-10; 13:14-16
 3. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “The most natural translation is, **‘But I will surely forgive them’**.... This same verb is used for **forgiveness** in

14:2. This translation appears blatantly to **contradict** the first half of the verse. The **juxtaposition** of **judgment** and **mercy**, though, characterizes the entire chapter (see vv. 9-10...).” (Bold emphasis added, 8:230)

4. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “In the end, **mercy** overrides **wrath**; **restoration** follows **discipline** and **purification**.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:230)

3) This statement has been **interpreted** in at least three different ways:

a) First, God will not have **mercy** on Israel, and He will **forgive** them

1. *Richard D. Patterson & Andrew E. Hill*: “God intends the reader to hold both Israel’s **judgment** and its hope of **forgiveness** in **dynamic paradoxical tension**.” (Bold emphasis added, CBC, 10:13)

b) Second, both Israel and Judah may expect God’s **judgment**, not deliverance

c) Third, God will **not have mercy on Israel**, but He will **have mercy on Judah** (Patterson & Hill, CBC, 10:13)

e. YHWH will have **mercy** on the house of Judah (Hos. 1:7)

f. YHWH will **save** them, but not with **military might**¹⁴ (cf. 1 Sam. 17:47; Psa. 20:7-8; 44:6-8)

1) *Duane A. Garrett*: “This can mean...that **God will deliver them but not by military means**. On the other hand, it could equally well mean ‘**I shall not save them from**’ bows and cavalry and warfare. And both statements are true! **God will abandon Israel to the cruelty of the Assyrian war machine** and will not deliver them. And yet **God will make them to be a new people**, ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit’ (Zech 4:6).” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:62)

2) YHWH would save Judah from the **Assyrian threat** in the days of Hezekiah

a) When **Sennacherib** came knocking at the door of Jerusalem (701 BC), **Isaiah assured Hezekiah of deliverance** (2 Ki. 19:1ff; Isa. 37:1ff)

b) This deliverance was provided by the Angel of YHWH when **185,000 Assyrian soldiers** were **killed** in one night, and **Sennacherib** returned to Nineveh with his tail tucked between his legs (2 Ki. 19:32-36; Isa. 37:33-37)

3) Later, however, because of her **sins** and her **impenitence**, YHWH used **Babylon** to carry Judah away into exile (2 Ki. 25:1ff)

4) Then YHWH manifested His **mercy** by:

a) Bringing a **remnant** back to the land (Ezra 9:8)

b) Bringing **the Messiah** into the world through that remnant to make **redemption** possible, not just for Israel and Judah, but for all mankind (Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 3:13-14; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 5:9)

5. Gomer bore a **son** and he was named **Lo-Ammi** (Hos. 1:8-9)

¹⁴ “These military weapons are examples of the metonymy of adjunct (the specific weapons named) for subject (warfare).” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

- a. In the ancient world, **weaning** normally/often occurred when a child was between **two and three years old** (cf. 2 Macc. 7:27; 1 Sam. 1:23)
- b. Once again, “she conceived and **bore a son**” may indicate that Hosea was **not the father**
- c. Lo-Ammi means “**not my people**”
- d. “For you¹⁵ are not **My people**”
 - 1) *Allen R. Guenther*: “The Lord’s interpretation, *You are not my people, and I am not your God*, resembles the **divorce formula** of the day (cf. [Hos.] 2:2). God has disowned his people.” (Bold emphasis added, 46)
 - 2) *Allen R. Guenther*: “The expression ‘**You are not my son**’ occurs in Old Babylonian **marriage documents** to **disown** the son(s) of a wife who is being **divorced** (Westbrook: 129, from PBS 8/2 155; PRAK I B 17). The child is **sent away** from the father’s home and has **no rights of inheritance**.” (Bold emphasis added, 46)
- e. “And I will not be **your God**”¹⁶
 - 1) YHWH would no longer **claim Israel** as His own people. There is a **limit to God’s forbearance**
 - 2) This is a reversal of YHWH’s ancient **covenant formula** (cf. Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Dt. 26:17-18)
 - a) The covenant formula is repeated frequently in **Jeremiah** (Jer. 11:4-5, 24:7, 30:22, 31:1, 33, 32:38) and **Ezekiel** (Ezek. 11:20, 14:11, 36:28, 37:23, 27)
 - b) Cf. Israel will return to “**Egypt**” (Hos. 7:16; 8:13; 9:3; 11:5)
 - 3) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “The last clause of Hosea 1:9 (**I am not your God**) is literally, ‘**and I [am] not I AM (‘ehyeh) to you.**’ The statement probably alludes to God’s words to Moses, ‘I am (‘ehyeh) who I am (‘ehyeh). This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM (‘ehyeh) has sent me to you’ (Ex. 3:14). ‘I AM,’ which is closely related to the divine name Yahweh, points to God as the covenant **Lord** of Israel who watches over and delivers His people (cf. Ex. 3:16-17). However, through Lo-Ammi the Lord announced that Israel would no longer experience His special saving presence.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1381)
 - 4) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “The meaning of the son’s name *Lo-ammi* (**Not My People**) is predicated on the claim that God is *Lo-ehyeh* (**Not I AM**) with respect to the Israelites. *Lo-ehyeh* is a pun on the tetragrammaton (*yhwh*) and depends on the account of the revelation of the divine name in Exod. 3:14. Put simply, **YHWH is no longer I AM on behalf of Israel**. As a result of Israel’s faithlessness, YHWH’s name is ‘reversed,’ i.e., changed to reflect

¹⁵ “The independent personal pronoun אַתֶּם (‘*attem*, ‘you’) is a plural form, referring to the people of Israel as a whole.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

¹⁶ “The MT reads לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם (‘*lo’-‘ehyeh lakhem*, ‘I will not be yours’). The editors of *BHS* suggest emending the text to לֹא־אֶהְיֶה לְיְהוָה לָכֶם (‘*lo’-‘elohekhem*, ‘I will not be your God’). The emendation creates a tighter parallel with the preceding אַתֶּם לֹא־עַמִּי (‘*attem lo’-‘ammi*, ‘you are not my people’). Because of a lack of external evidence, however, the reading of the MT should be retained.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

the breaking of the relationship between him and Israel.” (Bold emphasis added, 97)¹⁷

a) *Note:* Others argue that while this interpretation is **possible**, it is open to **question**

1. *Duane A. Garrett:* “To take **וְאֵנִי כִּי לֹא־אֵהְיֶה לְכֶם** to mean ‘I am not I AM to you’ requires that one treat it as a *verbless clause* in which **אֵהְיֶה** functions not as a verb but substantively as a *proper name* in the predicate position. The order [subject + **לֹא** + predicate noun] can be used for a negative verbless clause. Examples include this verse (**אַתְּ מִן־עַמִּי לֹא עָמְרִי** ‘you are not my people’), Hos 2:4 (Eng. 2:2), and Jer 2:11 (= 16:20). On the other hand, we also see the pattern [**לֹא** + predicate + subject], as in Amos 7:14 **יֵאֵנִי בְּיָמַי אֲנִי לֹא נָבִיא** (‘I am not a prophet’). See also Jer 5:10 and 51:5. If the statement is a negative rhetorical question, the normal order is [**הֲלֹא** + subject + predicate], as in Exod 4:11; 14:12; Num 22:30; Deut 3:11; Isa 45:21.” (Italics added, 19A:70, n. 91)
2. *Duane A. Garrett:* “We also have to wonder whether the ancient **Hebrew reader** would **take this clause to mean** ‘And I am not “I AM” to you.’” (Bold emphasis added, 19:A:70)
3. *Duane A. Garrett:* “We have several reasons for reading the phrase with **אֵהְיֶה יְהוָה** as a normal verb (‘I am not your [God]’). First of all, **וְאֵנִי כִּי לֹא־אֵהְיֶה לְכֶם** is *normal Hebrew grammar*. That is, we have many examples of a [subject pronoun + **לֹא** + imperfect verb] pattern (to cite but a few, Jer 15:19; 23:14; 38:18; Ezek 5:11; 11:11; Hos 5:13). The Hebrew reader probably would take **אֵהְיֶה יְהוָה** in its *ordinary sense* as a *verb* and not as a *proper name*. The lack of the word **אֱלֹהֵי יְכֶם** (‘your God’) is not all that *surprising*; we saw that Hosea omitted both **יְהוָה** and **וְהוּא שָׁעַ** in v. 6 (saying only ‘and he said to him’). Also there may be another reason for Hosea’s choice of **וְאֵנִי כִּי לֹא־אֵהְיֶה לְכֶם** over something like **וְאֵנִי כִּי לֹא־אֱלֹהֵי יְכֶם** (‘I am not your God’) at this early stage of the oracle. By simply saying ‘and I am not yours,’ the text continues to *operate at two levels*. On one side is *God’s relationship to Israel*, but on the other is *Hosea’s estrangement from his own family*. ‘I am not yours’ allows for this *ambiguity* in a way that ‘I am not your God’ would not. See especially 3:3, where Hosea tells Gomer, ‘Then indeed I shall be yours’ (**וְגַם־בִּיאַנִּי אֲלֵי יְדֵי**), a reversal of the line in 1:9. Finally, as mentioned above, there is *no other reference to Exod 3 or to the I AM in this oracle*. It seems strange that the text would slip in

¹⁷ *J. Andrew Dearman:* “Exod. 3:14 preserves a wordplay on the tetragrammaton (= YHWH) that includes a finite verbal form as the subject of a sentence. When asked by Moses what his name is, ‘God’ (‘*ēlōhîm*’) responds, ‘I am who I am’ (‘*ehyeh ’ăšer ’ehyeh*’).... You shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM (‘*ehyeh*’) has sent me to you.’” The verbal form ‘I am/I will be’ (‘*ehyeh*’) is used like a proper name and is the subject of the verb ‘to send.’ The next verse has the tetragrammaton, YHWH (= Yahweh), as the subject of the same verb ‘to send,’ emphasizing that YHWH is the God who ‘will be’ with Moses *and* who is ‘sending’ him (3:12).” (101).

such a significant allusion and then do nothing with it. Instead, the oracle ends at 2:25 (Eng. 2:23) with Lo-Ammi saying, ‘You are my God’ (אֱלֹהֵי הָיָה, אֵלֹהֵי הָיָה), which implies that the reader was simply to understand אֱלֹהֵי הָיָה יְיָ (or, אֱלֹהֵי הָיָה יְיָ) at 1:9. If an allusion to Exod 3:14 were the point of the text, we may have expected the reversal also to include אֱלֹהֵי הָיָה in some fashion (i.e., ‘You are I AM to me’)....” (Italics added, 19A:70, n. 93)

- 5) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “Several modern translations render 1:9 differently, presupposing an emendation of *’ānōkī lō’-’ehyeh lākem* (**‘I will not be yours/for you’**) to read instead *’ānōkī lō’ ’ēlōhēkem* (**‘I am not your God’**).” (Bold emphasis added, 99)
 - a) YLT: and He saith, ‘Call his name Lo-Ammi, for ye are not My people, and I am not **for you**;
 - b) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “[T]he emendation itself has **no textual basis** and is **unnecessary**. Moreover, the symmetry and paronomasia in the Hebrew text are evident in the juxtaposition of **Lo-ammi** with **Lo-ehyeh**.” (Bold emphasis added, 99)
6. YHWH promises to **restore Israel** (Hos. 1:10-2:1)
 - a. The number of the children of Israel will be like **the sand** of the sea (Hos. 1:10a)
 - 1) *David A. Hubbard*: “In the book’s basic structure **announcements of judgment** and **promises of hope** alternate.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:73)
 - 2) This is a proverbial expression for **innumeration** (cf. Gen. 41:49; Josh. 11:4; Jdg. 7:12; 1 Sam. 13:5; 2 Sam. 17:11; 1 Ki. 4:20, 29; Isa. 10:22; Jer. 15:8; 33:22)
 - 3) This was YHWH’s **promise** to **Abraham** which He also repeated to **Jacob** (Gen. 22:17; 32:12)
 - a) *Leon J. Wood*: “God will still carry out his promise of an **innumerable posterity** for Abraham, in spite of the **unfaithfulness** of the people, which called for severe punishment.” (Bold emphasis added, 7:173)
 - 4) This is a **reversal** of the judgment on the kingdom of Israel (Hos. 1:4; 9:11-17)
 - a) “Though the **judgment** of God will **fall** and **many** of the people of Israel will **die** in that judgment, a **remnant** will be **left**; and from that **remnant** will come a **vast numberless multitude** of people....” (Bold emphasis added, *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1665)
 - b) *Duane A. Garrett*: “The **affirmation** that they would become as **numerous** as the **sand** on the seashore was **almost laughable** in Hosea’s day. Wolff observes that in 738 B.C., according to 2 Kgs 15:19-20, Israel had about **sixty thousand free landholders** and that the nation was **puny** compared to the **expanding Assyrian Empire**. Only **faith** in God could **foresee** a **reversal** of this reality.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:71)
 - b. In the place where it once was said **“You are not my people,”** it will be said, **“You are sons of the living God”**
 - 1) **“The place”** has been variously interpreted as:
 - a) The **wilderness**

- b) The **valley of Jezreel**
 - c) The **land of exile**
 - d) **Hosea's community**
 - e) **Not any specific location** (i.e. "in place of" or "instead") (Garrett, 72)
- 2) **Rejection** (Hos. 1:9) will be turned into **reconciliation** (cf. Hos. 2:23)
- 3) Whereas they had been "**children of harlotry**" (Hos. 1:2), they will once more be the **children of God**
- 4) Furthermore, they will be **sons of the living God**
- a) God's people will **regain their status** and be **acknowledged** as His own
 - b) God's people will be sons of the **living God**, who is able to **defeat** all His enemies (Josh. 3:10), not the children of **dead idols** who have no life or power (cf. Hos. 4:12; 8:4-6; Isa. 40:18-25; 44:9-20; Jer. 10:1-16; Acts 14:14-17)¹⁸
 - 1. Cf. **Elijah's mockery** of the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel as they cried out to a **god** who was **absent** or **asleep** (1 Ki. 18:25-39)
 - 2. This anticipates the **defeat** of the **Baals** announced a little later (Hos. 2:11-12, 16-17)
 - 3. *David A. Hubbard*: "[B]y attributing a **self-sustaining, life-giving character** to Israel's God that exposes the **impotence** of the **fertility cult** to which Israel was so fatally attracted." (Bold emphasis added, 24:74)
 - c) As the "living God," He is the **Lord of life** who **gives life**
 - 1. *Duane A. Garrett*: "As giver of **victory** and **life**, Yahweh will **cast out** the usurper, **Baal**, and **regain** his **family** (see 2:5-8)." (Bold emphasis added, 19A:72)
- 5) The apostle Paul cites Hosea as evidence that **God** has **called** not only **Jews** but also **Gentiles** (Rom. 9:25-26)
- a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: "Verse 25 is an **adaptation** of Hos. 2:23 (MT 25), and 9:26 is a **quotation** of Hos. 2:1 LXX (Eng. 1:10)." (Bold emphasis added, 102)
- 6) Peter applies this passage to **Christians** who are the people of God (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
- c. The children of Judah and Israel will be **gathered together** (Hos. 1:11; cf. Isa. 11:12-13; Jer. 23:5-8; Ezek. 37:15-28)
- 1) *James E. Smith*: "In those distant lands God would **gather** both the children of **Judah** and the children of **Israel**. This presupposes that **Judah** would find herself in the **same condition** as **Israel**, i.e., cast off into captivity." (Bold emphasis added, 213)
 - 2) *David A. Hubbard*: "This **reunion** of the kingdoms takes on a **miraculous cast** in the light of the **sharp conflict** between them which Hosea personally

¹⁸ *Duane A. Garrett*: "[T]he title 'living God' often appears in a context of military conflict between Israel and the nations. In this 'living God' virtually means the 'true God' who is able to give victory, in contrast to dead idols (see Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26; 2 Kgs 19:4; Jer 10:10-11; Dan 6:26)." (19A:72).

observed: the **Syro-Ephraimite struggle** of 734 BC, which seems to underlie [Hos.] 5:8-7:16.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:74)

d. They will appoint for themselves **one head** (cf. Hos. 3:5)

- 1) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “The **promise to David** of an everlasting throne will be **fulfilled** (cf. 2 Sam. 7:11b-16).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1:1381)
- 2) *Allen R. Guenther*: “Just as **David** drew together the **North** and **South** and welded them into **one great nation** under God [2 Sam. 5:1-5], so the fourth promise marks their **reunion** under the **new Davidic ruler** (Hos. 3:5).” (Bold emphasis added, 48)
- 3) Cf. Ezekiel’s prophecy of the **two sticks** joined together (Ezek. 37:15-28)
- 4) “**Jewish interpreters** themselves refer it to the **times of Messiah**. Thus Kimchi says, ‘This shall take place in the gathering together of the exiles in the **days of the Messiah**, for unto the second house there went up only Judah and Benjamin that had been exiles in Babylon; nor were the children of Judah and the children of Israel gathered together; and they shall make for themselves one head,—this is the **King Messiah**;’ similarly, in the ‘Metsudath David,’ by Altschul, we read on this passage, “*They shall be gathered together*: this will come to pass in the **days of the Messiah**. *One head*: this is the **King Messiah**. *And they shall come up*; out of the lands of the captivity they shall go up unto their own land.”” (Bold emphasis added, *The Pulpit Commentary*, 9)

e. They will **come up** out of the land

- 1) This language echoes similar language to describe **Israel’s first Exodus** from Egypt (cf. Ex. 3:8, 17; Num. 1:1; 9:1; 11:20; 20:5; 22:11; 33:38; Dt. 25:17; Josh. 5:4; 1 Ki. 6:1; 2 Chr. 5:10; Hos. 2:15; 12:13)
- 2) This has been variously interpreted:
 - a) The return from **the land of their exile** (cf. Ezek. 37:12)
 1. In the **blessings and curses** of the covenant, **Moses** had **prophesied** a return from exile (Dt. 30:1-10)
 2. Israel would **return to Egypt** [i.e. Assyria] when YHWH punished her for her sins and impenitence (Hos. 7:11, 16; 8:13; 9:3, 6; 10:6; 11:5; cf. Dt. 28:68)
 3. Then Israel will **return from Egypt** [i.e. Assyria] when YHWH delivers her after His wrath is spent (Hos. 11:11)
 4. Objections:
 - a. *J. Andrew Dearman*: “Israel will be called children of the living God ‘**in the place**’ where they were described as **not God’s people** (1:10). God will ‘**sow her [= Gomer = Israel] in the land**’ (2:23 [MT 25]). Moreover, Israel’s *going up* makes great the **day of Jezreel**, which as either valley or city assumes a geographic setting in Israel.” (Bold emphasis added, 105)
 - b. *David A. Hubbard*: “The word *land* (Heb. *‘āreṣ*) in the singular without a modifying noun, however, is not used in the Old Testament for a **foreign nation**. *Land*, in our context, almost inevitably means the ‘**promised land**’, given by God

as Israel's home, so long as her covenant loyalty remained strong." (Bold emphasis added, 24:74)

b) An idiom for **military conquest**

1. Some argue, based on a certain reading of Exodus 1:10, that we should read the clause "**they shall go up from**" the land meaning "**they shall take possession of**" the land¹⁹
2. Cf. "take **possession** of the land" (cf. LEB; NRSV)
3. Objection: This particular reading of Exodus 1:10 has not gained strong support (Hubbard, 24:75)

c) A return from the **land of the underworld** (cf. Job 10:21-22; Isa. 44:23; Hos. 6:1-3; 13:14)

1. To come up from the underworld metaphorically depicts **national "resurrection" or renewal**
 - a. The **resurrection of Israel's dry bones** (Ezek. 37:1-14) is followed immediately by the prophetic promise that the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah will be **reunited under King David** (Ezek. 37:15-28) (Hubbard, 24:75)

d) Metaphorically, Israel will be like a **plant** growing up from the soil (cf. Hos. 2:21-23; 14:5-8)

1. This verb can be used of a **plant growing up** through the soil (cf. Dt. 29:23)
 - a. *J. Andrew Dearman*: "In Deut. 29:23 (MT 22) the Hebrew verb 'ālā is used in conjunction with the verbs zāra' ('**sow**') and šāmah ('**sprout**'). The verse compares a cursed land of promise with the way the Lord treated Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim. Hosea elsewhere demonstrates knowledge of the treatment of Admah and Zeboiim (11:8). In 1:11 (MT 2:2), therefore, the promise that the people will go up from the land may be a **reversal of a covenant curse** for disobedience and resulting **infertility**." (Bold emphasis added, 105, n. 7)
 - b. *Duane A. Garrett*: "Growing up out of the land like grass is another way of describing the **vast population for Israel** that Hosea foresees in the previous verse. Ezekiel also develops this concept in 36:9-11...." (Bold emphasis added, 19A:73)
 - c. Cf. "will **flourish** in the land" (NET)
2. This view fits the **wordplay** with **Jezreel** ["God sows"] (cf. Ezek. 36:9-11)

e) A return from the **land of sin**

1. *James E. Smith*: "The **one head** would lead his people 'up from the land.' The language is taken from the **Exodus**. This **future**

¹⁹ "Alternatively, 'gain possession of the land' (cf. NRSV) or 'rise up from the land' (cf. NIV). This clause may be understood in two ways: (1) Israel will gain ascendancy over the land or conquer the land (e.g., Exod 1:10; cf. NAB 'come up from other lands') or (2) Israel will be 'planted' in the land (Hos 2:24-25; cf. NLT 'will ... plant his people')." (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

leader would be a **second Moses**. **Jesus Christ** leads his people out of the **bondage of sin** to the **Promised Land**, i.e., heaven.”
(Bold emphasis added, 213)

f. Great will be the **day of Jezreel** (cf. Hos. 2:22-23)

- 1) This is a **reversal** of the judgment announced when Hosea was told to name his first son **Jezreel** (Hos. 1:4)
 - a) *David A. Hubbard*: “The **judgment on Jehu’s house** (v. 4) and **Israel’s foolish trust in weaponry** (v. 5) are **not reversed**; indeed they could not be without nullifying the specific purpose of the judgment. What is **reversed** is the **way God deals with his people**. What once he had to **scatter** he will again be **ready to plant**.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:76)
 - b) *Allen R. Guenther*: “The earlier use of the name *Jezreel* was also associated with the royal house but denoted a **major military catastrophe** (1:4-5); this day of Jezreel marks **victory** for the restored people. In confirmation of this perspective, Amos 9:11-12 links the **reestablishment** of the **Davidic monarchy** and the **restoration** of the **nation** with a **conquest** of the **surrounding nations**.” (Bold emphasis added, 49)
 1. *Note*: James argues that the **conversion of the Gentiles** in his day was a fulfillment of Amos’ prophecy (Acts 15:13-17)
- 2) *David A. Hubbard*: “**Jezreel** is deliberately **ambiguous**—God will both **scatter in judgment** and **sow in restoration**” (Bold emphasis added, 24:76)
- 3) *Tom Constable*: “As Jezreel was a place of **former victory** for Israel (Judg. 7), so it will **be again** in the future (cf. Isa. 9:4-7; 41:8-16; Joel 3:9-17; Amos 9:11-12; Rev. 19:11-21).” (Bold emphasis added, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*)

g. Say to your brethren “**My people**”

- 1) The verb “**say**” and the pronouns “**your**” are **plural**, so a **group** of people will make these announcements²⁰
 - a) **Hosea’s children**
 1. The plurals “**brethren**” (or brothers) and “**sisters**” indicate that more are included here than the children of Gomer (two sons and only one daughter) mentioned in Hosea 1 (unless Gomer had other children before she married Hosea)
 - b) **The faithful remnant**
 - 2) **Lo-Ammi** [Not My People] (Hos. 1:9) will become **Ammi** (My People)

h. Say to your sisters “**Mercy is shown**”

- 1) **Lo-Ruhamah** [No Mercy] (Hos. 1:6) will become **Ruhamah** (Mercy)
 - a) *David A. Hubbard*: “The fact that **change of name** reflects **change of status, character** and **destiny** (e.g. Abram to Abraham, Gen. 17:5;

²⁰ *David Hubbard*: “The plural imperative *say* and the plural nouns in Hebrew ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ . . . are directed to clusters of persons within the reunited nation, not to Hosea’s children personally, a transition begun with the plural *you* of 1:9. Groups within Israel (here called Jezreel) are commanded to declare Yahweh’s pardon to the men and women of the nation in name-changing language. . . .” (24:76).

Sarai to Sarah, 17:15; Jacob to Israel, 32:28) makes the proclamation all the more powerful.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:76)

b) The effects of YHWH’s judgment will be **reversed**

1. *Allen R. Guenther*: “The sharp side-by-side presentation of **judgment speech** and **salvation oracle** poignantly emphasize **God’s grace** as the **wellspring of restoration**.” (Bold emphasis added, 49)

2) **When** will these reversals occur? A reminder of **Hosea’s own time-frames** will hopefully be helpful in answering this question:

a) The **present** for Hosea is the time of **harlotry** in all its forms

1. The present is the time in view in virtually all of **Hosea’s accusations**

b) The **near future** is the time of **judgment**

1. This will be inflicted by YHWH through the agency of the **Assyrian armies** (cf. Isa. 10:5-19)

c) The **more distant future** is the time of **hope**

1. This is “when the **meaning** of Israel’s names will be **changed** from **negative** to **positive** and they will be **transformed** in the **glory** predicted in 1:10-2:1.” (Bold emphasis added, Hubbard, 24:77)

3) The **first stage** in this hopeful future is the **return of the remnant** from Exile (Hos. 11:10-11)

a) **536 BC**: The first group returned under the leadership of Joshua and Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-6)

b) **458 BC**: The second group returned under the leadership of Ezra (Ezra 7-10)

c) **445 BC**: The third group returned under the leadership of Nehemiah (Neh. 1-2)

1. The return of the remnant was viewed as a **reunion** and **restoration** of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah (cf. Ezra 2:70; 3:1; 8:35; 10:5; Neh. 7:73; 12:47; Zech. 8:13; Mal. 2:11)²¹

2. *David Hubbard*: “Yet the **post-exilic era** lacks both the **royal leader** promised in Hosea 1:11 or 3:5 and the **expansive splendour** announced in 1:10. Both Haggai and Malachi call attention to the **austerity**, even **poverty**, of life in the **Persian period**. Indeed, the Old Testament closes by reaching beyond itself and longing for the day when the **promises of righteousness, glory and prosperity** found in almost all the prophets will be **fully realized** (cf. Hag. 2:6-9; Zech. 14; Mal. 4).” (Bold emphasis added, 24:77)

4) The second stage in this hopeful future is fulfilled when **Jesus** of Nazareth fulfills YHWH’s promises to **Abraham** (Lk. 1:55), **David** (Lk. 1:32-33), and **God’s people** (Mt. 1:23; 2:6)

²¹ The OT knows nothing of the “ten lost tribes of Israel.” (Hubbard, 24:77).

- a) Matthew saw in Jesus a **new Israel** rescued from a **new Pharaoh** (i.e. Herod the Great) by a **new exodus** (Mt. 2:15; cf. Hos. 11:1) (Hubbard, 24:77)
- 5) The third stage in this hopeful future is fulfilled when **Christ builds His church** (Mt. 16:18-19)
- a) *David Hubbard*: “Here the New Testament snatches the **word-plays** on the names of the last two children and applies them to the **incorporation of Gentiles** into the covenant, as the new people of God (Rom. 9:25-26; 1 Pet. 2:10). The **removal** of the ‘**nots**’ is seen by Peter and Paul, not as the **restoration of Jews to a renewed covenant relationship**, but as descriptive of **Gentiles** who had **previously received no mercy** nor had been **included in the people of God**. In this way **prophecies** that in their first setting had been **directed to Israel** are **rechannelled** to describe the **life of the Christian church** and especially its **gentile expression**.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:78)
- 6) The fourth and final stage in this hopeful future will be fulfilled when Jesus returns in the **Second Coming** and all of God’s children go home (Hubbard, 24:77-78)
- a) The writer of Hebrews explains that Abraham and the other patriarchs were looking for a **heavenly city** and a **better country** (Heb. 11:8-10, 13-16)

B. Hosea 2:2-13

1. YHWH instructs the children to **bring charges** against “your mother” (Hos. 2:2)
- a. The **characters** in this drama are:
- 1) The husband = **Hosea** and/or **YHWH**
 - 2) “Your mother” = **Gomer** and/or **Israel** (i.e. the nation as an ideal unity)
 - 3) The children = **Hosea’s children** and/or **individuals** within the nation
 - a) Is the speaker here **Hosea** or **YHWH**? Certain indications point to YHWH
 1. The first-person personal pronoun “**I**” (v. 2)
 2. The reference to the **wilderness** (v. 3)
 3. The references to **what the “lovers” provide** (v. 5, 8)
 4. “**They**” points to Israel (v. 8)
 5. “**My grain**,” “**my wine**,” “**my wool**” and “**my linen**” (v. 9)
 6. The reference to **religious celebrations** (v. 11)
 7. “**Says the Lord**” (v. 13)
 - b) If this is talking about Hosea’s relationship with Gomer, as some believe, it **mirrors** YHWH’s relationship with Israel; and later in the context the two marriages seem to **blend** together
- b. “**Bring charges**” [*ryb*] refers to a **formal legal accusation**
- 1) The related noun often refers to a **lawsuit** (cf. Ex. 23:2-3, 6; Dt. 17:8; 21:5; Hos. 4:1; 12:2)

- 2) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “In the prophets God contends with the failures of his people by **charging** or **indicting** them with wrongdoing (Isa. 3:13; Jer. 2:9; Mic. 6:1-2).” (Bold emphasis added, 108)
- c. “She is not **My wife**”
- d. “Nor am I **her Husband**”
- 1) These statements have been interpreted in two ways:
- a) This is a **formal declaration of divorce**
1. *J. Andrew Dearman*: “The declaration in [Hos.] 2:2 is similar to those in **divorce documents** from the **ancient Near East**, which either state that a man and woman are **no longer married**, or represent the status of **divorce** and **reasons** for it.” (Bold emphasis added, 109)
 2. *Allen R. Guenther*: “Marriage and divorce documents spanning two thousand years confirm that statements such as ‘**She is my wife**’ and ‘**You are my husband**’ represent the heart of the **marriage declaration**. The marriage is **dissolved** when the spouses **publicly negate** those words:

‘She shall **not be wife** to me’;
 ‘You are **not my husband**.’ (Kalluveetil: 110-11)” (Bold emphasis added, 57)
 3. *Allen R. Guenther*: “Why else would God again **court** ([Hos.] 2:14-15) and **betroth** ([Hos.] 2:19-20) Israel to himself? Why else would Israel repeat the **marriage formula**, ‘*My husband*’ ([Hos.] 2:16) [*Marriage, p. 393*]?” (Bold emphasis added, 57)
 4. This is similar to the **earlier declaration** (Hos. 1:9)
- b) This is not a formal declaration of divorce but rather **an accusation that Israel is not acting like a faithful wife**
1. *Joe Sprinkle*: “It has been conjectured that ‘**she is not my wife, and I am not her husband**’ is part of **Israel’s divorce formula** (compare the formula in Sumerian divorce documents: ‘**You are not my wife**’). On the other hand, this is **not the divorce formula of the Elephantine papyri**.... The consensus of exegesis is that **Gomer** (symbolizing Israel) is **not in fact divorced at this point**. But if the conjecture is correct, then by alluding to the divorce formula God is threatening to **make official** what was *de facto* the case.” (Bold emphasis added, 542)
 2. YHWH’s ultimate purpose was to **heal** the relationship not **end** it
 3. The marriage is **broken de facto**; has it also been **severed de jure**?
 - a. *J. Andrew Dearman*: “[T]he **parallel** with the **naming** of the children may be helpful. Hosea names a child **Lo-ruhamah** (No Mercy) or **Lo-ammi** (Not My People) to indicate that **Israel has broken the covenant** with the Lord, although apparently during this same time he **continues to live with Gomer**, just as **Israel remains in its land** and with a king for some years even as it continued in its dereliction of covenant responsibilities. Correspondingly, it seems that the children charge Gomer with adultery and declare certain

- consequences, even though a **formal divorce has not been enacted**. Having said this, **one cannot be sure about the legal status of the marriage**. If there was **no divorce**, Gomer's infidelities seemingly resulted in one or more (enforced) **separations** from Hosea." (Bold emphasis added, 109)
- b. *Anderson & Freedman*: "From the wife's side (Israel's) the relationship was **severed**; from Hosea's (Yahweh's) it was **not**. In 2:4-25 the woman is treated as **not his wife in practice** and yet **still his wife in principle**.... It is as a husband who **still has claims on his wife** that he applies the **various disciplines** and **makes the appeals**." (*Hosea*, 222, quoted in Dearman, (Bold emphasis added, 109, n. 5)
 - c. There is no mention here of a **certificate of divorce**, as in other passages (Dt. 24:1-4; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8), or **witnesses**, or **legal setting**, or **judge**, or **sanctions** (Dearman, 110)
4. The possibility of **change** (Hos. 2:2, 7) and the threat of **judgment** (Hos. 2:3) is perhaps an indication that although **divorce** is being **contemplated**, it has not been **completed** (Hubbard, 24:79)
 5. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: "The fact that Yahweh **warns** Israel in the next verse of potential punishment, later **judges** her, and then **woos** her reveals that the **marriage relationship** is still in place." (Bold emphasis added, 8:235)
 6. Historically, about **thirty years** elapse from the end of Jeroboam II's reign until Israel is finally conquered by the Assyrians (i.e. "divorced" by YHWH)
2. YHWH calls upon the "mother" to **put away her harlotries** lest she be **punished severely** (Hos. 2:2-5)
 - a. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: "The image is of a **brazen woman**, who **flaunts her infidelity**." (Bold emphasis added, 8:236)
 - 1) The plural terms "**harlotries**" and "**adulteries**" suggest **repeated or habitual action**
 - b. *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: "Rather than exercising His legal prerogative by having His wayward wife *executed* (cf. Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22), the Lord issued a *call for repentance*, urging the nation to abandon its **adulterous** activity (Hosea 2:2b)." (Italics added, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1383)
 - c. YHWH's **threatened punishment** involves three things:
 - 1) First, He threatens to **strip her naked**
 - a) YHWH would strip her of all that He had given her and let her be as when He had **found her** – helpless (cf. Ezek. 16:1-6)
 1. *Duane A. Garrett*: "Israel will **lose everything**, the **land** will be **emptied**, and the **people** will go into **exile**. In the ancient world **captives** were often **taken away naked**." (Bold emphasis added, 19A:77)

2. *Allen R. Guenther*: “Conquered peoples were sometimes led into exile, **naked and bound** (ANEP: 305, 323, 358, 365).” (Bold emphasis added, 59)²²
 3. *James E. Smith*: “Israel would be stripped of **property, prosperity, population and privileges**.” (Bold emphasis added, 215)
- b) This would make Israel an object of **shame and ridicule** (cf. Isa. 47:3; Jer. 13:22-27; Ezek. 16:35-39; 23:10, 26, Nah. 3:4-5)
1. *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “**The punishment fit the crime**. She who had **exposed her nakedness** to her lovers would be **exposed publicly** for all to see. This public act apparently preceded the execution of an adulteress (cf. Ezek. 16:38-40).” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1383)
 2. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “In extrabiblical literature this language is used in **curses for violating treaty agreements** (D. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* [BibOr 16; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964], 58-60). . . .” (Bold emphasis added, 8:236)
 3. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “[T]his imagery also is found in texts dealing with **divorce or remarriage**: the stripping and going out naked is symbolic of leaving behind one’s **property and economic status** and not a literal punishment for adultery (P. Day, ‘Adulterous Jerusalem’s Imagined Demise: Death of a Metaphor in Ezekiel XVI,’ *VT* 50 [2000]: 285-309; Kelle, 59-64).” (Bold emphasis added, 8:236)
 4. *Robert B. Hughes & J. Carl Laney*: “The **Nuzi Tablets** attest to the fact that **public exposure** of an adulterous wife was **common** in the culture of the ancient Near East (Hos. 2:3; cf. Ezek. 16:37-38).” (Bold emphasis added, 324)
 5. *Duane A. Garrett*: “Judging from similar threats in other prophets (Jer 13:22-27; Ezek 16:37-39; Nah 3:4-5), it is conceivable that something like **public exposure for prostitution** happened in Israelite society, but **the evidence is far from certain**. We cannot be sure whether the Israelites actually **had such a practice** or whether stripping adulterous Israel is simply a **prophetic motif**. The Torah prescribes the **death penalty** for both guilty parties in adultery (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22) but does not call for a **public exposure** of the woman.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:78)
- 2) Second, He threatens to make Israel like **an arid wilderness**
- a) This was one of the **curses** of the covenant (Lev. 26:19-20; Dt. 28:22-24)
 - b) This is typical **judgment language** (cf. Isa. 27:10; 33:9; Jer. 6:8; Zeph. 2:13)
- 3) Third, He threatens to have **no mercy** on Israel’s children (Hos. 2:4; cf. Hos. 1:6)
- a) YHWH’s refusal to show mercy to the children is because of their mother’s **harlotry and shameful behavior** (Hos. 2:5)

²² ANEP = *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*.

1. *E. B. Pusey*: “She *made shameful* every thing which she could *make shameful*, her **acts**, her **children**, and **herself**.” (Bold emphasis added, 1:30)
 2. *David A. Hubbard*: “In this accusation nothing is said about the **actual misbehaviour of the children**: the sole explanation of their involvement in harlotry is the **conduct of their mother** (v. 5), whose own words are cited as part of the evidence against her.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:82)
 3. “**For she said**” is likely equivalent to such modern expressions as “**she thought (or said) to herself**” (Dearman, 112)
 4. “I will **go after** my lovers”
 - a. **Going/walking after** can refer to:
 1. Pursuing **idols** (Jdg. 2:12, 17; Jer. 2:23-24;)
 2. Pursuing a **prostitute** (Pr. 7:22)
 - b. It was **Israel** (or Gomer) who **pursued** the lovers, rather than the other way around (cf. Jer. 2:23-24)
 5. Israel mistakenly believed that **Baal provided** her material blessings (Hos. 2:5, 8, 9, 22)
3. YHWH describes Israel’s **punishment** (Hos. 2:6)
 - a. “**Therefore**” (cf. Hos. 2:9, 14; 13:3) introduces God’s judgment
 - b. “I will **hedge up** your way with thorns...”
 - 1) Its purposes were **positive** and **gracious**:
 - a) It sought to **protect** Israel from her **wanton urges** which would only bring harm
 - b) It aimed to **thwart her heated pursuits** after her lovers
 - c) It was designed to bring about a **reconciliation** with her husband ultimately (Hubbard, 24:82-83)
 4. YHWH reveals that Israel will **chase after her lovers** and then try to **return to Him** (Hos. 2:7)
 - a. Israel’s **lovers** have been interpreted as:
 - 1) **Idol gods** (cf. Hos. 2:13) [Homer Hailey]
 - 2) **Foreign nations** (cf. Hos. 8:8-10) [Phil Roberts]
 - b. There is no clear indication of **remorse** or **repentance** here, only that a return to YHWH would be “**better**”
 - c. Israel did not realize that **YHWH** was the **source** of her blessings, not her idol lovers (Hos. 2:8)
 - 1) The term “**know**” [*yad*] (Hos. 2:8, 20; 4:1, 6; 5:3-4; 6:3, 6; 13:4-5) captures the essence of what **God wanted** and what **Israel lacked** (Hubbard, 24:83)
 - a) *Duane A. Garrett*: “The verbs here should be translated in the **present tense**. ‘She **does not know** that I am the one who **gives** her the grain and the wine and the fresh oil; / And I **make** her silver increase, but she **makes** gold into Baal.’ The point is that this is an **ongoing activity** that

Yahweh must **put a stop to**; it is not some **prior offense** for which he must **punish** them.”²³ (Bold emphasis added, 19A:82)

- b) Israel **did not know** that YHWH was the source of her blessings because she **did not want to know**
- 2) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “**Baal** was the Canaanite god who supposedly controlled **storms** and was responsible for both **agricultural and human fertility**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1384)
- a) *E. Ray Clendenen*: “The Hebrew verb *ba'al* can mean ‘**marry, rule over, possess**’ and is related to the noun ‘**husband, lord, owner**’ and the name of the Canaanite god ‘**Baal**’ as well as places such as **Baal-peor** where he was worshiped.” (Bold emphasis added, *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, 1353)
- 3) Although Baal worship existed during the time of the **Judges** (Jdg. 2:11-13; 3:7; 8:33; 10:6, 10), it was **Ahab** and **Jezebel** who promoted it heavily in Israel (1 Ki 16:30-33; 18:17-18)
- 4) By looking to Baal for her blessings, Israel broke the **first two** of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:3-6; Dt. 5:7-10)
- 5) YHWH was the **real source** of Israel’s blessings (Dt. 7:13; 11:13-15; 26:10)
- a) *Duane A. Garrett*: “In the **Feast of Harvest** Israel was supposed to acknowledge that **all the bounty** of the land **came from God** (Lev 23:10-20; Deut 26:10-11).” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:82)
- 6) The **idols** that Israel chased after and/or the **foreign nations** that she relied on were **impotent** (cf. Psa. 115:4-8)
5. YHWH will **punish** the mother severely (Hos. 2:9-13)
- a. He will **take back** His grain, new wine, wool, and linen (Hos. 2:9)
- 1) *David A. Hubbard*: “The picture is almost **vicious**. *Take away* (Heb. *nsl*) means to ‘**snatch away**’, ‘**tear off**’ as one would **snatch prey** from the mouth of an animal (Amos 3:12).” (Bold emphasis added, 24:85)
- 2) Note that what Israel said was **hers** (Hos. 2:5), God says was **His** (Hos. 2:8-9)
- 3) **Obedience** to the covenant would bring Israel **material blessings** (Lev. 26:3-13; Dt. 28:1-14)
- 4) **Disobedience** would bring Israel the **exact opposite** (Lev. 26:14-39; Dt. 28:15-68)
- 5) Because of her disobedience, YHWH will bring on Israel the **curses of the covenant**
- b. He will **uncover her lewdness** in the sight of her lovers (Hos. 2:10; cf. Hos. 2:3; Ezek. 16:36-37)

²³ *Duane A. Garrett*: “The perfective aspect of the *qatal* form is not necessarily past action, and it certainly is not always ‘completed action.’ This is particularly true in prophetic discourse. E.g., Isa 1:14: ‘My soul hates [חַדְשֵׁי יָרֵךְ] your new moons and festivals; they are [יָבִיחַ] a burden upon me that I am tired of bearing [אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָרֵךְ].’” (19A:82, n. 138).

- 1) “**‘Lewdness’** (*nablût*, which occurs only here in the OT) refers to a **blatant breach of covenant** which disgraces the entire community.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1384)
 - a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “The term *nābāl*, whence *nablût* most likely derives, means **‘fool/foolish.’** At its most basic it means to **act inappropriately** in a setting where wisdom and tradition provide guidance for proper behavior. The noun *nēbālā* refers to **something foolish**, which may be **sexual** in nature (Gen. 34:7; Deut. 22:21; Judg. 19:23; 2 Sam. 13:12), but the term is **not limited to that**. Translations that render *nablût* as **‘lewdness’** do so because of the **context**, and perhaps because of the verb *uncover* (*gālā*).” (Bold emphasis added, 116-117)
- 2) A related term (*nebalah*) is used to refer to:
 - a) **Shechem’s defilement** of Dinah (Gen. 34:7)
 - b) **Fornication** (Dt. 22:20-21)
 - c) **Achan’s sin** (Josh. 7:15)
 - d) **Homosexual rape** (Jdg. 19:22-24)
 - e) **Rape** (Jdg. 20:4-6)
 - f) **Incest** (2 Sam. 13:12)
 - g) **Adultery** (Jer. 29:23)
- 3) The **uncovering** of Israel’s **lewdness** in the sight of her lovers will make her an **object of abhorrence** (cf. Isa. 47:1-3; Nah. 3:4-7; Jer. 13:22, 25-27; Ezek. 23:28-30)
 - a) *A. R. Fausset*: [M]en no longer dazzled by the glitter, **despise the unmasked sinner.**” (Bold emphasis added, IV:463)
- 4) No one will **deliver her** from My hand
 - a) This is one of the most **somber statements** in the whole book (Dearman, 116)
 - b) This does not mean that Israel’s “lovers,” the false gods, will try to **help** but **fail**. After all, they do not really **exist** (Psa. 115:4-8; Acts 19:26; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 10:19-20). It means that no **human effort** can protect her from God’s punishment (Garrett, 19A:82)
 - c) *Matthew Henry*: “Those who will not deliver themselves into the hand of **God’s mercy** cannot be delivered out of the hand of **his justice.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, 1467)
- c. He will cause all **mirth to cease** from Israel’s religious celebrations (Hos. 2:11; cf. Amos 8:10; Jer. 7:34)
 - 1) *David A. Hubbard*: “*Mirth* describes the **divinely ordered purpose** of the festivities: they were to be **celebrations of thanksgiving** for the gifts of God in crops and the mighty works of God in redemption.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:86)
 - 2) **Feast days** = annual feasts: Passover, Pentecost, & Tabernacles (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:22-23; Dt. 16:16-17)
 - 3) **New Moons** = monthly celebrations (Num. 10:10; 28:11-15)
 - 4) **Sabbaths** = weekly Sabbaths (Ex. 20:8-11; 2 Chr. 8:12-13)

- a) *E. Ray Clendenen*: “In spite of Israel’s **idolatry**, they had continued the **hypocrisy** of ‘**worship**’ in the Lord’s name. **Outward religious activity can outlive the death of true faith.**” (Bold emphasis added, *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, 1353)
- b) These had become just **outward empty forms** (Amos 8:5; Isa. 1:11-17)
- c) *Duane A. Garrett*: “The **tragedy** is not that so many were **desperately licentious** but that so many had **fallen so far from God and did not know it.**” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:84)
- 5) After **Jerusalem’s destruction** by the **Babylonians** in **586 BC**, the **joy** associated with these Jewish Feasts came to **an end** (Lam. 1:4; 5:15)
- a) No doubt, the northern kingdom of **Israel** experienced a similar **joylessness** after **Samaria** fell to the **Assyrians** in **722 BC**
- d. He will destroy her **vines** and **fig trees** (Hos. 2:12)
- 1) The vine and fig trees were symbols of **security** and **prosperity** (cf. 1 Ki. 4:25; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10)
- 2) Their destruction was part of the **curses of the covenant** (Dt. 28:38-42; cf. Joel 1:7; Amos 4:9)
- 3) “These are **my wages** that **my lovers** have given me”
- a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “The Canaanite deities, the Baals, were considered the **masters** of the **fertility cycle**, and in Israel’s mind had provided them with **needed produce.**” (Bold emphasis added, 117)
- b) The term “**wages**” [*etna*] “is **unique**, but it is almost certainly a variant of the term *’etnan*, which is specifically **the hire of a prostitute**” (cf. Hos. 9:1) (Dearman, 117-118)
- 4) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “The vineyards would be reduced to an **overgrown thicket** inhabited by **wild animals.**” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1384)
- a) This is also one of the **curses** of the covenant (Lev. 26:6, 22)
- e. He will **punish Israel** for the days she served Baal (Hos. 2:13)
- 1) I will **punish** (or visit) her suggests **fitting retribution**
- a) *Duane A. Garrett*: “The phrase **וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל־לֵיהָ אֲתֵי מִי** (‘and I will visit upon her the days of the Baals’) recalls **וּפְקַדְתִּי אֶת־יְהוּ יְזַרְעֵל עַל־לִבְיַת יְהוֹאָחָז** (‘and I will visit the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu’) from 1:4. In both cases it is not precisely **punishment** but forcing someone to **experience** what he or she has **done to others.**” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:85, n. 153)
- 2) *Duane A. Garrett*: “The ‘**Baals**’ here are either **different deities** who all carry the name **Baal** or are **one deity** as he is honored at **various shrines** throughout the land.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:85)
- a) **Baal-Berith** at Shechem (Jdg. 8:33; 9:4)
- b) **Baal Gad** (Josh. 11:17) in the valley of Lebanon west of Mount Hermon
- c) **Baal Hamon** (cf. Song 8:11), location unknown

- d) **Baal Hermon** (Jdg. 3:3; 1 Chr. 5:23), near that northern mountain
- e) **Baal Peor** (Num. 25:1-9; Hos. 9:10) in Moab (Hubbard, 24:89)
- 3) **Burning incense** could be directed to:
 - a) **YHWH** (1 Ki. 9:25)
 - b) **Idols** (1 Ki. 11:8; Hos. 4:13; 11:2; Jer. 7:9; 11:12-13, 17; 19:4, 13; 32:29)
- 4) Israel adorned herself with **rings** and **jewelry** and **went after** her lovers
 - a) *James E. Smith*: “Both **nose rings** (Gen 24:47; Isa 3:21) and **ear rings** (Gen 35:4) were worn by women in Old Testament days.” (Bold emphasis added, 218)
- 5) Israel **forgot** YHWH
 - a) Israel’s fundamental sin was **forgetting** YHWH (cf. Isa. 1:2-4; Hos. 8:14; 13:6; Jer. 18:15)
 - b) Moses had repeatedly **warned** his people about the danger of forgetting YHWH (Dt. 4:9; 8:11, 14; 13:6; 32:18)
 - c) Despite these warnings, Israel **forgot** YHWH throughout her **history** (cf. Jdg. 3:7; 1 Sam. 12:9-10; Ps. 78:9-11; Jer. 23:27)

C. Hosea 2:14-20

1. YHWH will **allure** His wayward wife back to Him (Hos. 2:14-16)
 - a. There is an abrupt shift here to the **future restoration**
 - 1) *Duane A. Garrett*: “‘**Therefore**’ should introduce the **logical consequence** of what Hosea had just stated, that God would **abandon his wife** as she had **abandoned him**. Rather, God promises a **new and tender courtship** of the wayward woman and holds forth the possibility of a **regeneration of the relationship** through a **return to the wilderness**.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:87-88)
 - 2) YHWH will **show mercy**, not because His wife **deserves** it, but because she **needs** it
 - b. He will **allure** her
 - 1) **Allure** refers here to **tender**, even **seductive**, speech. The term is used to describe:
 - a) A man’s **seduction** of a virgin (Ex. 22:16)
 - b) The **enticement** of Samson to divulge the secret of his great strength (Jdg. 14:15; 16:5)
 - c) Job’s refusal to be **enticed** by another woman (Job 31:9, 27)
 - d) YHWH’s **inducement** of Jeremiah (Jer. 20:7)
 - 2) This term indicates the **intensity** of YHWH’s **yearning** for His wife
 - a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “This is not the depiction of a **self-centered seduction**, but a **wholehearted appeal** based on **personal commitment**.” (Bold emphasis added, 121)

- 3) *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “[D]ivine wrath is not motivated by **spite or revenge**. Yahweh longs that his wife and he be **reunited in love and devotion**.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:237)
- c. He will bring her into the **wilderness** and **speak comfort** to her (Hos. 2:14; cf. Ezek. 20:35-38)
- 1) This is a remarkable **reversal** of the desert motif used earlier (Hos. 2:3)
 - 2) *Homer Hailey*: “‘**The wilderness**’ of Israel’s fathers had been **Sinai**, which had meant **deliverance** from the bondage of Egypt and a place of **discipline** and **special blessings** from God. It was there that He had entered into **covenant** with Israel, had given them **the law**, and had **led** them and **provided** for their needs for forty years. The **present bondage** of Israel was **enslavement** to the baalim. **Delivered** from this servitude, Israel would be brought by Jehovah into a **new ‘wilderness’ of spiritual discipline, guidance, and blessing**.” (Bold emphasis added, *A Commentary On The Minor Prophets*, 143)
 - 3) Biblically, the **wilderness** is a place of:
 - a) **Desolation** (Job 38:26-27; Isa. 27:10; 64:10; Jer. 4:26; 51:43; Joel 2:3; Mal. 1:3)
 - b) **Deprivation** (Ex. 14:12; Jer. 22:6)
 - c) **Discipline** (Dt. 8:2-3, 15-16; Ezek. 20:10-38)
 - d) **Destruction** (Num. 32:13; Isa. 27:10; Ezek. 29:5)
 - e) **Devotion**
 1. Israel experienced **YHWH’s care** in a special way (Hos. 13:5)
 2. Israel loved her husband YHWH with the **devotion of a new bride** (Jer. 2:2-3)
 3. *Note*: Israel’s wilderness experiences were not all **positive**; there was the **apostasy** at **Baal Peor** for example (Hos. 9:10; Num. 25:1-18). There were both **positive** (Psa. 105:37-45) and **negative** (Psa. 106:13-31) aspects
 - f) **Deliverance** (Psa. 55:6-8; Jer. 31:2)
 1. **Hagar** (Gen. 16:7-12; 21:14-21)
 2. **Israel** (Dt. 8:15-16; Jer. 2:6)
 3. **David** (1 Sam. 23:14)
 4. **Radiant Woman** (Rev. 12:6, 14)
 - g) **Delight** (Psa. 107:33-38; Isa. 32:14-17; 35:6; 41:18-19; 43:19-20; 51:3) (Garrett, 88-90)
 - 4) In the wilderness, YHWH will **speak comfort** to her [lit. “speak to her heart”] (cf. Gen. 50:21)
 - a) These are the **gentle, encouraging words** that a man would speak to his desired bride
 1. **Shechem** to Dinah (Gen. 34:3)
 2. **Boaz** to Ruth (Ruth 2:13)
 3. **The Levite** to his concubine (Jdg. 19:3)

4. YHWH to His people (Isa. 40:2)
- b) *Matthew Henry*: “He will **allure** them with the **promises** of his **favour**, as before he had **terrified** them with the **threatenings** of his **wrath**, will **speak friendly** to them, both by his **prophets** and by his **providences**, as before he had spoken roughly, Isa. 40:1, 2.” (Bold emphasis added, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, 1468)
- c) The place of **judgment** (Hos. 2:3) will become the place of **salvation**
- d. He will give back her **vineyards** (Hos. 2:15)
- 1) *Duane A. Garrett*: “By **metonymy** ‘her vineyards’ stands for the **orchards, grains, livestock, wool, and flax** that Hosea had declared God would strip her of in vv. 3-12.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:88)
- 2) This is a **reversal** of earlier judgment (Hos. 2:12)
- 3) The **Valley of Achor** will be a **door of hope**
- a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “*The Valley of Achor* is likely one of the **rugged narrow entrances** into the central hill country from the Jordan Valley (the corridor from Jericho through Ai to Bethel?).” (Bold emphasis added, 122)
- b) It was where **Achan** and his family were **stoned** to death because Achan stole some of the **forbidden spoils** of Jericho (Josh. 7:24-26)
- c) But the valley of Achor (“**trouble**”), where Achan troubled Israel by his sin and YHWH troubled Achan with his punishment, will become a place of **rest and hope** (cf. Isa. 65:10)
- 4) Israel will **sing for joy** when she enjoys a **second Exodus** (cf. Ex. 15:1-21)
- a) She will “**sing**” (KJV; NKJV; NET; NASB; NIV84) or “[**make**] **answer**” (ASV; ESV; RSV) or “**respond[ed]**” (CSB; HCSB; LEB; NAB; NIV; NRSV; YLT)
1. *Leon J. Wood*: “The word translated ‘**sing**’ (𐤍, 𐤏, 𐤐, ‘*ānāh*) commonly means ‘**to answer, respond.**’ The context, however, calls for a **joyful manner of response**, such as singing.” (Bold emphasis added, 7:180)
2. *J. Andrew Dearman*: “[T]he verb has the connotation of **accepting an invitation**, and more particularly, responding to an **invitation from a spouse.**” (Bold emphasis added, 123)
3. This is a **reversal** of earlier judgment (Hos. 2:11)
- b) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “The **deliverance** from Egypt is **fundamental** to defining who **Israel** is and who **YHWH** is (11:1; 13:4). The verb ‘*ālā*, ‘to ascend, go up,’ is part of the confessional language that **God had brought Israel up from Egypt** (Exod. 3:8, 17; Josh. 24:17; Judg. 2:1; 1 Sam. 12:6; 2 Sam. 7:6; Jer. 2:6; 7:22; 11:7; Ezek. 37:12 [brought up from the grave for a new entrance into Israel]; Amos 2:10; 3:1; Mic. 6:4). On occasion it is **Moses who brought them up from Egypt** (Exod. 32:7, 23), or in the case of Hos. 2:15, **Israel** (lit. ‘she’) is the subject.” (Bold emphasis added, 122, n. 9)
1. YHWH **delivered** Israel from Egyptian bondage (Hos. 11:1; 12:9, 13; 13:4)

2. YHWH will **deport** Israel to another “Egypt” [Assyria] (Hos. 7:16; 8:13; 9:3, 6; 11:5, 11)
 3. YHWH will **deliver** Israel from “Egypt” [Assyria/Babylon] again (Hos. 2:15)
- e. Israel will call YHWH “**My Husband**” [isī] instead of “**My Master**” [ba’li]²⁴ (Hos. 2:16)
- 1) These two Hebrew words are essentially **synonymous**. Sometimes they are used **interchangeably** (Dt. 24:3-4; 2 Sam. 11:26). But the word *ba’al* would be a reminder of Israel’s former **Baal worship** (Chisholm, Jr., *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1386)
 - 2) “My Husband” [isī] denotes **affection and intimacy**. “My Master’ [baali] speaks of **rulership**²⁵ (*MacArthur Study Bible*)
2. YHWH will take from Israel’s mouth **the name of the Baals**²⁶ (Hos. 2:17)
- a. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “Yahweh, as the nation’s husband, does not want **any form of ba’al** to be on their lips for any reason.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:239)
 - b. *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “These *bē’ālīm* are **other deities** or the various **local manifestations** of the god *ba’al*....” (Bold emphasis added, 8:240)
 - c. As God had **commanded** in the law (Ex. 23:13), the **names** of idol gods will no longer be **mentioned**. Idolatry would be a **thing of the past** for Israel (cf. Zech. 13:1-2)
 - d. Whereas Israel had **forgotten YHWH** (Hos. 2:13), there will come a time when she will **no longer remember the Baals**²⁷ (cf. Ezek. 36:25-27; 37:23-28)

²⁴ *J. Andrew Dearman*: “In classical Hebrew the familiar terms *’iš* (‘man’) and *’iššā* (‘woman’) also express what modern readers understand by husband and wife. Thus in [Hos.] 2:2 one could translate quite literally: ‘She is not my woman and I am not her man.’ The noun *ba’al* means ‘owner, master, lord,’ and in certain contexts ‘husband.’ Both senses of the word are presupposed here in [Hos.] 2:16. In the patriarchal, non-Western societies of ancient Canaan, a husband was the owner and master of his household, which included his wife. In a few instances in the OT the related verb *bā’al* is used with the meaning ‘to marry, to take a wife.’ A wife, furthermore, could be described as *bē’ūlā*, a feminine passive form, meaning ‘possessed [by a husband],’ i.e., married. And as a noun, *ba’al* also is used for Canaanite deities. They were masters of certain powers and possessors/owners of property and people.” (123-124).

²⁵ “There are wordplays on the terms *’iš* (‘ish’) and *ba’al* here. The term *’iši* (‘ishi, ‘my man, husband’) is a title of affection (Gen 2:23; 3:6, 16) as the counterpart to *’išah* (‘ishah, ‘woman, wife’). The term *ba’li* (‘my lord’) emphasizes the husband’s legal position (Exod 21:3; Deut 22:22; 24:4). The relationship will no longer be conditioned on the outward legal commitment but on a new inward bond of mutual affection and love.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

²⁶ “There is a wordplay on the terms *ba’li* (‘my master’) and *habbē’alim* (‘the Baals’) which are derived from the root *ba’al* (‘master; lord’). This wordplay is especially effective because the term *ba’li* can refer to one’s husband and is also the name of the Canaanite storm god Baal. Referring to a spouse the term normally means ‘husband; master.’ It was a common, ordinary, nonpejorative term that was frequently used in an interchangeable manner with *’iš* (‘ish, ‘husband; man’). Due to its similarity in sound to the abhorrent Canaanite fertility god Baal, the repentant Israelites would be so spiritually sensitive that they would refrain from even uttering this neutral term for fear of recalling their former idolatry. The purpose of the exile is to end Israel’s worship of Baal and to remove syncretism.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

²⁷ “The singular term *ba’al* refers to the Canaanite god Baal himself, while the plural form *habbē’alim* refers to the manifestations of the god....” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

3. YHWH will **make a covenant** for them with the beasts and the birds (Hos. 2:18a)
 - a. Although this covenant is **with the animals** and for (not with) Israel, I believe it **anticipates** what Jeremiah will later call the “**new covenant**” (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Isa. 59:21; Ezek. 37:26)
 - b. The **animals** that earlier devoured the vines and fig trees (Hos. 2:12) will **no longer be hostile**
 - 1) When Israel **disobeyed** YHWH’s will, the **animals** became agents of His judgment as one of the **curses** of the covenant (Lev. 26:21-22; Dt. 28:26, 42), but all that will change
 - 2) A **rehabilitated relationship** with nature is a characteristic of the **Messianic age** (cf. Isa. 11:6-8; 65:25; Ezek. 34:25)
 - a) Paul indicates that Isaiah’s prophecy is **fulfilled now** as Jesus rules and reigns as the Messiah (cf. Rom. 15:8-9, 12)
 - c. **Bow and sword** will be shattered
 - 1) *Carl Friedrich Keil & Franz Delitzsch*: “The breaking in pieces of the weapons of war and of battle out of the land, is a pregnant expression for the **extinction** not only of the **instruments of war**, but also of **war itself**, and their extermination from the land.” (Bold emphasis added, 10:43)
 - 2) *Tom Constable*: “Attacks from **wild animals** and destruction from **war** were **prominent motifs** employed in **the curses** threatened in **ancient Near Eastern treaties**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*)
 - 3) **Warfare** was one of the **curses** of the covenant (Lev. 26:25, 31-39; Dt. 28:25, 31-33, 49-52)
 - 4) But those **curses** would be **canceled**, and **covenant blessings restored**
 - 5) **Weapons of war** would be **destroyed** (cf. Psa. 46:9)
 - a) *David A. Hubbard*: “The picture of **shattered weapons** reflects the **second judgment action** in [Hos.] 1:4-5 as well as the promise not to deliver Israel or Judah by **military intervention** in [Hos.] 1:7.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:94)
 - b) **Peace** is a characteristic of the **Messianic age** (cf. Isa. 2:1-4; Jer. 23:6; 33:16; Mic. 4:1-5; Zech. 9:9-10)
 - d. To make them **lie down safely** (cf. Isa. 11:1-16)
4. YHWH will **betroth** Israel to Himself **forever** (Hos. 2:19-20)²⁸
 - a. *David A. Hubbard*: “In Israelite marriages **betroth** would involve **negotiations** with parents or their representatives (2 Sam. 3:12-15), including settlement of proper **bride-price** which the suitor would pay to the bride’s family (2 Sam. 3:14). An **interval** of time would pass between the betrothal and the **consummation** of the relationship (Deut. 20:7; 28:30), but in that interval she is considered to **belong officially** to her intended (Deut. 22:23-27) and to belong to him for life....” (Bold emphasis added, 24:95)
 - b. This alludes to the **new marriage** based on the **new covenant** (cf. Isa. 62:1-2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22ff)

²⁸ *Robert B. Hughes & J. Carl Laney*: “The words of [Hos.] 2:19-20 are traditionally recited by Jews when they put on their phylacteries (cf. Deut. 6:8).” (325).

c. This betrothal will be in:

1) **Righteousness** [*sedeq*]: To be rightly related

a) *David A. Hubbard*: “*Righteousness* describes Yahweh’s commitment to be all that his covenant role as Sovereign and Saviour demands and to relate to her in **strength, loyalty** and **uprightness** in all his dealings with her.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:95)

b) The term points to:

1. The **straightness** of God’s own **character** (Job 36:3)
2. His **administration** of **justice** (Jer. 11:20)
3. His **vindication** in, or rescue from, enemy attack (Psa. 35:24, 28) (Hubbard, 24:95)

2) **Justice** [*mispat*]: The enactment of what is right in the community

a) *David A. Hubbard*: “*Justice* centres in **Yahweh’s fairness** in all his relationships to his people, as he **honours** their **obedience** and **corrects** their **waywardness**, without whimsy or arbitrariness.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:96)

b) The term points to:

1. **Rectitude** in **decision-making** (Gen. 18:25)
2. **Concern** for **compassionate redress** of grievance (Isa. 20:18)
3. **Protecting** the good and **punishing** the evil (Hubbard, 24:96)

c) **Righteousness** and **justice** are the **foundations** of YHWH’s throne (Psa. 89:14; 97:2-3; cf. Dt. 32:4; Psa. 33:5; 103:6; Isa. 28:17)

3) **Lovingkindness** [*hesed*]: Unswerving devotion that fulfills covenant responsibilities

a) *David A. Hubbard*: “*Steadfast love* rings with the tones of **covenant loyalty**, describing both the **attitude** and the **behaviour** of the Lord who made a **pledge** to his people in full freedom.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:96)

b) The term may connote:

1. God’s **guidance** and **protection** (Ex. 15:13)
2. God’s **motive** in rescue (Psa. 6:4)
3. God’s **forgiveness** (Psa 25:7)
4. God’s **covenant-keeping** (Dt. 7:9, 12; Mic. 7:20) (Hubbard, 24:96)

4) **Mercy** [*rahamim*]: Tender feelings that motivate gracious actions

a) *David A. Hubbard*: “*Mercy* glows with **tenderness** and **compassion**, especially as it shows itself to the **weak**, the **needy**, the **oppressed**.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:96)

5) **Faithfulness** [*emunah*]: Dependability and constant loyalty (Chisholm, Jr., 1:1386; Dearman, 127-128)

a) *David A. Hubbard*: “*Faithfulness*, the final price of the betrothal, conveys Yahweh’s utter **dependability**, the **reliability** of all his **words** and **deeds**, especially his **covenant promises**.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:96)

- 6) *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “Grammatically, this construction could mean that these qualities represent **the bride price** that Yahweh will pay for Israel (cf. 2 Sa 3:14) or **the attributes** that will characterize this renewal of the marriage relationship. In both options, they are **what God will bring** to the marriage to **guarantee its success**.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:240)
- 7) What YHWH **offers** to His bride is what He **asks/requires** of her:
- a) **Righteousness**: The fulfillment of all covenant requirements to him and each other (Hos. 10:12)
 - b) **Justice**: The safeguarding of the rights of every member of the community (Hos. 12:6)
 - c) **Lovingkindness**: Steadfast love, extending covenant grace to others (Hos. 4:1; 6:6; 10:12; 12:7)
 - d) **Mercy**: Warm concern for others, especially those in distress (cf. Pr. 12:10; Amos 1:11; Zech. 7:9)
 - e) **Faithfulness**: Reliability in keeping promises, fulfilling obligations, and living uprightly (Hos. 4:1) (Hubbard, 24:96-97)
- d. Israel will **know**²⁹ YHWH (Hos. 2:20)
- 1) In certain contexts, the verb “**know**” [*yada*] can have the connotation of **sexual intimacy** between a husband and wife (cf. Gen. 4:1, 17, 25; 19:5, 8; 24:16; 38:26; Num. 31:17-18, 35; Jdg. 11:39; 19:22, 25; 21:11-12; 1 Sam. 1:19; 1 Ki. 1:4)
 - 2) In Hebrew thought, this knowing was not merely a **mental action**; it implied **action** (Jer. 22:16) (Chisholm, Jr. 1:1386)
 - a) *David A. Hubbard*: “Though *know* is appropriate to the **intimacy** of marriage (Gen. 4:1), its meaning here is that the bride will make the **appropriate response** to the Bridegroom by **committing herself** as fervently and faithfully to **the terms of the covenant** as he has.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:96)
 - b) *David A. Hubbard*: “**Covenant loyalty and obedience** are the core of **knowing** Yahweh.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:96)
 - 3) This is a **reversal** of her former tendency to **forget** YHWH (Hos. 2:8, 13; 13:6)
 - 4) This is one of the promises of the **new covenant** (cf. Jer. 30:20-22; 31:31-34; Jn. 6:44-45)
- e. YHWH promises to **answer** when His people call (Hos. 2:21-22)
- 1) **YHWH** will answer when the heavens call
 - 2) The **heavens** will answer when the earth calls
 - 3) The **earth** will answer when the crops call³⁰

²⁹ “The term יָדָע (*yada*, ‘know, acknowledge’) is often used in covenant contexts. It can refer to the suzerain’s acknowledgment of his covenant obligations to his vassal or to the vassal’s acknowledgment of his covenant obligations to his suzerain. When used in reference to a vassal, the verb ‘know’ is metonymical (cause for effect) for ‘obey.’” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

³⁰ This is not an exhaustive list of all the crops the land will produce, but two of these items (wine and oil) were associated with celebration and wealth (Garett, 95).

- 4) The **crops** will answer when Jezreel calls
 - a) These are the **commodities** that Israel had mistakenly believed her **idol lovers provided** (Hos. 2:5, 8)
- 5) *M. Daniel Carroll R.*: “**Abundance** will be the byword ‘in that day.’” (Bold emphasis added, 8:240)
- 6) The promise of **fertility** recalls the judgments of **deprivation** (Hos. 2:9, 12)
- 7) **Jezreel**³¹ suggests several things:
 - a) It obviously alludes to the name of **Hosea’s firstborn son** (Hos. 1:4-5)
 - b) It anticipates **the name change** (Hos. 2:23)
 - c) It now implies **salvation** and **prosperity** instead of **calamity** (Garrett, 95)
5. YHWH will **sow** Israel for Himself in the earth (Hos. 2:23)
 - a. *Duane A. Garrett*: “The word ‘**plant**’ is the Hebrew word *zāraʿ*, the same word that is part of the name ‘**Jezreel**.’ This brings out another aspect of Jezreel’s name. God will not only **plant crops**, he will also **plant a people**.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:95)
 - b. This is a **reversal** of Israel’s earlier **scattering** (Hos. 1:3-5)
6. YHWH will have **mercy** on her who had not obtained mercy
 - a. The **tenderness** inherent in this term is suggested by the fact that the Hebrew word “**mercy**” [*racham*] is related to the Hebrew word “**womb**” [*rechem*]
 - 1) Isa. 49:15: ¹⁵ “Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have **compassion** on [*rechem*] the son of her **womb** [*rechem*]? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. (*Spirit Filled Life Study Bible*)
 - 2) Also, fathers **pity** their children (Psa. 103:13)
 - b. This is a **reversal** of Israel’s earlier condition. “**Lo-Ruhama**” [No-Mercy] (Hos. 1:6) will receive mercy
7. YHWH will **say** to those who were not His people “**You are my people**”
 - a. This is a **reversal** of Israel’s earlier repudiation. “**Lo-Ammi**” [Not-My-People] (Hos. 1:9) will be YHWH’s people once again (cf. Hos. 1:10)
8. They will say “**You are my God**”
 - a. This has its ultimate fulfillment in the **Messianic kingdom**
 - 1) Paul quotes Hos. 1:10b and 2:23b in Rom. 9:25-26
 - 2) Peter quotes these passages in 1 Pet. 2:9-10
 - b. *Homer Hailey*: “God brought His people back into **Canaan**, then brought them to Himself under a **New Covenant**, bestowed **all spiritual blessings** on them in Christ, sowed them to Himself in the **true fatherland** (Phil. 3:20) and **kingdom**,

³¹ “The use of the name יִזְרְעֵל (yizr’ē’l, ‘Jezreel’) creates a powerful three-fold wordplay: (1) The proper name יִזְרְעֵל (‘Jezreel’) is a phonetic wordplay on the similar sounding name יִשְׂרָאֵל (yisra’el, ‘Israel’): God will answer Israel, that is, Jezreel. (2) The name יִזְרְעֵל (‘Jezreel’) plays on the verb זָרַע (*zara’*, ‘to sow, plant’), the immediately following word... This wordplay creates a popular etymology for יִזְרְעֵל meaning, ‘God sows/plants,’ which fits well into the agricultural fertility imagery in 2:21-23 [2:23-25]. (3) This positive connotation of יִזְרְעֵל (‘Jezreel’) in [Hos.] 2:21-23 [2:23-25] reverses the negative connotation of יִזְרְעֵל (‘Jezreel’) in [Hos.] 1:4-5 (bloodshed of Jehu in the Jezreel Valley).” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

showered **mercy** on them, and made them **His own.**” (Bold emphasis added, *A Commentary On The Minor Prophets*, 145)

D. Hosea 3:1-5

1. YHWH instructs Hosea to **love an adulterous woman** (Hos. 3:1a)
 - a. Go again, love a **woman**
 - 1) **Two questions** confront the expositor of this passage:
 - a) Is this woman loved by a lover **Gomer** or **someone else**?
 - b) Is this passage a **doublet** or a **variant account** of Hosea 1 or a **continuation** of that story?
 - 2) Question 1: There are several good reasons to conclude that Gomer and the “woman loved by a lover” are **one and the same person**
 - a) This woman is **unnamed**
 1. Even though the text says “**a woman**” and not “**your wife**” (Hos. 3:1), the context implies that **Gomer** is meant
 2. The absence of the **woman’s name** implies that the reader ought to be **familiar** with that detail
 3. *Duane A. Garrett*: “[T]hose who believe that this is a **different woman** must explain why she is **unnamed**, but there is **no such onus** on those who take this to be the **woman already introduced** in the text.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:99)
 - b) The woman’s **character** was the same as Gomer’s (Hos. 1:2; 3:1)
 1. Gomer is the **only immoral woman** we know anything about
 2. After Hosea speaks of **Gomer** as the **paradigm of faithlessness**, it would be **very odd** for him to suddenly refer to **some other immoral woman** without even **mentioning her name**
 - c) This woman is an **adulteress** which implies that she is married but **unfaithful** to her husband
 1. *Duane A. Garrett*: “There is no reason for Hosea to ‘**show love**’ to **the adulterous wife of another man**; such a command comes near to demanding Hosea **commit adultery** himself! The command only makes sense if the woman in adultery is his own wife.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:99)
 - d) Hosea was told to “**love**” **her**, not “**take**” **her** (which would apply to a new marriage)
 - e) The command to “love her” **fits the situation** because Hosea had lost the love he once felt for Gomer [?]
 - f) The word “**again**” indicates **repeated action**
 1. *G. J. Polkinghorne*: “**again** might be taken with **said** or **go** or **love**, with varying shades of meaning....” (Bold emphasis added, *New International Bible Commentary*, 875)
 - a. “Go **again**” (ASV; CSB; ESV; HCSB; NASB; NKJV; RSV; YLT)
 - b. “Go **yet**” (KJV)

- c. “And Yahweh said to me **again**” (LEB; NRSV; cf. NAB)
- d. “Go, show love to your wife **again**” (NET; NIV)
2. *Leon J. Wood*: “Admittedly, the **repeated element** could be merely that of **loving some woman**; but the word **comes first** in the command—in the **place of emphasis**—which strongly suggests that it is the **same woman** in view and not merely the same type of action. It should also be observed that the MT punctuation places ‘*ôd* with the idea of the **command** and not of **God’s saying something again**, as some have understood it.”
(Bold emphasis added, 7:182)
- g) This command **parallels** YHWH’s initial command to Hosea (Hos. 1:2)
- h) If this woman is someone other than Gomer, there would be the **ethical problem** of God commanding Hosea to marry an adulteress [?]
1. This point **assumes two things** that are not necessarily true:
 - a. First, that Gomer was **innocent** when she married Hosea and then later became **immoral**
 - b. Second, that the command to marry an adulteress presents a **real ethical problem**
 - i) The **parallel** between YHWH’s relationship with Israel and Hosea’s relationship with Gomer **stands** only if this woman is Gomer
 1. “Though the name of this **woman** is not stated, she should be understood as *Gomer*, Hosea’s wife in chs. 1-2; otherwise, *the analogy of the woman to Israel breaks down*. It is Israel, the **adulteress**, that the Lord pursues, not another people.” (Italics added, *The ESV Study Bible*, 1626)
- 3) Question 2: There are several good reasons to conclude that this passage is not a **doublet** or a **variant account** but a **continuation** of Hosea and Gomer’s story
- a) The change from **third person** (Hos. 1:2ff) to **first person** (Hos. 3:1ff) does not prove that:
 1. Chapter 3 describes an event **prior** to chapter 1
 2. Chapter 3 is an **alternate record** of the events of chapter 1 (Hubbard, 24:60)
 - b) The details of chapter 3 seem to indicate a **sequential event**:
 1. Hosea 1 reads like the **initiation** of a marriage. Hosea 3 describes the **resumption** of a relationship
 2. The term “**again**” [*’od*] (Hos. 3:1) would seem to imply that the events of chapter 3 **follow** the events of chapter 1
 - a. What is **continued**? God’s **speaking** or Hosea’s **going and loving**?
 1. “**Go again**, love a woman beloved of her friend....” (ASV; cf. CSB; ESV; HCSB; NASB; NKJV; RSV; YLT)
 2. “And Yahweh **said to me again**, Go love a woman who has a lover....” (LEB; cf. NAB; NRSV)

3. “Go, **show love** to your wife **again**....” (NET; cf. NIV)
 - b. Although this adverb more frequently **follows** the verb it modifies, on occasion it **precedes** its verb (cf. Isa. 56:8; Jer. 2:9; Ezek. 5:4)
 - c. So, this exegetical decision will have to be made on the basis of **context**
 1. If Hosea is **reconciled** with Gomer, that scenario **fits the parallel** with YHWH and Israel
 2. If Hosea **marries** some other woman, that scenario **does not fit the parallel** with YHWH and Israel (Guenther, 75)
 - d. *Duane A. Garrett*: “Thus one has to **excise ‘again’** as an **editorial insertion** to maintain this interpretation, and **textual surgery** is a fairly clear sign that the **interpretation contradicts the sense** of the text itself.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:48)
 1. *Duane A. Garrett*: “Both the LXX and the Vg attest to the word.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:48, n. 24)
3. The lack of reference to the **children** points towards a **movement** in the story when the **judgment** conveyed in their names has **run its course** and the focus is on the **restored relationships** between Hosea & Gomer and YHWH & Israel
 - a. If Hos. 3:1-5 is just a **variant account** of Hos. 1:2-9:
 1. Why are the **children not mentioned** since they play such a **prominent part** in the narrative of Hosea 1?
 2. How can imposed **sexual abstinence** (Hos. 3:3) be harmonized with **sexual activity** (Hos. 1:3, 6, 8)? (Harrison, 863)
4. Hosea’s **purchase** of the woman builds on the **threats** of Hosea’s **banishment** of Gomer (Hos. 2:3) and her **abandonment** of Him (Hos. 2:5)
5. The picture of **covenant loyalty** (Hos. 3:3) makes the most sense when seen as demonstrating the **renewed covenant** depicted in the **earlier salvation oracle** (Hos. 2:14-23) (Hubbard, 24:60)
 - a. Reading chapter 3 as the **second half** of Hosea’s story rather than as a **second account** is **congruent** with the **message** of the book
 1. *Duane A. Garrett*: “If chap. 3 is merely a **doublet**, then Gomer simply **disappears** from the story after her adultery, and the story **ends** there. But if...Hosea **sought** her out and **redeemed** her, then her life story **mirrors** the message of **sin, punishment, and redemption** that is the **essence of Hosea’s prophecy**. On the **doublet reading** of Hosea 3, the story of Gomer is in fact a **poor analogy** for the prophecy, since it implies that the result of Israel’s sin will **be irreconcilable and irrevocable divorce**.” (Bold emphasis added, 19:A:48)

- b. Postulating a different woman in chapter 3 **breaks the analogy** which carries the **basic message** of this section
1. YHWH will **judge** his idolatrous people and afterwards **renew His relationship** with them
 2. Introducing a second woman **derails** the entire train of thought and **wrecks the hope** which Hosea is trying to convey to Israel (Hubbard, 24:61)
- c) The term “**committing adultery**” implies that this woman is **married**
1. *Duane A. Garrett*: “An **unmarried** woman can be **promiscuous**, but only a **married woman** can be an **adulteress**.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:99)
 2. This **fits Gomer** if Hosea has **not divorced** her
 - a. However, the NT teaches that one can **commit adultery** even though he is **not married** to his God-joined mate
 1. Jesus teaches that one **commits adultery** when an unlawful **divorce** results in **remarriage** to someone else (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:10; Lk. 16:18)
 2. Paul teaches that one **commits adultery** if he is “**bound**” to his original mate and **married** to another (Rom. 7:2-3)

Hosea 1:2-9	Hosea 3:1-5
Hosea	Me [Hosea]
Go take	Go again love
A wife of harlotry and children of harlotry	A woman loved by a lover and committing adultery
He went and took Gomer	Bought her for 15 shekels of silver and 1½ homers of barley
She conceived and bore him a son [Jezreel]	Stay with me many days
She conceived again and bore a daughter [Lo-Ruhammah]	You shall not play the harlot
She conceived and bore a son [Lo-Ammi]	Nor shall you have a man
	So too will I be to you

- 4) *Note*: There are **no legitimate grounds** for treating chapter 3 as an **interpolation** or from a **later date**
- a) **No manuscript evidence** from the Hebrew or the versions supports its excision
 - b) The **style** of chapter 3 is **not remarkably different** from the rest of Hosea
 - c) The chapter is **too short** for any meaningful **stylistic analysis**

- 5) The word “**love**” [*ehab*] has a wide semantic range:
- It can mean “**to gain pleasure from**”
 - Gomer’s paramour “**loved**” her company (Hos. 3:1)
 - It can describe a **misguided relationship** like Israel’s with the Baals (Hos. 2:5, 7, 10, 12-13; 9:1, 10)
 - It can connote **loyal and costly love** like Hosea’s love for Gomer and YHWH’s love for Israel (Hos. 3:1)
 - It can illuminate the many facets of YHWH’s **commitment** to Israel (Hos. 11:1, 4; 3:1; 14:4) (Hubbard, 24:100; Guenther, 77)
- 6) *Leon J. Wood*: “Gomer is called merely *’iššāh* (**‘woman’**), without a **possessive suffix** to indicate **‘your woman’** or **‘your wife,’** apparently showing the **degree of estrangement** existing between the two.” (Bold emphasis added, 7:181)

b. Loved by a **lover** [*rea*]

- 1) This term has a **wide semantic range**. The NKJV translates it as:

- “**Neighbor**” (99x)
- “**Friend**” (41x)
- “**One another**” (15x)
- “**Companion**” (11x)
- “**Another**” (4x)
- “**Other**” (3x)
- “**Opponent**” (2x)
- “**Lover**” (2x)
- “**Husband**” (1x)
- Et al.*

- 2) Who is this “**lover**”? There are two possibilities:

a) Gomer’s **paramour**

- Leon J. Wood*: “**רֵעָא** (*rēa’*, **‘friend’**; NIV, **‘another’**) is best understood as referring to a **paramour** with whom Gomer had perhaps been living, rather than to Hosea as her rightful husband. Though the word can mean **‘husband’** (cf. Jer 3:20; Song of Songs 5:16), it can also mean **‘paramour’** (cf. Jer 3:1).” (Bold emphasis added, 7:182)
- Note*: This reference is to a single “**lover,**” whereas earlier references were to plural “**lovers**” (Hos. 2:5, 7, 10, 12, 13; cf. 8:9)

b) Gomer’s **husband** (Hosea)

- A. R. Fausset*: “The word implies that Gomer’s husband had been **her truest and most tender friend**, so that there was **no excuse** for her **conjugal** infidelity....” (Bold emphasis added, IV:467)

2. The sense would be: “Go, love a woman who, although **beloved** by her **friend/husband**, has yet become an **adulteress**”

c. Committing **adultery**

1) This implies that this woman is a **wife** who has been **unfaithful** to her husband

2. YHWH explains **the reason** for His difficult command (Hos. 3:1b)

a. Hosea’s love will **mirror** YHWH’s **great love** for Israel despite her gross **unfaithfulness**

1) Israel **looked** to other gods (cf. Hos. 2:5; Dt. 31:18, 20; Lev. 19:4)

a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “The verb has the basic meaning of **turning toward** or **facing** someone for the purpose of **engagement** or **interaction**. **Disengagement** would be the act of **turning away from** (*pānâ min*).” (Bold emphasis added, 134)

b) This was a violation of the **first two commandments** (Ex. 20:3-6; Dt. 5:7-10)

2) Israel **loved** the raisin cakes

a) Eating raisin cakes was **not sinful**, in and of itself, even when eaten as part of a **religious ceremony** (cf. 1 Chr. 12:40; 2 Sam. 6:19 // 1 Chr. 16:3)

b) Raisins were a form of **high energy food**, and they were consumed by those who were faint with hunger (1 Sam. 30:12; Song 2:5)

c) But these raisin cakes were evidently delicacies employed in feasts associated with **pagan worship** (cf. Jer. 7:18; 44:19)

b. Few Bible passages tell us more about **divine love**:

1) It is **constant** in all circumstances

a) YHWH **loved Israel** even when she was **enmeshed in her idolatry**

b) “**God’s love**, as seen in Hosea, is willing to **go** where others would not be willing to go and to **pay** what others would not be willing to pay.” (Bold emphasis added, *Believer’s Study Bible*)

2) It **contrasts utterly** with the triviality of **human affections**

a) While YHWH is loving the **Israelites**, they are loving **raisin cakes!!!**

3) It can be **illustrated** through human love when that human love has grasped something of the **power** and **pathos** of the divine

a) YHWH’s command to Hosea assumes a **correspondence** between the **divine** and the **human**

4) It is **commitment** and **action**

5) It is **strong** as well as **tender**

a) *A. R. Fausset*: “God was **loving them all the time that they were looking to other gods**. Though an adulteress, Gomer was yet beloved of her friend. Such is the love of God, which still **yearns over His people**, even when **fallen a second time**, and by His **marvellous grace** finally **turns them to Himself**.” (Bold emphasis added, IV:467)

- 6) It has the courage and integrity to **exercise discipline** when that is necessary (Hos. 3:3-4) (Hubbard, 24:99)
3. Hosea **buys** this woman (Hos. 3:2; cf. Hos. 1:3)
- a. **Why** did Hosea have to **buy** Gomer? (Various explanations have been offered):
- 1) She had fallen into **slavery**, and he **bought** her from her owner
 - 2) Hosea bought her from a **second husband**
 - a) *Carl Friedrich Keil & Franz Delitzsch*: “The price paid, moreover, is not to be regarded as **purchase money**, for which the wife was obtained from her parents; for it cannot be shown that the custom of **purchasing a bride** from her parents had **any existence** among the Israelites....” (Bold emphasis added, 10:46)
 - 3) Hosea **sent** Gomer out of his house, she fell into **poverty** and finally gave herself over to **slavery** in order to survive
 - 4) Gomer had become someone’s **personal slave** or a **temple prostitute** (Hubbard, 19A:101)
- b. The **precise amount of barley** Hosea paid for Gomer is **uncertain** because we do not know for sure the **value** of these **ancient measurements** of volume (Different sources give various estimates)
- 1) A **homer** = 4.3 bushels and a **lethech** = 1.05 bushels (Logos Weights & Measures Converter)
 - 2) “A **homer** was about **5 bushels** (180 liters) and a **lethech** about **2.5 bushels** (90 liters).” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)
 - 3) *David A. Hubbard*: “[T]he combination of **silver** and **grain** suggests that Hosea may have had **difficulty obtaining it**; **shekels** are measures of **weight**, perhaps in **coin form**, calculated by some to be just under half an ounce; **homer** and **lethech** are **volume measures** for grain, probably contained in woven baskets; the **lethech** is thought to be **half an homer**; precision escapes us, since the homer’s size is variously estimated from **five to eleven bushels**; a reasonable guess is that the combined silver and grain value was about **thirty shekels of silver** and thus equivalent either to the **worth of a female slave** (Exod. 21:32; cf. Lev. 27:4 for the monetary equivalent of a woman vowed to the Lord) or to the cost of acquiring a **cult-prostitute** (Jeremias, p. 55).” (Bold emphasis added, 24:100, n. 36)
- c. *Leon J. Wood*: “The **amount** was actually **not large**; fifteen silver shekels was not a great sum, and barley was a more **modest food** than wheat.” (Bold emphasis added, 7:181)
- 1) This paltry sum “shows the **desperate condition** into which Gomer had fallen.” (Bold emphasis added, *The ESV Study Bible*, 1626)
 - 2) *Paul R. Fink*: “**Barley** was considered to be a **food fit only for animals** and was eaten only by the **poorest people**. Gomer had sunk to such depths that she was worth only **half the price of a common slave** and approximately **ten bushels of animal food!**” (Bold emphasis added, *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1669)
 - 3) *Carl Friedrich Keil & Franz Delitzsch*: “The price generally, for which the prophet obtained the wife, was probably intended to indicate the **servile condition** out of which Jehovah purchased Israel to be His people....” (Bold emphasis added, 10:46)
- d. The **circumstances** surrounding this purchase are **uncertain**

- 1) Whether Hosea had **legally divorced** Gomer is unknown
- 2) She may have become a **temple prostitute**
- 3) Perhaps she was the **legal property** of someone who employed her as a **concubine** or hired her out as a **prostitute** (Chisholm, Jr., 1:1387)
4. Hosea **refuses to be a husband** to Gomer (Hos. 3:3)
 - a. Hosea manifests **“tough love”**³² for this woman:
 - 1) She will abide with him **many days**
 - a) *David A. Hubbard*: “*Many days* must mean a period of **temporary duration**...because the *afterward* of verse 5 points to a **joyful, climactic event** when the *many days* have passed.” (Bold emphasis added, 24:101)
 - 2) She will **not play the harlot**
 - 3) She will **not have a man**
 - a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: “The phrase *hāyâ lē* (**‘belong to, be for’**) is used in the context of both **covenant and marriage declarations**. . . . The phrases *hāyâ lē’îš* and *hāyâ lî* are ways to indicate a woman **‘belongs to’ a man in marriage** (Gen. 20:12; Deut. 22:29).” (Bold emphasis added, 132, n. 4)
 - b) Gomer must be **celibate** during this probationary period
 1. “Nor shall you have a man” means **“any man,”** not just **“another man”**
 - 4) So too will I be **toward you**
 - a) This has been interpreted in at least three different ways:
 1. Hosea remarried Gomer and **resumed conjugal relations** with her
 - a. This is unlikely because:
 1. It does not make sense for the “many days” of verse 3 to be a **positive period** and the “many days” of verse 4 (which is parallel) to be **negative and probationary**
 2. The injunction **“nor shall you have a man”** would have to include **Hosea** himself (otherwise we should expect something like **“except me”** to be included)
 3. It would also seem **quite unnatural** for Hosea and Gomer to immediately **resume conjugal relations**
 2. Hosea brought Gomer home but **never again had conjugal relations** with her
 - a. This is unlikely:
 1. It depends upon translating the end of the verse something like this: **“and I also shall behave in the same way toward you”** (i.e. “I shall live a life of celibacy too”)

³² *David A. Hubbard*: “Hosea speaks directly to Gomer (v. 3) for the only time in the book (in 2:2-3 he speaks to her through the children). . . .” (24:98).

2. It is doubtful that the Hebrew can **have the meaning** that this view requires
3. Hosea brought Gomer home, imposed **sexual abstinence** on her for a **probationary period**, but afterwards resumed a **normal conjugal relationship**
 - a. "I also [will not be] unto you" describes **Hosea's parallel celibacy** (Hubbard, 24:101)
 - b. This is the best interpretation because:
 1. This view most naturally **parallels the explanation** of the symbolism given in verses 4-5
 2. It also **maintains the reversal** of Hos. 1:9 (Hubbard, 19A:102-103)
 - b) Hosea's "**tough love**" for Gomer affected both of them. Both of them had to experience and endure a time of **sacrifice**
 1. Such is the **nature** of "tough love," and this explains why so many are not willing to **practice** it
 - c) *J. Andrew Dearman*: "Gomer's **full restoration** is not accomplished **immediately**, and Israel's would not be either." (Bold emphasis added, 132)
- 5) *David A. Hubbard*: "The **disciplinary period** in the marriage is a **prophetic action** designed to symbolize a time of **chastening** and **deprivation** through which Israel is to pass." (Bold emphasis added, 24:101)
- b. This marital situation **mirrors** YHWH's relationship with His people. He too will exercise "**tough love**" [Comment] (Hos. 3:4)

Hosea & Gomer	YHWH & Israel
You shall stay with me many days	Without king or prince
You shall not play the harlot	Without sacrifice or sacred pillar
Nor shall you have a man	Without ephod or teraphim
So too will I be toward you	Afterward Israel will return
	Seek the Lord their God
	Seek David their king
	Fear the Lord and His goodness

- 1) The children of Israel will be without **king** or **prince**
 - a) *Duane A. Garrett*: "[T]he list of things Israel will lose for 'many days' includes both **licit** and **illicit** items. Only the '**idol**' is **fundamentally evil**; all the rest could be **good** or **evil** depending on **context**." (Bold emphasis added, 19A:103)
 - b) Israel's kings had been **unfaithful** (cf. Hos. 1:4; 8:4)
 - c) *Allen R. Guenther*: "Without king nor prince anticipates national **dispersion** and **subjection**." (Bold emphasis added, 78)
- 2) The children of Israel will be without **sacrifice** or **sacred pillar**

- a) Israel had offered sacrifices to **Baal** (cf. Hos. 11:2; 13:1-2)
- b) *Allen R. Guenther*: “The suspension of *sacrifice* ([Hos.] 3:4) applies to **all sacrifices**, whether offered to the **Lord** or to **other gods**. During this long period of abstinence, **all official sacrifice will cease.**” (Bold emphasis added, 78)
- c) “**Sacred pillars**” were used for both permissible and forbidden activities:
1. Mark **graves** (Gen. 35:20)
 2. Commemorate **covenants** (Gen. 31:45-52; Josh. 24:26-27)
 3. Commemorate **divine appearances** (Gen. 28:18, 22; 31:13; 35:14)
 4. Personal **monuments** (2 Sam. 18:18)
 5. Canaanite **idolatry** (Ex. 23:24; 34:13; Dt. 7:5; 12:3)
 6. Israelite **worship** (Ex. 24:4; Isa. 19:19)
 7. Israelite **idolatry** (Lev. 26:1; Dt. 16:22; 1 Ki. 14:23; 2 Ki. 17:10; Hos. 10:1-2; Mic. 5:13) (*Guenther, 79*)
- d) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “‘**Sacred stones**’ (*maṣṣēbâh*) had been a **legitimate part of patriarchal worship** (cf. Gen. 28:18, 22; 31:13). However, because of those stones’ association with **pagan religion**, Israel was **forbidden** to use them after entering Canaan (Lev. 26:1; Deut. 16:22).” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1388)
- e) *David A. Hubbard*: “The **pillars** may originally have been **memorials** to mark the hallowed sites of Israel’s history like **Bethel** (Gen. 28:18, 22; 35:14) and **Shechem** (Gen. 33:20; Josh. 24:26) but proved akin to the **Canaanite columns** that symbolized **male deities** and were **forbidden** (Deut. 16:21-22). . . .” (Bold emphasis added, 24:101, n. 37)
- f) Before she entered the Promised Land, YHWH had instructed Israel to **destroy** Canaanite **sacred pillars** [i.e. standing stones] (Dt. 7:5; 12:3) and not erect her own (Dt. 16:22)
- g) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “In **direct violation** of this covenant stipulation Israel had **erected such stones** as part of its **Baal worship** (2 Kings 3:2; 10:26-27; 17:10; Hosea 10:1; Micah 5:13).” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1388)
- h) This implies the cessation of **formal religious activity**
1. *J. Andrew Dearman*: “For Israel to do without sacrifice likely entails the absence of **temples** and **high places** where sacrificial rites are carried out.” (Bold emphasis added, 137)
- 3) The children of Israel will be without **ephod** or **teraphim**
- a) *David A. Hubbard*: “[T]he *ephod* may be connected with the **high priestly garment** which contained the **urim** and **thummim** for **divination** (Exod. 28:4-40; 35:27; 39:2-30), and may have been an **image** (cf. Exod. 32:4; Judg. 8:27), a **garment** used to adorn idols (2 Kgs 23:7), or a **figurine** akin to *teraphim* (cf. Judg. 17:5; 18:14), which were usually **small terracotta figures of deities** thought to grant protection and guidance (1 Sam. 19:13; 2 Kgs 23:24; Ezek. 21:21).” (Bold emphasis added, 24:101, n. 37)

- b) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “In this context **the ephod** was not the garment worn by a priest, but a **cultic object** (cf. Jud. 8:27...).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1388)
- c) *Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.*: “**Idols** (*terāpîm*), sometimes found in **homes** (Gen. 31:19; 1 Sam. 19:13, 16) or in a king’s collection of **divination devices** (Ezek. 21:21), were **despised** by the Lord (1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Kings 23:24). These two items (ephod and idol) are also mentioned together in Judges (17:5; 18:14, 17-18, 20) as part of the belongings of an Ephraimite’s personal priest.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1388)
- d) *J. J. Given*: “[T]hey were to remain without **royal rule**, or **princely power**, or **priestly function**, or **prophetic instruction**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Pulpit Commentary*, 87)
- e) *Carl Friedrich Keil & Franz Delitzsch*: “The prophet mentions objects connected with both the **worship of Jehovah** and that of **idols**, because they were both **mixed together** in Israel, and for the purpose of showing to the people that the Lord would **take away** both the **Jehovah-worship** and also the **worship of idols**, along with the **independent civil government**.” (Bold emphasis added, 10:48)
- c. Afterward the children of Israel would **return, seek** YHWH their God, and **David** their king (Hos. 3:5; cf. Hos. 2:5, 7; 5:15; 7:10; Dt. 4:25-31)
- 1) They will **return**
 - 2) They will **seek YHWH**
 - a) Whereas they had **forgotten** YHWH, the time will come when they will **seek** Him (Hos. 13:6; Dt. 8:10-18)
 - 3) They will **seek David** their king
 - a) “**The northern kingdom**, under their own king (1 Kin. 12:20) and with their own centers for worship (1 Kin. 12:28, 29), was a **rebellion against the Davidic covenant** (2 Sam. 7:1-16; see 1 Chr. 17:7-12). Christian and Jewish scholars interpret this as a reference to the **Messiah** since David had long been dead at the time of this prophecy.” (*The Woman’s Study Bible*)
 - b) *Duane A. Garrett*: “The phrase does not mean simply that the Israelites would again submit to the **Davidic monarchy** and so **undo Jeroboam’s rebellion**. Had that been the point, we would expect the text to say that they would return to the ‘**house of David**.’ Instead we see ‘**David their king**’ set alongside of Yahweh as the one to whom the people return in pious fear. This ‘**David**’ cannot be the **historical king**, who was long dead, but is the **messianic king** for whom he is a figure.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:104)
 - c) The OT prophets prophesied the advent of a **future glorious ruler** from David’s line called “**David**”
 1. **Hosea** (Hos. 3:5; cf. 1:11)
 2. **Amos** (Amos 9:11-12)
 3. **Isaiah** (Isa. 9:1-7; 11:1-5; 6:5; 16:5; **22:20-25**; 55:3-4)
 4. **Micah** (Mic. 5:2-5)
 5. **Jeremiah** (Jer. 23:5-6; 30:8-11; 33:15-26)

6. **Ezekiel** (Ezek. 34:23-25; 37:21-28)
 7. **Zechariah** (Zech. 12:7-13:6)
- d) **“David their king”** conveys a number of ideas in the context of Hosea:
1. The **reunion** of the two kingdoms under one head (Hos. 1:11)
 2. The **reversal** of Israel’s pattern of dynastic instability (Hos. 7:3-7; 8:4; 10:3)
 3. The **rejection** of foreign alliances which served as a buffer against their own political weakness (Hos. 7:8-9, 11, 16)
 4. The **continuity** of YHWH’s covenant with David
- e) The NT clearly indicates that **Jesus** was the **ultimate fulfillment** of these prophecies
1. Jesus was the **“Son of David”** (Mt. 1:1, 6, 17; 9:27; 21:9; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8)
 2. Jesus was also **David’s Lord** (Mt. 22:42-46; cf. Psa. 110:1)
 3. Jesus would be given the **throne of David** (Lk. 1:30-33)
 4. Jesus was the **horn of salvation** raised up in David’s house (Lk. 1:67-69)
 5. Jesus was born in **Bethlehem**, the **city of David** (Lk. 2:4, 11)
 6. Jesus was **resurrected** as **David prophesied** (Acts 2:24-32; 13:35-39; cf. Psa. 16:8-11)
 7. Jesus sat on **David’s throne** (Acts 2:29-36; cf. 2 Sam. 7:11-16 // 1 Chr. 17:11-15; Psa. 89:3-4, 27-37; 132:11-18)
 8. Jesus rebuilt the **tabernacle of David** (Acts 15:13-17; cf. Amos 9:11-12)
 9. Jesus has the **key of David** (Rev. 3:7)
 10. Jesus is the **Root and Offspring of David** (Rev. 5:5; 22:16; cf. Isa. 11:1, 10)
- f) Objection: *Leon J. Wood*: “If the search for **‘David their king’** is to be assigned to the day of **Christ’s first coming**, there is a **problem**—viz., **the Jews did not seek Christ at that time** but definitely **rejected him**. In the **Millennium**, however, they will indeed seek Christ (the David of the time, ruling on David’s throne).” (Bold emphasis added, 7:183)
- g) Response:
1. The **true Jew** accepted Jesus (cf. Jn. 1:11-12)
 - a. **Simeon** (Lk. 2:25-35)
 - b. **Anna** (Lk. 2:36-38)
 - c. **Nathaniel** (Jn. 1:45-51)
 - d. **First converts** (Acts 2:37-42)
 - e. **Paul** (Phil. 3:3-11)

The Jew	The True Jew
Abraham's seed (Jn. 8:33)	Abraham's deeds (Jn. 8:37-39, 41, 44)
Abraham's flesh	Abraham's faith (Gal. 3:6-9)
Circumcision in the flesh (Rom. 2:28)	Circumcision of the heart (Dt. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:29)
Praise of men (Rom. 2:29)	Praise of God (Rom. 2:29)
Children of the flesh (Rom. 9:6-8)	Children of the promise (Rom. 9:6-8)
The rest (Rom. 11:7)	The remnant (Rom. 11:5, 7; cf. Isa. 10:20-22; 11:11, 16; Jer. 31:7; Rom. 9:27-29)
Those who say they are and are not (Rev. 2:9; 3:9)	Those who are (Gal. 3:26-29)
Worship according to the flesh	Worship in the Spirit (Phil. 3:3)

2. Paul does not promise the **conversion of Israel *en masse*** but rather the conversion of **individual Jews** who accept Christ (Rom. 9:6-8, 27; 10:11-13; 11:1-2, 5, 7, 11-14, 17-18, 23-24)

4) They will **fear** YHWH and His **goodness** (Jer. 33:9)

- a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: "It is difficult to find a **precise equivalent** in English to a verb that runs the gamut from '**fear**' to '**be awestruck**,' and can be used to describe both the **positive** and **negative aspects** of such feelings." (Bold emphasis added, 140-141)
- b) *Matthew Henry & Thomas Scott*: "Not only are we to **fear the Lord** and his **greatness**, but the Lord and his **goodness**; not only his **majesty**, but his **mercy**." (Bold emphasis added, n.p.)
- c) *J. Andrew Dearman*: "YHWH's **goodness** is his **integrity in action** on which the people's restoration in the 'latter days' is dependent." (Bold emphasis added, 141)
- d) YHWH's **goodness** is expressed in His **gifts** (cf. Jer. 31:12; Zech. 9:17)
- e) *Allen R. Guenther*: "**Contrition** leads to repentance; **repentance** to a new longing for God; the **awareness** of God to a deep awe and humility; and that **reverence** for the Almighty bursts open the storehouse of **God's bounty**. Israel is foreseen as **fully restored**." (Bold emphasis added, 80)
- f) *Carl Friedrich Keil & Franz Delitzsch*: "He who has the **Lord** for his **God** will want no **good thing**." (Bold emphasis added, 10:49)

5) In the **latter days**

- a) *J. Andrew Dearman*: "The phrase '**the latter days**' essentially refers to **what is coming in the future**. Jacob, Balaam, and Moses use the

phrase in this fashion to speak of **what will happen after their deaths** (Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Deut. 31:29). As a noun the word *’aḥrît* can mean **‘latter part’** or **‘end.’** The question is raised in prophetic contexts, therefore, whether the phrase **‘latter days’** reflects an **eschatological sense of ‘last days’** or **end of days**. It approaches that sense in Isa. 2:2/Mic. 4:1; Ezek. 38:16 (cf. 38:8); Dan. 10:14 (cf. 8:19); and there are other references where it is difficult to tell whether the phrase means anything more than **‘in the future.’** See Jer. 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39.” (Bold emphasis added, 139, n. 22)

- b) Several NT events are associated with the **“latter days”** or the **“last days”** or the **“last times”**
1. The coming of **Shiloh** (Gen. 49:1, 10-11)
 2. The **star** coming out of Judah (Num. 24:14, 17)
 3. The **mountain** of YHWH’s house being established above the mountains (Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-5)
 4. The establishment of a **kingdom** that will never be destroyed (Dan. 2:28ff, 44)
 5. The pouring out of the **Holy Spirit** (Acts 2:17-21; cf. Joel 2:28-32)
 6. God speaking through **His Son** (Heb. 1:1-2)
 7. The **Incarnation** of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:20)

E. Isaiah 50:1-3

1. To understand this passage, we must appreciate its **metaphorical background**
 - a. God **“married”** His people (Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 2:1-2; 3:14)
 - 1) In other words, **God’s covenant** with Israel is likened to a **marriage**
 - b. God’s wife (Israel) **“committed adultery”** with many lovers (idols)
2. YHWH asks, “Where is the **certificate** of your mother’s divorce” (Isa. 50:1)
 - a. Some have interpreted this rhetorical question to mean that **Israel had not been divorced** by YHWH, that the divorce certificate could not be **produced** (because it had not been given)
 - 1) “The question **Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement?** is rhetorical, and the answer implied is that *there is none*. This should be seen in contrast with Jeremiah 3:8, where the Lord clearly states that *He divorced Israel* and threatens to do the same to Judah.” (Italics added, *King James Version Bible Commentary*, 1383)
 - 2) “The **rhetorical question** indicates the **absence** of a certificate of divorce; therefore, Yahweh had **not divorced** Israel. Yahweh is reassuring the exiles that He has **not permanently abandoned** them.” (Bold emphasis added, *Faithlife Study Bible*)
 - 3) *Edward J. Young*: “To the first question a **negative answer** is expected. Zion has **no writing of divorcement** and hence cannot produce one, for God has **never sent her away.**” (Bold emphasis added, 3:295)
 - 4) The **previous context** might lend support for this interpretation:

- a) God is less likely to forget his children than a mother would forget her **nursing child** (Isa. 49:15)
 - b) God cannot forget His people because they have been **inscribed** on His hands (Isa. 49:16)
 - c) God will **bring back a multitude** of His people so large that there will not be enough room for them all (Isa. 49:16-21)
 - d) God will cause **foreign nations** to bring Israel's children and bow down before her in respect (Isa. 49:22-24)
 - e) God will destroy **Israel's oppressors** (Isa. 49:24-26)
 - f) God has **not divorced** His people, and He has the power to rescue them from any troubling situation (Isa. 50:1-3) (Smith, Gary, 377)
- 5) But there are **problems** with this interpretation:
- a) First, YHWH clearly says "your mother **has been put away**" (Isa. 50:1e)
 - b) Second, other passages clearly say that **Israel was divorced** by YHWH (Jer. 3:8)
- b. I believe others correctly interpret this rhetorical question to mean that **Israel had been divorced** by YHWH, and He calls upon her to produce the **divorce certificate** which will demonstrate that she had been divorced because of her **transgressions** ("spiritual adultery")
- 1) "The Lord admits **he did divorce Zion**, but that too was the result of the **nation's sins**. The force of the earlier rhetorical question comes into clearer focus now. The question does not imply that a **certificate does not exist** and that **no divorce occurred**. Rather, the question asks for the certificate to be produced so the accuser can **see the reason** for the divorce in black and white. The Lord did not put Zion away arbitrarily." (Bold emphasis added, The NET Bible First Edition Notes)
 - 2) What has happened is not **God's fault** but **Israel's**
- c. So, in this passage, **the Exile** is being likened to:
- 1) **Divorce**
 - 2) Being **sold** into indentured servitude
- d. But even this does not mean that God **cannot redeem** – that **reconciliation is impossible** (Isa. 50:2)
- 1) The God who can **dry up the sea** and make the **rivers** a wilderness (Dt. 28:23-24) does not lack power to **deliver** His people if they will **repent** and **return** to Him³³
 - 2) The allusions to the **Exodus** seem unmistakable:

³³ *John N. Oswalt*: "God has such power that neither sea nor sky can withstand him. It does not matter how much water is in the ocean, or how bright the heavens are at noonday; God can dry up the one and darken the other. Shall the Hebrews, and all the rest of the world's captives, doubt that God has the power to lighten their darkness and water their deserts?" ("The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66." NICOT, 32).

John N. Oswalt: "God lacks neither the desire nor the power to deliver his people. The only issue is whether they will step forward in repentance and faith to meet him when he comes and answer him when he calls." (*Ibid.*).

- a) “Is **My hand** shortened...?” (cf. Ex. 15:16; Dt. 26:8)
- b) The rebuke of the **sea** (cf. Ex. 14:21; 15:8, 10; Psa. 106:9)
- c) The stink of the **fish** (cf. Ex. 7:17-21)
- d) The darkening of the **sky** (Ex. 10:21-23)

F. Isaiah 54:1-10

1. This passage is **anticipated** in Isaiah 49:14-23 and Isaiah 50:1-3 (Grogan, EBC, 6:308)
2. The Servant’s **suffering** and **accomplished work** (Isa. 52:13-53:12) provides the basis for the **reconciliation** of God and Israel (Grogan, EBC, 6:308)
 - a. Compare the parallel terminology:
 - 1) “**Seed**” (Isa. 53:10 // Isa. 54:3)
 - 2) “**Many**” (Isa. 52:14-15; 53:11-120 // Isa. 54:1)
 - 3) “**Righteousness**” (Isa. 53:11 // Isa. 54:14)
 - 4) “**Peace**” (Isa. 53:5 // Isa. 54:10)
3. YHWH invites the **barren woman** [Zion (Isa. 54:11)] to **sing** because she will **bear more children** than the married woman (Isa. 54:1)
 - a. Cf. **Hannah’s Song** (1 Sam. 2:1ff, 5)
 - b. The only **appropriate response** to a great work of God is **joyous praise** (cf. Isa. 12:5; 26:1; 35:10; 42:10-12; 61:10-11) (Grogan, 6:807)
 - c. Paul indicates that this is fulfilled in **spiritual Israel** (Gal. 4:27)
4. YHWH instructs the barren woman to **enlarge her tent**, because her children will be **so numerous**; therefore she will need larger living quarters (Isa. 54:2-3; cf. Gen. 28:14; Isa. 33:20; 49:19-20; Jer. 30:18)
 - a. The “**seed**” [*zera*] that the Suffering Servant will **see** (Isa. 53:10) will be the (formerly) barren woman’s “**descendants**” [*zera*] (Isa. 54:3) – the **children of salvation**
 - b. *Shalom M. Paul*: “The polar opposites, north and south, constitute a **merism** in all geographical directions.” (Bold emphasis added, 419)
 - c. This portrayal contrasts **Jeremiah’s dirge-like prophecy**, which equates the **ruin of the city** with the **collapse of a tent** (Jer. 10:20-22)
5. YHWH instructs her not to **fear** or be **ashamed** because she will not be **put to shame** and she will **forget the shame** of her youth (Isa. 54:4; cf. 41:10, 14; 43:5-6; 44:21, 8)
 - a. In the ancient world, barren women felt **terrible shame** (cf. Gen. 30:22-24; 1 Sam. 1:5-6; Isa. 4:1; Lk. 1:24-25)
 - b. The **shame** of her youth
 - 1) **Egyptian bondage** (Hos. 11:1)
 - 2) **The Assyrian Captivity**
 - 3) **Her idolatry** (Isa. 42:17; 45:16; Ezek. 20:6-8; 23:2-4, 19)
 - c. The **reproach** of her widowhood
 - 1) **The Babylonian Exile** (Isa. 49:21; Jer. 10:20)
6. YHWH reminds her of **just who He is**: (Isa. 54:5)

- a. Her **Maker** (Isa. 44:2; 45:9-11; 51:13)
 - b. Her **Husband** (Jer. 3:14; 31:32; Hos. 2:19)
 - c. The **Lord** of hosts (Isa. 1:9 – 54x in Isaiah)
 - d. Her **Redeemer** (Isa. 35:9-10; 41:14; 44:24 – 13x in Isaiah)
 - 1) Cf. The story of **Ruth** (Ruth 4:1-12)
 - e. The **Holy One** of Israel (Isa. 43:14; 48:17; 49:7 – 30x in Isaiah)
 - f. The **God** of the whole earth
7. YHWH assures her that He **called her** like:
- a. A **woman forsaken** and grieved in spirit
 - b. A **youthful wife** when she was refused (Isa. 54:6)
 - 1) Cf. The story of **Hosea** (Hos. 1-3)
8. YHWH assures her that although He **forsook** her for a mere moment, He will **gather** her and **have mercy** on her (Isa. 54:7-8; cf. Isa. 26:20; Psa. 30:5)
- a. “The Babylonian exile did not seem ‘**brief**’ at the time (cf. Psalm 74), but it was **momentary** in comparison to **God’s everlasting love**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The ESV Study Bible*, 1340)
 - b. *J. A. Motyer*: “The emphasis in verse 7 is on the **greatness of the compassion** which was exercised; in verse 8 on the **endlessness of the love** which has replaced wrath; and in verse 9 on the **permanence of the resulting situation**.” (Bold emphasis added, 448)
9. YHWH assures Zion that His **covenant of peace** will not be removed (Isa. 54:9-10; cf. Ezek. 34:25; 37:26)
- a. This promise is like His **promise to Noah** that the whole earth would never be flooded with water again (cf. Gen. 8:20-22; 9:8-17)
 - 1) *James Smith*: “God’s new commitment to Zion would be as **irrevocable** as the **covenant** he made with **Noah** after the Flood.” (Bold emphasis added, 151)
 - 2) *Homer Hailey*: “Jehovah has **kept his oaths** that He will **not destroy the earth with another flood** nor **pour out His wrath against spiritual Jerusalem**. The earth has not been destroyed by water again, and the true people of God have endured through the centuries. There have always been **a faithful few**.” (Bold emphasis added, Isaiah, 447)
 - b. The **mountains** and **hills** would be **removed** before He **reneges** on this promise (cf. Isa. 51:6)
 - 1) The mountains and hills symbolized **stability** (Gen. 49:26; Dt. 33:15; Hab. 3:6)
 - 2) God says that these **symbols of stability** would depart before His **kindness** would depart from His people (cf. Mt. 24:35; Isa. 51:6; Jer. 31:35-36; 33:19-21)
 - 3) God will give His people **lasting peace** (cf. Isa. 9:7; 32:17-18; 54:13; 55:12; 66:12; Jer. 30:10; 33:6, 9; 46:27)
10. In this passage, **Zion** is described in **three ways**, as:
- a. A **barren woman** (Isa. 54:1)

b. A **widow** (Isa. 54:4)

c. A **divorced** wife (Isa. 54:6)

- 1) *Jim McGuigan*: “The **Babylonian exile** is viewed as implying all these states. But God assures Zion that as in the case of Sarah and Hagar, the **barren wife** ended up with **more children** than the fruitful handmaid, so Zion will be **more greatly blessed** after her ‘barren’ experience.” (Bold emphasis added, 273)

G. Jeremiah 3:1-4:4

1. This passage begins with a **rhetorical question** that alludes to the **teaching of Moses** on MDR (Jer. 3:1a; cf. Dt. 24:1-4)³⁴
 - a. *Charles L. Feinberg*: “The chapter has an unusual beginning because the first word in the Hebrew text is *lē’mōr* (**‘and saying’**). . . . Probably the words **‘The word of the Lord came to me’** have been **omitted** by an early copyist. The LXX and Syrian omit the word *lē’mōr* altogether.” (Bold emphasis added, 6:397)
 - 1) Cf. Jer. 2:1
 - b. Moses’ statute **‘forbade** a man who **divorced** his wife to **remarry** her if she had married some other man in the interval.” (Bold emphasis added, Thompson, 190)
 - c. *Note*: The **marriage metaphor** has already been used earlier (Jer. 2:1-2, 20)
2. This rhetorical question is followed by an **indictment** (Jer. 3:1b-5)
 - a. This resembles a **similar pattern** in other passages in Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 2:11-12, 32; 8:4-5; 13:23; 18:14-15) (Thompson, 190)
 - b. In contrast to Moses’ teaching, Judah had **played the harlot with many lovers** (Jer. 3:1)
 - 1) She had not been **divorced** by YHWH, and she had **not married** another
 - 2) Instead, she had **played the harlot** with, not one, but **many lovers** [idols]
 - 3) *Larry L. Walker & Elmer A. Martens*: “It had not been a **clandestine affair**; Israel did not even care **how publicly** her behavior was known. She was not **overcome** by temptation—she **sought it out!**” (Bold emphasis added, 8:325)
 - c. The verb **‘return’** (*sob*) is an infinitive that could be translated in different ways:
 - 1) It could be translated as an **imperative**: **‘Return to me’**
 - a) “Yet **return again** to me” (ASV; KJV)
 - b) “Yet **return** to me” (NKJV)
 - c) If this is an **imperative**, YHWH is calling the nation to **repentance** despite her gross unfaithfulness
 - d) Arguments against this view:

³⁴ “**tn Heb** ‘May he go back to her again?’ The question is rhetorical and expects a negative answer.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

⁴⁴ “**tn Heb** ‘Returning to me.’ The form is the bare infinitive which the KJV and ASV have interpreted as an imperative ‘Yet, return to me!’ However, it is more likely that a question is intended, expressing surprise in the light of the law alluded to and the facts cited.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

1. The argument based on Dt. 24:1-4 is *a fortiori*
 - a. *Michael Brown*: “If a twice divorced woman **cannot return** to her original husband, **how much less** can Israel return to the Lord, since she has **prostituted** herself with **many lovers**” (Bold emphasis added, 7:103)
 2. The rest of this oracle (Jer. 3:2-5) **indicts** Israel for her **wanton harlotry**. So **how dare she think she can return** to her first husband
- 2) It could be translated as an **interrogative**: “**Would** you return to me in spite of all you have done?”
- a) “**Can** you return to me?” (CSB; HCSB)
 - b) “**Would** you return to me?” (ESV; NRSV; RSV)
 - c) “**Would** you now return to me?” (LEB; NIV)
 - d) “So **what** makes you think you can return to me?”
 - e) If this is an **interrogative**, YHWH is expressing His **incredulity** that His “wife” would even **consider returning** after her gross unfaithfulness
 - f) Arguments against this view:
 1. Despite YHWH’s **divorce** of Israel for her immorality (Jer. 4:8), He repeatedly calls upon her to **repent** and **return** to Him throughout this passage (Jer. 3:1, 7, 12, 14, 22; 4:1)³⁵
 - a. Why would YHWH do this if reconciliation is **impossible**?
 - b. “**Would you return?**” (v. 1, NIV) is answered by “**Return**” (v. 12), and “**Will He remain angry forever?**” (v. 5) is answered by “**I will not remain angry forever**” (v. 12) (Brown, 7:103)
 2. Even Dt. 24:1-4 could support this view, if God is saying: “There is no way that you **deserve** this, and it is almost **outrageous to consider**, yet I still call on you to **return** to me.” (Brown, 7:103)
 3. Since Israel was not in fact returning to YHWH in **repentance**, why would He **incredulously ask** about this?
 - a. Response: Perhaps God was rebuking their **superficial repentance**
- 3) It could be translated as a **jussive**: “**Let her return** to me”
- 4) It could be translated as an **indicative**: “Yet you **return** to me”
- a) “Yet you would **return** to me!” (NAB)
 - b) “Yet you **turn** to Me” (NASB)
 - c) “**And turn** again to Me” (YLT) (Feinberg, 6:397)
- d. Israel’s **harlotry** has been **widespread** and **shameless** (Jer. 3:2)

³⁵ *Charles Feinberg*: “It is hard to see, however, how the Lord would be declaring a reconciliation impossible when, throughout the remainder of the chapter, he is pleading for that very thing in urging Judah to repent.” (6:397).

- 1) **Where** has she not prostituted³⁶ herself?
 - a) Everywhere one looked there was evidence of **idolatry** (Isa. 57:7-8; Hos. 4:11-15; Jer. 2:20, 23, 28; 11:13)
 - b) Harlots, in both ancient and modern times, advertise their trade by the **roadside** (Gen. 38:13-14, 20-21; Pr. 7:10-15; Ezek. 16:23-25)
- 2) She has been like an **Arabian** in the wilderness
 - a) Either as a **marauding Bedouin** waiting for passing caravans to plunder
 - b) Or like an Arabian **selling his wares** to passing travelers
 - c) The **former** seems more likely to me
- 3) She has **polluted** the land
 - a) The sin of God's people had **repercussions** for the land (e.g., Lev. 18:25, 28; 19:29; Dt. 24:4; Hos. 4:2-3; Amos 4:6-10) (Thompson, 191)
- e. As a result, YHWH has withheld the **showers** and the **latter rain** (Jer. 3:3)
 - 1) The **early rains** fell in **October** and **November**, and the **late rains** (Dt. 11:14; Jer. 5:24; Hos. 6:3; Joel 2:23; Jas. 5:7) in **March** and **April** (Thompson, 192)
 - 2) *Michael L. Brown*: “Just as the **rains in season** were an essential promise and token of **divine favor** (see Lev 26:4; Dt 11:13-15; 28:12), so also the **absence** of those rains spoke of his **curse** and **displeasure** (Lev 26:19; Dt 28:23-24), and Amos 4:7-8 describes how the **withholding** of the rains was designed to bring Israel to **repentance**.” (Bold emphasis added, 7:104)
 - 3) “Ironically, the **false god Baal** whom Judah worshiped was thought to be the **god of rain, dew, thunder, and fertility**. The true God **withheld these** things, demonstrating the **futility of false religion**.” (*CSB Study Bible: Notes*, 1144)
- f. Despite YHWH's chastening, Israel has had a **harlot's forehead**, refusing to be ashamed (Jer. 3:3)
 - 1) This disciplinary action has **no salutary effect**. Judah cannot be brought to **shame**. She is **stubborn, rebellious, and hard hearted** (cf. Isa. 48:4; Ezek. 3:7-9; Jer. 5:3; 8:5, 12; 11:10)
 - 2) *Matthew Henry*: “**Blushing** is the **colour** of **virtue**, or at least a **relic** of it; but those that are **past shame** (we say) are **past hope**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, 1225)
- g. YHWH notes that in this time of **drought** Israel cries out for a **reprieve** (Jer. 3:4-5)
 - 1) However, her **fine words** were not matched by **corresponding deeds** (Thompson, 193)
 - 2) She **honored** YHWH with her **lips**, but her **heart** was **far** from Him (cf. Isa. 29:13; Jer. 12:2; Ezek. 33:31; Mt. 15:8; Mk. 7:6)
3. This indictment is followed by a lengthy **prose passage** that provides details about the **guilt of two sisters**: Israel and Judah (Jer. 3:6-18)

³⁶ *F. B. Huey, Jr.*: “The word לָ שׁ (‘ravished’) was considered obscene by the Masoretes, so they substituted the Qere כָּ שׁ (‘lie with’) here and in three other passages where the same word occurs (Deut 28:30; Isa 13:16; Zech 14:2).” (16)

- a. YHWH addresses Jeremiah in a **monologue** during the reign of Josiah [640-609 BC] (Jer. 3:6-11)
- 1) YHWH asks Jeremiah if he has seen what **backsliding Israel** had done (Jer. 3:6)
 - a) “Here the apostate northern kingdom is described literally as ‘**Apostasy (mešubā) Israel.**’ The same name appears in vv. 8, 11, and 12, that is, Israel is seen as **Apostasy personified.**” (Bold emphasis added, 195)
 - 2) YHWH offered **reconciliation**, but Israel **refused** (Jer. 3:7)
 - a) While some English versions (KJV; NKJV) translate this verse as a **command** [“Return to Me”], most (ASV; CSB; ESV; HCSB; LEB; NET; NAB; NASB; NIV; NRSV; RSV) translate it as a **statement**
 1. ASV: And I said after she had done all these things, **She will return unto me**; but she returned not: and her treacherous sister Judah saw it.³⁷
 - b) YHWH repeatedly pleads with Israel to **return** throughout this passage (Jer. 3:7, 12, 14, 22; 4:1-2)
 - 3) YHWH **divorced** Israel for her **adultery** (Jer. 3:8)³⁸
 - a) This “divorce” and “sending away” was the **Assyrian Captivity** in 722 BC (2 Ki. 17:1-23; 18:9-13)
 - b) *Joe Sprinkle*: “This text is the most interesting of those describing God using the language of divorce because it clearly portrays God as **divorced**. Verses 1-4 refer to the **divorce law** of Deuteronomy 24. Verses 6b-7 describe **Israel’s adultery**. They assert that although God thought **she might return** to God, **she had not done so**. She had gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and committed adultery there (with idols), and her ‘sister’ Judah had seen her and was adversely influenced. Then comes v. 8: ‘I gave faithless Israel her **certificate of divorce** and **sent her away** because of her adulteries’ (NIV). The text goes on to say that **Judah had learned nothing** from this experience and had **not returned to God** wholeheartedly.
 “In the first verse God’s statement raises an issue of interpretation: **Is it permissible for him to remarry Israel whom he has divorced**, given the law in Deut 24:1-4? Israel is actually worse than the wife of Deuteronomy 24 who has merely married another man. Israel has lusted after many other gods. For this reason she has been ‘**sent away**’ (the language of divorce)— that is, she has **gone into exile** and become **joined to other gods**. The analogy from divorce law suggests that **Israel cannot come back to her husband** (God). Yet despite the

³⁷ “**sn** Open theists suggest that passages such as this indicate God has limited foreknowledge; however, more traditional theologians view this passage as an extended metaphor in which God presents himself as a deserted husband, hoping against hope that his adulterous wife might return to him. The point of the metaphor is not to make an assertion about God’s foreknowledge, but to develop the theme of God’s heartbreak due to Israel’s unrepentance.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

³⁸ *Rick Brannan & Israel Loken*: “The DSS, Syr., and some LXX manuscripts have ‘she saw’ rather than ‘I saw.’ According to this reading, the subject is the ‘treacherous sister Judah’ from the preceding verse. This reading makes more sense in the context and may be original.” (*The Lexham Textual Notes on the Bible*).

law, **God calls upon Israel to return** to him as her true husband (v. 14).

“It is implied here that God is both **divorced** and **polygamous**—with **sisters as wives**, contrary to the **incest laws**. One can hardly **blame God** for **polygamy** and **incest**: He originally **only marries one woman** (Israel), who subsequently **split** into two sisters (Israel and Judah).” (Bold emphasis added, 542)

- 4) **Judah** witnessed all of this and went and **played the harlot** also (Jer. 3:9; cf. Ezek. 16:44-52; 23:1-49)
 - a) *J. A. Thompson*: “Despite the reforms of Hezekiah, **Judah declined seriously** after his death in 687 B.C. During the long reign of Manasseh (687-642 B.C.) things went from **bad to worse**. **Apostasy** was still **rampant** in the early part of Josiah’s reign (640-609 B.C.).” (Bold emphasis added, 194)
 - b) She committed “**casual harlotry**”
 1. *J. A. Thompson*: “The Hebrew text reads literally ‘**through the lightness of adultery**’” (Bold emphasis added, 196)
 - c) She **defiled** the land (Jer. 3:9)³⁹
 - d) She committed **adultery** with stones and trees⁴⁰
- 5) Judah has not turned to YHWH with her **whole heart** but in **pretense** (Jer. 3:10)
 - a) **Josiah’s reforms** (cf. 2 Ki. 22-23; 2 Chr. 34-35) brought about a temporary **change of behavior** (2 Chr. 34:32) but not a true **change of heart**
- 6) YHWH tells Jeremiah that backsliding Israel has been **more righteous** than treacherous Judah (Jer. 3:11; cf. Ezek. 16:51-52; 23:11)
 - a) Israel was **less culpable** than Judah for several reasons:
 1. Judah saw **how God dealt with Israel** and should have **learned** from this, but she did not
 2. Judah had the benefit of **Josiah’s reforms** which provided the perfect opportunity for genuine repentance
 3. Judah added to her guilt the sin of **hypocritical repentance** (Brown, 7:108)
 - b. YHWH gives Jeremiah a **message** to proclaim toward the north (Jer. 3:12-18)
 - 1) The **north** was the region where Israel was **deported** by the Assyrians (2 Ki. 15:29; 17:6; Jer. 4:6; 16:14-15; 23:7-8; 31:8)
 - 2) Jeremiah is to call northern Israel to **repentance** (Jer. 3:12-14a)
 - a) This **call to repentance** could be explained in at least **three different ways**:

³⁹ *Charles Feinberg*: “In Canaanite religion the main emphasis was on fertility and sex. Worship was entered into in order to insure the fertility of the land, the animals, and the people. Sacred prostitution was practiced widely. Among the sacred objects were stone altars and the sacred tree or grove. . . .” (6:399).

⁴⁰ *Elmer A. Martens*: “Stone pillars, sometimes representing the male sex organ, and trees or wood poles representing the female deities were standard Baal symbols.” (*Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, 3:524).

1. Rhetorically, it is addressed to Israelite exiles in Assyria but really intended to **provoke Judah to jealousy**⁴¹
 2. It is intended for the **remnant of Israel** still residing in the land formerly known as Israel (2 Ki. 17:24-41)
 3. It is an offer to the **Israelite exiles** in Assyria deported after the fall of Samaria (722 BC) (Huey, Jr., 74)
 4. *Note:* Perhaps it was a **combination** of all three
- b) YHWH tells Jeremiah to offer **reconciliation** to backsliding Israel (Jer. 3:12-13)
1. *Barclay M. Newman Jr. & Philip C. Stine:* “**I will not look on you in anger** translates the Hebrew idiom, ‘*I will not cause my face to fall on you.*’” (Italics added, 103)
 2. Reconciliation will be possible if Israel will acknowledge her **iniquity**, her **transgressions**, and that she has **not obeyed** YHWH’s voice (Jer. 3:13)
 3. *J. A. Thompson:* “**Obedience** is a **basic requirement** for Yahweh’s covenant people. In no other way could Israel remain the covenant people. **Obedience** leads to **blessing** and **disobedience** to **cursing** (judgment). The theme is present with considerable emphasis in Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut. 28:1, 2, 15).” (Bold emphasis added, 201)
 4. God had promised reconciliation after repentance in the **blessings** and **curses** of the covenant (cf. Lev. 26:40-45; Dt 30:1-10)
- 3) Jeremiah is to promise **restoration** (Jer. 3:14b-15)
- a) YHWH pleads with Israel to **return** “for I am **married** to you”
1. “I am **married** to you” (KJV; NKJV) would be more literally translated:
 - a. “I am a **husband** unto you” (ASV; NIV)
 - b. “I am your **master**” (CSB; ESV; HCSB; LEB; NET; NAB; NASB; NRSV; RSV)
 - c. “I have **ruled** over you” (YLT)
 2. *Barclay M. Newman Jr. & Philip C. Stine:* “**I am your master** translates a verb that may mean either ‘*I am your husband*’ (NIV) or ‘*I am your Lord*’ (so most translations). In the ancient Hebrew culture the husband was in effect the master or lord of his wife. . . . The Hebrew verb itself derives from the same stem as ‘Baal,’ and the author evidently intends a *play on words*.” (Italics added, 105)
 3. *J. A. Thompson:* “Yahweh is Israel’s **true ba’al**, not Baal.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Book Of Jeremiah*, 201)
 4. How should we **understand** this reference to **marriage** (i.e. being a husband) since Israel has been **divorced**? (cf. Jer. 3:8)
 - a. Several possibilities might be suggested:

⁴¹ *Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, & David Brown:* “In order to excite Judah to **godly jealousy** (Ro 11:14), Jehovah addresses the exiled ten tribes of Israel with a loving invitation.” (1:510).

1. This is not a reference to **Israel**, but **Judah**
 2. YHWH's divorce of Israel was only **apparent**, not real
 3. YHWH's divorce of Israel did not sever the **marriage bond**
 4. YHWH still considered Himself **Israel's husband**, even though they were divorced
- b. I'm not sure what the **correct explanation** really is
1. The **first option** would be the easiest explanation
- b) YHWH promises to take back a **remnant** (Jer. 3:14; 23:3; 24:6; 31:17; 32:36-44)
1. *Barclay M. Newman Jr. & Philip C. Stine*: "The noun translated **family** is more literally 'clan,' a subdivision of a tribe, that is, an extended family. It is quite likely that in the present context the word is used of a geographical or political division since it is placed in parallel with **city**...." (Italics added, 105)
 2. The exiles from the North will be brought to **Zion** (cf. Isa. 10:20-22)
 - a. *John Humphries*: "This author is confident that the correct answer is that while **the kingdoms of Israel and Judah are rejected** and will **not be restored** under the Messiah, the Jews (and Gentiles) are to **return to the Lord individually** through **obedience to the gospel of Christ** (Jer. 3:14; Rom. 10:11-13; Mark 16:15-16). It is clear that **God rejected forever the sinful kingdoms of Israel and Judah** (Hos.1:4; Amos 9:8; Jer. 19:10-11; 22:24-30; Ezek. 21:24-27). As a kingdom, they will **never return to God's favor**. Those kingdoms are **gone forever** (Ps. 9:17). However, as **individuals**, Jews (and Gentiles) are **married** to Christ or the Messiah (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:9). We are all **called or invited individually** into this relationship through the gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 2:13-14)." (Bold emphasis added, 25)
- c) YHWH promises to provide **shepherds** who will feed with knowledge and understanding (Jer. 3:15; cf. Jer. 23:1-4; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24)
1. This will be a stark contrast to **Judah's current leaders** (Jer. 2:8, 26-27)
- d) YHWH promises that several things will happen when they are "**multiplied and increased** in the land in those days"
1. The **ark of the covenant** will be forgotten ["Out of sight and out of mind"] (Jer. 3:16)
 - a. *Charles Feinberg*: "In the time of their restoration to the land, the Lord's people will **increase greatly** (cf. [Jer.] 23:3; Ezek 36:11; Hos 1:10 [2:1 MT]). The phrase '**in those days**' (vv.16, 18) clearly refers to **messianic times** (cf. [Jer.] 30:24; 31:27, 29, 31, 33, 38)." (Bold emphasis added, 6:401)
 - b. This **foreshadows** Jeremiah's promise of a **new covenant** (Jer. 31:31-34)

- c. *F. B. Huey, Jr.*: “The ark of the covenant is **first mentioned** in Exod 25:10-22; it was **constructed** in the desert (Exod 37:1-9). It was **captured** in battle by the Philistines (1 Sam 4:10-11) but **returned** by them to Beth Shemesh (1 Sam 6:13-16). It was later **removed** to Kiriath Jearim (1 Sam 7:1) and taken by David to **Jerusalem** (2 Sam 6:1-15). It was placed in **Solomon’s Temple** (1 Kgs 8:5-6) and **last mentioned** in 2 Chr 35:3. It was either **destroyed** or taken to Babylon as a **trophy** of war in 587 B.C. Second Maccabees 2:4-7 says that Jeremiah **hid it in a cave** where it will remain undiscovered until God regathers his people. Revelation 11:19 mentions the **‘ark of his covenant’ in God’s temple in heaven**, an archetype or heavenly counterpart of the earthly ark in Jerusalem.” (Bold emphasis added, 16:75, n. 46)
- d. The ark of the covenant symbolized **YHWH’s presence** with His people (cf. Ex. 25:22; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Ki. 19:15; 1 Chr. 28:2; Psa. 80:1)
- e. The time is coming when the symbols of God’s presence will **no longer be needed** because God Himself will be **present** in their midst (cf. Rev. 21:22-23)
2. Jerusalem will be called **“the Throne of the Lord”** (Jer. 3:17)
- a. *J. A. Thompson*: “The function formerly played by the Ark, that is, **Yahweh’s throne**, the symbol of Yahweh’s presence (Lev. 16:2, 13; 2 K. 19:15; Ps. 80:2 [Eng. 1]), will be played by **Jerusalem** itself (cf. Ezek. 48:35).” (Bold emphasis added, 203)
3. All nations shall be **gathered to Jerusalem** (Jer. 3:17; 50:4-5; cf. Isa. 11:10-16; Ezek. 37:15-28; Hos. 2:2; 3:5; Mic. 2:12; Zech. 8:20-23)
- a. *J. A. Thompson*: “Jerusalem, in virtue of its new splendor, will become the **focal point** for the **worship** of the **nations** (cf. Isa. 2:2-3 = Mic. 4:1-2; Isa. 56:6-8; 60:11-14; etc.).” (Bold emphasis added, 203)
4. No more will they follow the dictates of their **evil hearts** (Jer. 3:17)
- a. *J. A. Thompson*: “In these days the nations will cease stubbornly following their own wicked ways....” (Bold emphasis added, 203)
5. The house of Judah will **walk** with the house of Israel (cf. Jer. 3:18; 31:31-33; Isa. 11:10-16; Ezek. 37:15-28; Hos. 1:11; 3:5; Mic. 2:12)
- a. The coming of Israel and Judah from the **land of the north** assumes the **prior exile** of both kingdoms
6. They will come together out of the land of the north to the **land** given as an **inheritance** to their fathers (Jer. 3:18)
- a. *Barclay M. Newman Jr. & Philip C. Stine*: “**The land of the north** here includes both *Assyria* and *Babylonia*, reflecting the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. and the fall of Jerusalem in

586 B.C. These were the lands to which Israel and Judah were carried into exile....” (Italics added, 108)

- b. The writer of Hebrews explains that Abraham was looking for a **“heavenly country”** (Heb. 11:16)
 - c. Christians are citizens in the **“heavenly Jerusalem”** (Heb. 12:22)
 - e) I believe these are **spiritual promises** that would be **spiritually fulfilled** in the **spiritual land** occupied by **spiritual Israel** under a **spiritual David** (Jesus, the Messiah)
 1. *John Humphries*: “It becomes clear that Hosea and Jeremiah are looking ultimately to the **messianic hope in the gospel**, as one compares Hosea 1:10-2:1; 2:19-23 and 3:5 with I Peter 2:10; Romans 9:25; and Acts 2:29-36. It may also be helpful to note the **‘latter days’** in Hosea 3:5, comparing that passage with Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:16-17. One other comparison with Hosea and Jeremiah is the promise of the **messianic covenant** (Hos. 2:18; Jer. 31:31-34).” (Bold emphasis added, 24)
4. YHWH requires true **repentance** before there can be **reconciliation** and **rejuvenation** (Jer. 3:19-4:4)
- a. Jeremiah 3:19 is **variously translated** in our English versions
 - 1) Some English versions (KJV; NKJV; YLT) render this verse as a **question** and an **answer**. We might paraphrase the thought like this:
 - a) Question: How can I be reconciled to you?
 - b) Answer: Only through repentance on your part
 - 2) Most English versions (ASV; CSB; ESV; HCSB; LEB; NET; NAB; NASB; NIV; NRSV; RSV) render this verse as a **statement**
 - a) NASB: “Then I said, ‘**How I would set you among My sons** And give you a pleasant land, The most beautiful inheritance of the nations!’ And I said, ‘**You shall call Me, My Father**, And not turn away from following Me.’”
 - 3) Either way, the basic thought is essentially the same
 - 4) With **“My Father,”** either the **literary figure changes** from that of husband and wife to **father and son** (cf. Ex. 4:21-23; Hos. 11:1) or **“My Father”** is a reference to YHWH as **Judah’s husband**⁴²
 - b. YHWH reminds Israel of her **treachery** (Jer. 3:20)
 - c. A **voice** of **weeping** and **supplication** is heard on the desolate heights (Jer. 3:21)
 - 1) This might be interpreted in different ways:
 - a) This is a genuine **psalm of repentance**
 - b) This is a **penitential prayer** offered by Jeremiah for his people to use
 - c) This is Jeremiah’s contemptuous and **mocking portrayal** of the fact of the case

⁴² “Wives in the ancient Near East sometimes called their husbands **Father** as a recognition of their authority.” (CSB Study Bible: Notes, 1144).

- d) This is **supplication** to their idol gods in the high places⁴³
- e) This is **weeping and wailing** because their idol sanctuaries have been destroyed by Josiah (2 Chr. 34:3-7)
- d. YHWH urges Israel to **return**, and He promises **healing** (Jer. 3:22a)
- 1) *Michael Brown*: “To bring out the dynamic force of the Hebrew in v. 22, a literal translation is, ‘**Turn back** [šûbû], O **backturning** children [bānîm šóbābîm]. I will heal your **backslidings** [mešûbôtêkem].’” (Bold emphasis added, 7:118)
- e. Israel **responds** to YHWH’s appeal (Jer. 3:22b-25)
- 1) In this confession:
- a) They come to **YHWH**, because He is their God (Jer. 3:22)
- b) They acknowledge that it is **vain** to hope for **salvation** from the hills and mountains [i.e. the high places where idols were worshipped] (Jer. 3:22)
1. **Idols** cannot save; only **God** can
- c) They acknowledge that **shame** has devoured their labors from their youth (Jer. 3:24)
1. This is probably a reference to **Baal** under the substitute name **shame** [bošet] (cf. Jer. 11:13; Hos. 9:10)
- a. **Ishbosheth** [“man of shame”] (2 Sam. 2:10) = **Esh-baal** [“man of Baal”] (1 Chr. 8:33)
- b. **Mephibosheth** (2 Sam. 9:6) = **Meribaal** (1 Chr. 8:34)
- c. **Jerubbesheth** (2 Sam. 11:21) = **Jerubbaal** (Jdg. 9:1)
2. “**Our youth**” may refer to **Israel’s childhood as a nation** when YHWH called them from Egypt
- a. They had practiced **idolatry** there (Ezek. 20:5-10)
- d) They **confess** their sin and disobedience (Jer. 3:25; cf. Jer. 7:23-28)
- 2) This has been variously interpreted:
- a) It is a **prophetic perfect** expressing **certainty** that something will take place because God has said it will
- b) It is an **ideal confession** expressing what God wanted to hear
1. *James E. Smith*: “Jeremiah provided for the penitent a **model prayer** by which they might present appropriately their petition before the Lord.” (Bold emphasis added, 202)
- c) It is a **denial of the accusation** of faithlessness
- d) It is a **superficial expression of repentance** that took place during Josiah’s reign with no lasting effect

⁴³ “At issue here is whether the supplication is made to Yahweh in repentance because of what they have done or whether it is supplication to the pagan gods which is evidence of their perverted ways. The reference in this verse to the hilltops where idolatry was practiced according to [Jer.] 3:2 and the reference to Israel’s unfaithfulness in the preceding verse make the latter more likely.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

- e) It is a **confession of genuine repentance** (Huey, Jr. 78)
- f. YHWH responds with a promise of **reconciliation** if their **repentance** is genuine (Jer. 4:1-2)
- 1) **“Israel”** could be the **northern kingdom**, but it is perhaps more likely a reference to the **southern kingdom** before her exile
 - a) **“For”** ties the message to the men of Judah and Jerusalem with the preceding message to “Israel” (Jer. 4:3)
 - 2) If you will return, return to **ME** (cf. Jer. 3:7, 12, 14, 22)
 - a) Perhaps this means:
 1. If you will return to the **Promised Land**, return to Me
 2. If you will return, **be sure it is to Me**, not anyone or anything else
 3. If you will return, **get on with it**. Don’t dilly dally around
 - 3) If you **put away** your **abominations** [i.e. idols (2 Ki. 23:13, 24)], you shall not be **moved**
 - a) Genuine repentance means the **cessation of sin** (Pr. 28:13; Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 18:30; Mt. 12:41 & Jon. 3:10; Rev. 9:20-21)
 - b) There could be **no divided loyalty** between YHWH and other gods (Ex. 20:3-4)
 - 4) You shall swear **“The Lord lives”**
 - a) *Barclay M. Newman Jr. & Philip C. Stine*: “Often when people wished to **swear** or declare that something they said was really true, they would declare it so by saying **As the Lord lives**, meaning ‘*as surely as the Lord lives.*’ Thus to **swear** by the name of the Lord is to *acknowledge his existence*, and to *accept him as your God*. Evidently the people had either been *swearing by Baal*, or else they had *sworn by the Lord but not really meant it.*” (Italics added, 118)
 - b) *J. A. Thompson*: “[O]nly those who acknowledge Yahweh as God are entitled to **take an oath** in his name and provide the nations with **grounds for exalting** in Yahweh.” (Bold emphasis added, 212)
 - c) *J. A. Thompson*: “*As Yahweh lives* was the **usual formula** for an oath in ancient Israel. But it was never intended for use by those who **rejected Yahweh’s sovereignty.**” (Bold emphasis added, 212)
 - 5) The nations will **bless themselves** in Him (cf. Psa. 103:21-22; Zech. 8:20-23; 14:16-21)
 - a) *J. A. Thompson*: “[T]hey will discern in the example of Israel that the **source of true blessing** lies in **Yahweh** and that he dispenses his blessings to those who are **obedient** to his covenant...” (Bold emphasis added, 213)
 - b) *J. A. Thompson*: “[T]rue repentance on Israel’s part would have **far-reaching consequences** not merely for **Israel** but also for **mankind** in general (cf. Isa. 42:6; 49:6).” (Bold emphasis added, 213)
 - c) *Charles Feinberg*: “When the **nations** are being **blessed**, the **Abrahamic blessing** is being **realized** (cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; see also Isa 2:3; Zech 8:20-23).” (Bold emphasis added, 6:405)

- g. YHWH urges the men of Judah and Jerusalem to manifest **genuine repentance** (Jer. 4:3-4)
- 1) YHWH requires the **same thing** of Judah as He requires of Israel: **repentance**
 - 2) Their genuine repentance is **metaphorically** described:
 - a) They must **plow up** their unplowed ground (cf. Hos. 10:12)
 1. *F. B. Huey, Jr.*: “[This is] land that has **never been plowed** or has not been **cultivated recently**” ((Bold emphasis added, 16:79)
 2. *J. A. Thompson*: “The instruction does not refer to ground that has lain **untilled** for a long time and has **grown hard** so that it must be broken up again. The Hebrew verb and its cognate noun refer to **virgin soil**. The command is therefore to **break new soil**” (Bold emphasis added, 214)
 3. *Michael Brown*: “The meaning is to **awaken** the spiritually dull areas in their lives, to **dig afresh** the wells of their faith, to **become sensitive** again to the voice of God.” (Bold emphasis added, 7:121)
 - b) They must not sow among the **thorns**
 - c) They must **circumcise** their hearts to YHWH (cf. Dt. 10:16; 30:6; Rom. 2:28-29; Ezek. 18:31)
 - 3) **Genuine repentance** is the only way to **avert YHWH’s fiery fury** (cf. Jer. 21:12)
 - a) If/when this fire comes, it cannot be **extinguished** (cf. Jer. 7:20; Amos 5:6; Isa. 1:31)
 - b) God’s judgment will come because of His people’s **evil deeds** (cf. Dt. 28:20; Hos. 9:15; Jer. 21:12; 23:2, 22; 25:5; 26:3; 44:22)

H. Malachi 2:10-16⁴⁴

1. The scholars say that this passage is a *crux interpretum*. Since I am not a scholar, I will say that it is a real “**sticky wicket**.” In fact, it is one of the stickiest
 - a. *Andrew E. Hill*: “Biblical scholars are unanimous in their assessment of Malachi 2:10-16 as **a notoriously difficult passage to interpret**. Both textual corruption and grammatical anomaly combine to make this disputation **the most problematic** of Malachi’s oracles” (Bold emphasis added, 28:317)
2. Several **challenges** confront the interpreter of this passage:
 - a. First, who is **the speaker** in Malachi 2:10?
 - 1) The **prophet**
 - 2) The **community**
 - 3) Those involved in **mixed marriages**
 - b. Second, who is being **addressed**?

⁴⁴ *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “This pericope is regarded as the most difficult in the book of Malachi. It poses many and various problems with regard to the translation and interpretation of its contents, and in connection with questions pertaining to the *Sitz im Leben*, the context, and the general theme of this prophetic discourse.” (263).

- 1) The **priests**
 - a) The **absence of a vocative** (cf. Mal. 1:6; 3:6) might suggest that the **priests**, who were addressed in the previous section, are still being addressed
- 2) The **community**
 - a) There are several indications that the community is being addressed: **“we all”** (v. 10); **“Judah”** (v. 11); **“in Israel and in Jerusalem”** (v. 11); **“Judah”** (v. 11); and **“the tents of Jacob”** (v. 12) (Clark & Hatton, 410)
- c. Third, **how** is the text to be understood?
 - 1) There are several **textual difficulties** in this passage
 - 2) Are the described relationships **literal** or **figurative**?
 - a) If **figurative**, then this passage is talking about **apostasy**, not necessarily marriage and divorce
 - b) If **literal**, then this passage is talking about **marriage, women, divorce**, and the **negative consequences** for subsequent generations (Clark & Hatton, 410)
 - 3) There are **intertextual challenges** related to other OT passages (cf. Dt. 24:1-4; Ezra 9:1-15; Neh. 13:23-30)
- d. Fourth, how does Malachi 2:10-12 **relate** to Malachi 2:13-16 with reference to content and addressees? (Jacobs, 235-236)
3. Malachi brings his **first charge** against his people (Mal. 2:10-11)
 - a. Before he explicitly indicts his people, he asks **three questions** (Mal. 2:10)
 - 1) Have we not all **one Father**? (cf. Mal. 1:6)
 - a) This is a **rhetorical question** that presupposes an **affirmative answer** (Verhoef, 265)
 - b) Who is this **“one Father”**? Various answers have been given:
 1. **Adam**
 2. **Abraham** (cf. Josh. 24:2-3; Isa. 51:2)
 3. **Jacob** (cf. Isa. 58:14; Mal. 1:2; 2:12; 3:6)
 4. **Levi**
 5. **God**
 - a. God has already identified Himself as **Father** in Malachi (Mal. 1:6)
 - b. Other **OT passages** portray God as Father (e.g., Ex. 4:22-23; Dt. 32:6, 18; Isa. 1:2; 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9)
 - c. *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “The clauses’ **parallel structure**, their **order** in the MT, and the antithetical **‘daughter of a foreign god’** in v. 11 argue for the identification of **‘one Father’** and **‘one God.’** Reference to the **‘covenant of our fathers’** also makes it unlikely that the singular **‘father’** would refer to one with whom God made a covenant....” (Bold emphasis added, 322, n. 3)

1. *Craig A. Blaising*: “The reference to **one Father** is probably parallel to **one God** so that ‘Father’ refers to God (cf. 1:6), not to Abraham, as some suggest.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1580)

2) Has not **one God created us**?

a) This also is a **rhetorical question** that expects an **affirmative answer**

b) Although God is the Father of **all** through **creation** (cf. Acts 17:29; Eph. 3:14-15), the primary focus in this context is **God’s Fatherhood of Israel**

1. *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “The ‘**one another**’ in v. 10b refers to **participants** in ‘the covenant of our fathers’ and thus the **people of Israel**.” (Bold emphasis added, 21A:322)

2. “The reference to the **covenant** in v. 10 as well as to **Israel and Judah** (v. 11) makes it clear that the referent of ‘we’ is **God’s elect people**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)

c) Israel was **God’s son** in a special sense (cf. Ex. 4:22-23; Dt. 32:6, 18; Isa. 43:1, 15; 44:1-2; 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 2:27; 3:4, 19; 31:9; Hos. 11:1; Mt. 6:9)

1. “**One God**” may be an allusion to the **creedal statement** of Dt. 6:4-5

d) In the OT, **God** is always the **subject** of the verb “**create**” (*bara*), and this suggests His **sovereignty** (cf. Isa. 45:7-8) (Taylor & Clendenen, 21A:324)

e) *Craig A. Blaising*: “The fact that God had created Israel to be a **distinct people** on the earth (cf. Amos 3:2) formed the **background** for the **problem** Malachi now discussed (Mal. 2:10-16).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1580)

f) *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “The first two questions (forming an **antithesis**) set up the contrasting third question (the **thesis**), which **introduces** another section charging Judah with wrongdoing.” (Bold emphasis added, 21A:322)

g) These first two questions serve to **highlight** the seriousness of the **charge** that follows (Taylor & Clendenen, 21A:322)

3) Why do we **deal treacherously** with one another By **profaning the covenant** of the fathers?

a) This is a **real question** that **logically follows** the two preceding rhetorical questions

1. Malachi’s use of the first-person plural pronoun “**we**” does not imply his **involvement** in the sins he denounces

2. *Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen*: “Its use by the prophet in the charge against Judah is made appropriate by **its use in the previous two rhetorical questions** stressing the unity of God’s people. It recalls the concept of **corporate responsibility** found elsewhere in the Old Testament as well as a **prophet’s identification** with his audience (e.g., Josh 7:11-13; Ezra 9:6-15; Neh 1:6-7; Jer 14:7, 20; Dan 9:4-19).” (Bold emphasis added, 21A:328)

- b) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “*Bāgaḏ* signifies ‘to **cover** or **cloak** [*begeḏ*] things over, and so to **act falsely**, **perfidiously**, to **break faith**.’” (Bold emphasis added, 267)
1. Mistreatment of a **spouse** (Ex. 21:8; Mal. 2:14-16)
 2. Mistreatment of **people** in general (Jdg. 9:23; Psa. 73:15)
 3. Mistreatment of **God** (Jer. 3:8, 11, 20; 5:11; 9:2; Hos. 5:7; 6:7)
- c) To profane means to **fail to acknowledge as holy** (Hill, 318)
- d) The “**covenant of the fathers**” has been variously understood as:
1. The **Abrahamic** covenant (cf. Gen. 12:1-3)
 2. The **Sinai** covenant (cf. Ex. 19:5-6; Dt. 29:25; Jdg. 2:20; 1 Ki. 8:21; Jer. 31:32; 34:13)
 3. The covenant with **Levi** (cf. Mal. 2:4)
 - a. Since the **audience** has broadened from the **priests** to the **whole nation**, this does not refer to **God’s covenant with Levi** (Taylor & Clendenen, 21A:327)
- e) The echo of **Deuteronomic language** in this passage and the explicit obligations of the **Mosaic law** likely indicate that this is a reference to the **covenant at Sinai** (Mal. 4:4) (Hill, 28:319)
1. *Note*: Malachi uses the term “**fathers**” to refer to the **Exodus generation** (Mal. 3:7)
 2. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “By **breaking their promises** to each other, the people were in effect **disobeying the terms of the covenant** that God had made with the nation, in which he commanded them to **preserve one another’s rights** (Exo 20:12-17).” (Bold emphasis added, 412)
- f) Having God as their **Father** and being **created** by Him, should have produced **faithfulness** to Him and also to one another (Taylor & Clendenen, 21A:325)
1. *Eugene H. Merrill*: “The fact that God is the **Father** of the nation obviously leads to the conclusion that his **children** are **brothers** and **sisters**. How, then, can they **act so treacherously** against each other?” (Bold emphasis added, 8:854)
 2. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “It is because the people all have the **same relationship with God** that they ought to be **honest** and **reliable** in their dealings with each other.” (Bold emphasis added, 411-412)
- g) *Craig A. Blaising*: “The concern of this oracle is the **people’s unfaithful activity** in their relationships with one another.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1580)
1. “**Deal[t] treacherously**” is mentioned **5x** in this dispute (Mal. 2:10, 11, 14, 15, 16)
 - a. *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “The word describes either **violation of a covenant** (Jdg 9:23; cf. 9:3, 6) or an **act of betrayal or treachery** in a relationship that calls for

loyalty, kindness, and service (cf. Job 6:15; Jer 12:6; Lam 1:2).” (Bold emphasis added, 21A:326)

2. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “By **breaking their promises** to each other, the people were in effect **disobeying the terms of the covenant** that God had made with the nation, in which he commanded them to preserve one another’s rights (Exo 20:12-17).” (Bold emphasis added, 412)

b. Then Malachi identifies **Judah’s sin** (Mal. 2:11)

1) Judah has **dealt treacherously**

a) Judah obviously refers to the **people of Judah**

b) *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “The way the people **behaved toward each other** is a **mirror** of the way they **behaved toward God**.” (Bold emphasis added, 412)

2) Israel and Jerusalem have committed an **abomination**

a) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “*Israel* is here a **parallel description** of *Judah* as the **true people of God** and does not refer to the northern kingdom. *Jerusalem* is the **capital city** and the **religious center** of God’s people, the place of which it is said: ‘My name shall be there’ (1 K. 8:29).” (Bold emphasis added, 268)

1. Israel refers to the **country** as a whole, and Jerusalem is the **capital** of that country

a. “**Judah and Jerusalem**” signifies the **nation** and its **capital** (Mal 3:4; cf. 2 Kgs 23:1; 1 Chr 6:15; 2 Chr 11:14; 20:17; 24:18; 36:4, 10)

2. The people to whom Malachi spoke and wrote would have recognized themselves as the **remnant of Israel** (cf. Mal. 1:1, 5)

3. The **seriousness of this sin** is highlighted by the fact that it was being committed in Jerusalem, the **spiritual center** of the nation

b) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “The Hebrew word *tô‘ēbâ* signifies things and acts which are **abominable** in the sight of God, such as **idolatry, impurity, etc.**” (Bold emphasis added, 268)

1. The term is used of **various kinds of immorality**:

a. **Homosexuality** (Lev. 18:22; 20:13)

b. **Bestiality** (Lev. 18:23, 26-30)

c. **Prostitution** (Dt. 23:17-18)

d. **Child sacrifice** (Dt. 12:31; 18:9-12; 2 Ki. 16:3; Jer. 32:34-35)

e. **Witchcraft** (Dt. 18:9-10)

f. **Occult practices** (Dt. 18:9-12)

g. **Transgender dressing** (Dt. 22:5)

h. **Dishonest business practices** (Dt. 25:13-16; Pr. 11:1; 20:10, 23)

i. **Mistreatment and murder** (Pr. 6:16-19)

- j. **Lying** (Pr. 12:22)
 - k. **Covetousness** (Jer. 6:13-15; 8:10-12)
 - l. **Perversions of justice** (Pr. 17:15)
 - m. **“The Seven Deadly Sins”** (Pr. 6:16-19)
 - n. Etc.
2. The term is also used of **reprehensible religious behavior**:
- a. **Idolatry** (Dt. 7:25-26; 13:14; 17:2-5; 27:15; 32:16; 2 Kgs. 23:13; 2 Chr. 34:33; Isa. 44:19; Jer. 2:7; 16:18; 44:4, 22; Ezek. 6:9, 11; 7:3-9, 20; 8:1-17; 9:4-6; 11:18, 21; 14:3-11; 16:2, 15-26, 36-59; 23:36-39)
 - b. **Sacrificing blemished animals** (Dt. 17:1)
 - c. **Hypocritical worship** (Pr. 15:8; 21:27; 28:9; Isa 1:13)
 - d. Etc.
- 3) Judah has **profaned YHWH’s holy institution**
- a) *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “This is literally ‘the **holiness of Yahweh** [*qōdeš yhw̄h*] which he loves.’” (Bold emphasis added, 21A:331)
 - b) Bible translators have understood the object of Judah’s profanation in various ways:
 - 1. “The **holiness** of Jehovah” (ASV; KJV)
 - 2. The **sanctuary** (CSB; HCSB; ESV; NASB; NIV; LEB; NRSV; RSV) or the **temple** (NAB)
 - 3. “The **holy thing[s]** that the LORD loves” (NET; YLT)
 - 4. “The LORD’s **holy institution** (i.e. marriage [?]) (NKJV)
 - c) **Holiness** (*godes*) could refer to:
 - 1. The **sanctuary** [i.e. the temple] (cf. Psa. 78:68-69)
 - a. The related term “**holy place**” (*miqdas*) is clearly used of the **temple** (Psa. 73:17; Lam. 2:20; Ezek. 48:10)
 - b. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “The line of reasoning is that **marriage** with **non-Jews** leads to **compromise** with **non-Jewish religious practices**, and this **defiles** the **worship** of the Lord. When the priests and Levites are among those who contract such marriages, then the **Temple** itself is also **defiled**.” (Bold emphasis added, 413)
 - 2. The **covenant**
 - a. *Eugene H. Merrill*: “The **parallelism** between ‘Judah has desecrated the sanctuary [lit., profaned the holy thing]’ and ‘has marr[ied] the daughter of a foreign god’ suggests that the ‘holy (thing)’ is **the covenant** itself. By pursuing other gods Israel and Judah have **cut the covenantal bond** that tied them to the Lord. In effect, they have **divorced** him.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:854)

- b. Profaning YHWH's holiness could be parallel with
"profaning the covenant of the fathers" (Mal. 2:10)
3. The **Jewish people** (cf. Ex. 19:6; Lev. 19:2; Dt. 7:6; 14:2; Psa. 114:2; Isa. 6:13; 62:12; Jer. 2:3; Ezra 9:2)
- a. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: "Generally the **'sanctuary of the Lord'** (Heb. *qōdeš*, lit. **'holiness'**) refers to the **temple**. But the context suggests a reference to **'Israel'** as the chosen and holy nation." (Bold emphasis added, 268)
4. The **holy character** of YHWH
5. The **quality of holiness**
6. The quality of **distinctiveness** or **separateness** YHWH desired in Israel (Blaising, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:1580)
7. The **holy institution of marriage** (NKJV)
- d) *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: "The relative clause **which he loves** would apply equally well to the *Temple*, the *people*, or the *institution of marriage*." (Italics added, 413)
- 4) Judah has **married the daughter of a foreign god**
- a) This statement raises some **important interpretive questions**:
1. Is an **ongoing practice** or a **single incident** in view?
 - a. The use of the **plural pronouns** "we" and "us," and the phrase **"one another"** (Mal. 2:10) suggests an ongoing practice (Taylor & Clendenen, 21A:333)
 1. Unless the context indicates that only two individuals are involved (e.g. Gen. 26:31; Ex. 25:20), **"one another"** always implies **more than one occurrence** (e.g. Gen. 37:19; 42:21; 43:33; Ex. 16:15; Lev. 26:37; Ezek. 4:17; Mic. 7:2) (Taylor & Clendenen, 21A:334, n. 51)
 2. Should this marriage be interpreted **literally** or **figuratively**?
- b) The **key term** has been translated:
1. "Daughter of a **foreign god**" (ASV; CSB; ESV; HCSB; LEB; NASB; NIV⁸⁴; NKJV; NRSV; RSV;) or "daughter of a **strange god**" (KJV; YLT)
 2. "Has turned to a **foreign god**" (NET)
 3. "Has married an **idolatrous woman**" (NAB)
 4. "Marrying women who **worship a foreign god**" (NIV)
- c) A "foreign god" (cf. Dt. 32:12; Psa 81:9; Dan. 11:39) was **any god other than YHWH** the God of Israel (cf. Dt. 28:36, 64; 32:16-17, 21, 39)
- d) The expression **"daughter of a foreign god"** has been variously interpreted:
1. A metaphor for a **foreign goddess** or **idolatry** in general
 - a. *Eugene H. Merrill*: "As nations Israel and Judah have married 'the daughter of a foreign god' (v. 11), that is, have

entered into **illicit relationships with other nations** by recognizing and even **embracing their gods** (2 Ki 17:7-23). By doing so, they have, in effect, abandoned the Lord, their true lover, and have gone after gods (Eze 16:15-29; Hos 2:2-7).” (Bold emphasis added, 8:854)

- b. “Marriage is used here as a **metaphor** to describe **Judah’s idolatry**, that is, her **unfaithfulness** to the Lord and ‘remarriage’ to pagan gods. But spiritual intermarriage found expression in literal, **physical marriage** as well....” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)
2. A metaphor for **unholy alliances with heathen nations** through intermarriage
3. A reference to **intermarriage with foreign women**
 - a. Just as Israel were the **sons and daughters of YHWH** (Dt. 32:19), women who worshipped idols were the “**daughter of a foreign god**” (Jer. 2:27)
- e) The expression most likely refers to **mixed marriages with pagan women** who worshipped **false gods**
 1. *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “The **singular ‘daughter’** is used rather than plural not because it refers to a **goddess**...but because the one taking in marriage is the **collective singular ‘Judah’** (cf. Deut 33:7; Jer 14:2; 33:16; 52:27; Nah 1:15[Hb. 2:1]).” (Bold emphasis added, 21A:335, n. 60)
 2. *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “Foreigners are elsewhere referred to as **children** of their god (Num 21:29)....” (Bold emphasis added, 21A:335)
 3. Although there is no indication that **the remnant** that returned from Babylonian exile **practiced idolatry, intermarriage** with foreign women exposed God’s people to **pagan influences** (Taylor & Clendenen, 21A:336)
 - a. *Mignon R. Jacobs*: “The issue is that **exogamous marriages** were a **catalyst** for idolatry.” (Bold emphasis added, 245)
- f) **Intermarriage** with foreigners had been **expressly forbidden** in the law (Ex. 34:11-16; Dt. 7:1-4; Josh. 23:12-13)
- g) **Israel’s history** illustrates the dangers of entering marriages with unbelievers
 1. **Israel** during the time of the Judges (Jdg. 3:5-7; Psa. 106:35)
 2. **Solomon** (1 Ki. 11:4-10)
 3. **Judah** during the time of Jeremiah (Jer. 44:15-19)
- h) **Intermarriage** with foreigners was a **big problem** after the remnant returned from Babylonian Exile (Ezra 9:1-2, 10-12; Neh. 13:23-27)
4. Malachi responds to **the treachery** he has just described with **an imprecation** on anyone who is guilty (Mal. 2:12)
 - a. This verse is extremely difficult to **translate**

- 1) *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “Translation of this verse is extremely difficult. A literal rendering would be something like ‘**May Yahweh cut off to the man who does it, waking and answering, from the tents of Jacob, and presenting an offering to Yahweh of hosts.**’” (Bold emphasis added, 21A:337)
 - b. May YHWH **cut off** from the tents of Jacob
 - 1) This cutting off has been **variously understood** to mean:
 - a) **Execution**: Blotting out or destroying the **evildoer** (cf. Gen. 9:11; Ex. 31:14; Lev. 20:16-17; Josh. 11:21; 1 Ki. 14:10; Zech. 13:8)
 - b) **Extirpation**: Destroying the evildoer’s **descendants** [cf. ESV; HCSB] (cf. Num. 4:18-19; Jdg. 21:5-6; 1 Sam. 2:33; 1 Ki. 21:21; 2 Ki. 9:8)
 - c) **Excommunication**: Banishment from the community (Gen. 17:14; Ex. 12:15; 2 Chr. 26:21)
 1. *Eugene H. Merrill*: “The verb *krt* (‘cut off’...) is a technical term for **excommunication**, removal from the covenantal community.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:854)
 - c. The man who does this, being **awake and aware**
 - 1) *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “The Hebrew is literally ‘everyone who **awakes and answers**’ (NASB) and there is some alliteration (similarity of sound) between the two Hebrew verbs.” (Bold emphasis added, 414-415)
 - 2) The LXX reads: “The Lord will utterly destroy the person who does these things **until** he might even **humble** himself from the tent of Jacob and from bringing a sacrifice to the Lord Almighty”
 - a) “For ‘**answers**’ the LXX suggests an underlying Hebrew text of אָנַח, עֲנֵה (‘*anah*, ‘**to be humbled**’), and then the whole phrase is modified slightly: ‘**until he is humbled.**’ This requires also that the MT אָנַח (‘*er*, ‘**awake**’) be read as אָדָּה (‘*ed*, ‘**until**’; here the LXX reads ἕως, *heōs*). The reading of the LXX is most likely an **alteration to correct** what is arguably a **difficult text.**” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)
 - 3) This expression is **variously translated** in our major English versions:⁴⁵
 - a) “Him that **waketh** and him that **answereth**” (ASV; LEB; NASB)
 - b) “Being **awake and aware**” (NKJV)
 - c) “**Whoever he may be**” (CSB; NIV)
 - d) “**Every last person**” (NET)
 - e) “Any **descendant** of the man who does this” (ESV; HCSB)
 - f) “The **master** and the **scholar**” (KJV)
 - g) “Both **witness and advocate**” (NAB)

⁴⁵ *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “The phrase consists of two coordinated participles (‘*ēr wē’ōneh*) that are variously derived and translated: ‘him that waketh and him that answereth,’ ‘he that calls and he that makes reply,’ ‘the master and the scholar’ (KJV, cf. Vg. ‘*magistrum et discipulum*’), ‘the aroused one and the lover,’ ‘protector and applier,’ ‘protector and oppressor,’ ‘whether nomads or settlers’ (REB). It is also frequently explained and translated through emendation: ‘(hostile) witness and (defending) counsel,’ ‘anyone who gives testimony’ on behalf of the guilty (NIV margin), ‘any to witness or answer’ (NRSV), ‘witness and advocate’ (NJB), ‘root and branch,’ ‘nakedness and improper cohabitation.’” (21A:337-338).

- h) “Any to **witness** or **answer**” (NRSV; RSV)
- i) “**Tempter** and **tempted**” (YLT)
- 4) The **meaning** of this expression has been variously explained since ancient times:
- a) 1st Explanation: It refers to the practice of **learning by memory**, so that the one who **awakes** is the **teacher** and the one who **answers** is the **pupil** (KJV)
1. “The English and Latin Versions proceed on the assumption...that the first verb can be taken actively, ‘**he that awakeneth,**’ the **teacher** being so called as stimulating the **scholar**, who is named ‘**the answerer.**’” (Bold emphasis added, *Malachi*, The Pulpit Commentary, 22)
- b) 2nd Explanation: It refers to the ancient practice of **keeping guard** in a camp, where one person would **call out** and another would **answer**⁴⁶
1. This would fit the reference to the **tents of Jacob** in the preceding line
- c) 3rd Explanation: Based on the text underlying the LXX, it refers to a legal setting that involves a **witness** and an **advocate** (NAB; NRSV; RSV) (Clark & Hatton, 414-415)
1. *Andrew E. Hill*: “The gist of the passage seems to extend the prophet’s curse beyond those who have wrongly divorced their wives to include any who **aid and abet** those in Judah practising intermarriage with non-Hebrews.” (Bold emphasis added, 28:321)
- d) 4th Explanation: This refers to **any descendant** of the offender (ESV; HCSB)
- 5) Whatever the precise meaning of the original, it is generally thought to be a **proverbial expression** intended to express **totality** (a merism)⁴⁷
- a) **Head** and **tail** (Isa. 9:14)
 - b) **Name** and **remnant** (Isa. 14:22)
 - c) **Righteous** and **wicked** (Ezek. 21:3-4)
 - d) **Bond** and **free** (Dt. 32:36; 1 Ki. 14:10; 21:21; 2 Ki. 9:8; 14:26)
 - e) **Native-born** and **stranger** (Num. 15:30)
 - f) **Man** and **beast** (Ezek. 14:13, 17; 25:13; 29:8)
 - g) Etc.
- 6) Several **different emendations** of the text have been proposed:

⁴⁶ “Of the various suggestions offered, the most probable is that it is a military phrase derived from the challenge of the sentinels and the answer thereto, which in time came to denote the whole inhabitants of a camp or city.” (*Malachi*, The Pulpit Commentary, 22).

⁴⁷ “The idea seems to be a merism expressing totality, that is, everybody from the awakener to the awakened, thus ‘every last person who does this’ (NLT similar); NIV ‘whoever he may be.’” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

Pieter A. Verhoef: “Arabic has a similar expression, ‘There is not a caller or one who answers in the city,’ and this means that no living person remains.” (271).

- a) The LXX reads *heōs*, assuming the preposition ‘*ad*, “**until he is cast down**”
- b) Several propose emending ‘*ēr* to read ‘*ēd*, “**witness**” (cf. NRSV)
- c) Some propose “**Er and Onan**” (‘*ēr wə’ōnān*)
- d) On the basis of the targumic reading, Baldwin proposes “**son and grandson**”
- e) Petersen rearranges the text and proposes the reading “**involving nakedness and improper cohabitation**”
- f) Glazier-McDonald proposes “**the aroused one and the lover**” (Jacobs, 236, n. a)

7) This Hebrew phrase has been **explained** in different ways:

- a) It refers to “**son and grandson**”
 - 1. “The Targum and Syriac explain it by ‘**son and son’s son.**’” (Bold emphasis added, *Malachi*, The Pulpit Commentary, 22)
 - 2. This interpretation suggests that God’s punishment will be **transgenerational**
- b) It refers to **Er and Onan** (Judah’s sons who married the foreign woman Tamar) (Gen. 38:6-10)
 - 1. In this interpretation, **Judah is like Er and Onan** who were killed for **marrying a foreign woman**
 - 2. But this interpretation **cannot be correct** for several reasons:
 - a. First, this incident occurred long before God **forbade intermarriage** with foreigners
 - b. Second, Tamar’s descendants Perez and Zerah played a **role** in the history of God’s people
 - 1. Perez was an ancestor of **David** (Ruth 4:18-22) and **Jesus** (Mt. 1:3; Lk. 3:23-33)
 - c. Third, marrying Tamar was not the issue, but Er’s **wickedness** (Gen. 38:7) and Onan’s **disobedience** (Gen. 38:8-10) (Jacobs, 247)

8) The basic idea seems to be that YHWH will **not execute punishment with partiality** (Jacobs, 248)

d. Yet who **brings an offering** to YHWH of hosts

1) This has been understood in at least three different ways:

- a) It could refer to **the offender himself** alone
 - 1. NIV: As for **the man** who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD remove him from the tents of Jacob—even though **he brings an offering** to the LORD Almighty. (cf. CSB; NKJV; YLT)
- b) It could refer to **another person** who aids the offender
 - 1. ASV: Jehovah will cut off, to **the man** that doeth this, him that waketh and him that answereth, out of the tents of Jacob, and him

that offereth an offering unto Jehovah of hosts. (cf. KJV; LEB; NET; NAB; NASB; NRSV; RSV)

2. *Carl Friedrich Keil & Franz Delitzsch*: “The meaning of the whole verse is the following: ‘May God not only cut off **every descendant** of such a sinner out of the houses of Israel, but **any one who might offer a sacrifice for him** in expiation of his sin.’” (Bold emphasis added, 10:651)
3. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “In Hebrew these words describe **another class of helper** that the man with a foreign wife will be deprived of. There will be nobody in his family **to bring an offering** to the Lord.” (415)

c) It could refer to **any descendant** of the offender

1. ESV: May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob **any descendant** of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts! (HCSB)
 - 2) Committing this sin and then bringing an offering to YHWH of hosts was the **height of hypocrisy** (cf. Mic. 6:6-8)
5. Malachi brings a **second charge** against his people (Mal. 2:13-14)
- a. At least three things tie Malachi 2:13-16 with Malachi 2:10-12:
 - 1) The **“one” motif**: one father (v. 10); one god (v. 10, 15); and the One (v. 16)
 - 2) The references to **“covenant”**: “the covenant of the fathers” (v. 10) and “wife by covenant” (v. 16)
 - 3) The phrase **“deal[t] treacherously”** (v. 10, 11, 14, 15, 16) (Jacobs, 252)
 - b. This is the **second thing** you do (Mal. 2:13a)
 - 1) *Mignon R. Jacobs*: “The LXX reads **‘I hate’** (presuming *sānē’ū*, the first-person form of *sānē*, ‘to hate’) rather than the ordinal number *šēnīt*, ‘second.’ This appears to be a **harmonization** with Mal 2:16. There are two options for translating *šēnīt*: (1) **‘again, the second time’**.... (2) **‘second act or thing’**....” (Bold emphasis added, 194)
 - 2) *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “The sense of **again** is related to *logic* rather than *time*. The meaning is not ‘This is something you do a *second time*’ or ‘This is what you do *next*,’ but rather, as in TEV, ‘This is *another thing* you do.’” (Italics added, 416-417)
 - c. You **cover the altar** of YHWH with **tears**.... (Mal. 2:13b)
 - 1) **Whose tears** are these? Various answers have been given:
 - a) **Worshippers** engaged in some kind of **pagan ritual** that had been reintroduced into postexilic Judah (cf. 1 Ki. 18:26-30; Ezek. 8:14)
 1. This explanation **cannot be correct** for several reasons:
 - a. First, it is **YHWH’s altar**, not a pagan one that is in view
 - b. Second, the claim that Judah was practicing pagan worship at YHWH’s altar would make the problem of divorce a **third thing**, not a **“second thing”**

- c. Third, Malachi's countrymen ask, "**For what reason?**" which suggests that their **transgression** has not yet been **named**
- d. Fourth, the reply they receive says nothing about **ritual weeping**
- e. Fifth, the focus is on the **betrayal** of "the wife of your youth"
 1. The "second thing" refers to **the entirety** of verses 13-14 (Taylor & Clendenen, 21A:343-344)

b) **Divorced wives** who were **seeking justice** from YHWH

1. "The picture he exhibits is that of a multitude of **repudiated wives** coming to the temple with **weeping** and **lamentation**, and **laying their cause** before the Lord." (Bold emphasis added, *Malachi*, The Pulpit Commentary, 22)
2. *Carl Friedrich Keil & Franz Delitzsch*: "They cover the altar of Jehovah with tears, namely, by compelling the wives who have been put away to **lay their trouble before God** in the sanctuary." (Bold emphasis added, 10:651)

c) **Offerors** who realize that YHWH **no longer accepts** their sacrifices with pleasure

1. *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: "The weeping and groaning of Malachi's contemporaries did not result as it should have from their **repentance** (cf. 1 Kgs 8:33-39//2 Chr 6:24-31; Pss 80; 126; Isa 22:12; Joel 1:13; 2:12-17) but from their **grief** or even **anger** at the **Lord's refusal to accept their offerings** (cf. Cain's response in Gen 4:4-5)." (Bold emphasis added, 21A:345)
2. Perhaps they **recognized YHWH's rejection** of their sacrifices because of **failed crops** (cf. Mal. 3:10-12)
3. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: "Their religious activities amounted to **nothing**. The communication with the Lord was **broken**. That is why they now **cover the altar with tears**, with **weeping** and **wailing**. We have every reason to believe that this sorrow did not come from a **broken spirit** and a **contrite heart**. It was not a '**godly sorrow**' that brings **repentance** and leads to **salvation** (2 Cor. 7:10; cf. Hos. 7:14), but rather a '**worldly sorrow**,' such as that of **Cain** (Gen. 4:13, 14)." (Bold emphasis added, 273)
4. This passage picks up the theme of **useless offerings** mentioned earlier (Mal. 1:6-14)

d. YHWH does not **accept** their offerings anymore (Mal. 2:13c)

- 1) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: "The compound Hebrew word *mē'ên* can denote either **cause** or **effect**, either '**so that there is not**,' or '**because there is not**.' The second alternative is favored by the context. God has **turned himself away** from the offerings and **does not accept them** with pleasure from their hands." (Bold emphasis added, 272-273)
 - a) "**Insomuch**" (ASV; KJV)
 - b) "**Because**" (CSB; ESV; HCSB; LEB; NET; NAB; NASB; NIV; NRSV; RSV; YLT)

- c) “So” (NKJV)
- 2) *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “In Hebrew the relationship of the second half of the verse with the first is *ambiguous*. A large majority of scholars and versions understand that the second half states *the reason* for the behavior described in the first half, and so they say **because ...** (so TEV, CEV). Others understand the sense to be that the people’s tears are *not effective* in gaining the Lord’s favor, so they translate ‘*but he still refuses ...*’ (NEB/REB, NOB). Others again follow the Latin Vulgate in interpreting the second half of the verse to state *the result* of the behavior in the first half. Thus NJPSV has ‘*so that He refuses to regard the oblation any more,*’ and NKJV has ‘*So He does not regard the offering anymore.*’” (Italics added, 417)
 - 3) Their **offerings** were **detestable** to YHWH because their **behavior** was **detestable** (cf. Jer. 6:19-20; 14:10-12; Amos 5:21-24)
- e. Malachi answers **His people’s question** about their rejected offerings (Mal. 2:14)
- 1) The question, “**For what reason?**” represents **Judah’s bewilderment** at YHWH’s rejection of their sacrifices
 - a) Malachi’s people ask **similar questions** throughout the book (cf. Mal. 1:2, 6, 7; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13, 14)
 - 2) So, Malachi **answers their question**, thus explaining YHWH’s dissatisfaction with their sacrifices
 - 3) Husbands have **dealt treacherously** with their wives
 - 4) YHWH has been a **witness** to their treachery
 - a) He had witnessed their **marriage vows** or **covenant** with one another
 1. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “[T]he Lord is the **witness, guarantor, and protector** of every legal transaction, and this includes the marriage ‘contract’ (cf. Gen. 31:48–54).” (Bold emphasis added, 274)
 - b) He was also a witness to their **treachery**
 - 5) They have **dealt treacherously** with:
 - a) The wife of [their] **youth** (cf. Pr. 2:17; 5:18; Joel 1:8)
 1. Perhaps the chorus of Sonny James’ #1 country hit *Young Love* (1957) best expresses the idea
 - a. “Young love (young love), first love (first love)
Filled with true devotion
Young love (young love), our love (our love)
We share with deep emotion”
 2. They were **turning their backs** on that **true devotion** to their first love
 - b) Their **companion**
 1. The term “**companion**” (*haberet*) suggests “**mutuality** and an **affinity** formed through **shared experience or values**” (Bold emphasis added, Jacobs, 257)
 2. She was not “**property**” to be discarded at will (Hill, 323)
 - c) Their **wife by covenant** (Pr. 2:17; Ezek. 16:8)

1. This “**covenant**” has been interpreted in two ways:
 - a. The **marriage** covenant
 - b. The covenant between **God and Israel**
2. There are good reasons to believe that this “covenant” is the **marriage covenant**, not the national covenant
 - a. First, Malachi refers to **different covenants**, not just one:
 1. God’s covenant with **Israel** (Mal. 2:10)
 2. God’s covenant with **Levi** (Mal. 2:4-5, 8)
 3. Your **wife** by covenant (Mal. 2:14)
 - b. Second, YHWH is a “**witness**” to this covenant, not a covenant partner
 - c. Third, the term designating the wife as a “**companion**” (or partner) “frequently designates persons who have come into association by an **agreement** or **contract**”
 - d. Fourth, the expression “**dealt treacherously**” suggests **infidelity** against a **covenant partner**
 1. Note: Sometimes YHWH is the **covenant partner** (cf. Jer. 3:20)
 - e. Fifth, in expressions parallel to “wife of your covenant,” the **covenant** is always between the **governing noun** (“wife” in this case) and the **genitive noun or pronoun** (“your” in this case)
 1. **Keepers** of his covenant (Psa. 25:10; 103:18)
 2. **Possessors** of Abraham’s covenant (Gen. 14:13)
 3. “**Men** of your covenant” (Obad. 7)
 - f. Sixth, other OT passages describe **marriage as a covenant** (Pr. 2:17; Ezek. 16:8, 59-62; Hos. 2:16-20)
3. This threefold description emphasizes the **closeness** and the **intimacy** that should characterize the marriage relationship, and it makes the **treachery of divorce** all the more **odious** (Hill, 28:324)
4. Sadly, today all too many who say, “I do” **DON’T!**
6. Malachi asks **two questions** (Mal. 2:15a)
 - a. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “The first half of this verse is one of the **most obscure places** in the Old Testament, and is extremely difficult to make sense of. The problems are very old ones, and none of the **ancient versions**

seems to have followed a **Hebrew text exactly the same** as the one printed in BHS.” (Bold emphasis added, 420) ⁴⁸

b. Note: There are **several textual difficulties** in this verse:

- 1) First, there are several places where the actual **consonants** of the Hebrew text are uncertain
- 2) Second, there are some places where modern scholars have suggested that the **vowel points** of the Masoretic text should be changed
- 3) Third, there are problems of **grammar** and **sentence structure**
 - a) Example: It is not clear whether the word “one” (Mal. 2:15) is the **subject** or the **object** of the verb “make”
 1. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “The word ‘one’ again can be taken as **subject**, presupposing **God** (so RSV, NEB, NIV), or it may be the **object** of the verb, the subject (God) being understood: ‘did he not make one?’” (Bold emphasis added, 276)
 - b) It is not clear how many **sentences** there are
- 4) Fourth, it is not always clear **who** is being referred to
 - a) Example: Who is the “**one**”?
 1. **God**
 2. **Man**
 - a. **Abraham**
 - b. A man of **sound judgment**
- 5) Fifth, it is not always clear whether the sentences are **statements** or **questions** or a **mixture** of the two
 - a) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “The Vulgate and Peshitta, followed by the RSV and NIV among others, render it as a **question**: ‘And did he not make one?’ (RSV). In the text itself we have **no indication of a question.**” (Bold emphasis added, 276)
- 6) Sixth, it is not certain **how Mal. 2:13-16 fits** in to the flow of the argument (Clark & Hatton, 420)

⁴⁸ “*Heb* ‘and not one has done, and a remnant of the spirit to him.’ The very elliptical nature of the statement suggests it is proverbial.” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

Markus Zehnder: “In all probability the text in its masoretic form has to be considered as corrupt. It is only with great difficulty, assuming different grammatical irregularities and logical inconsistencies, that the given shape of the MT can be read in a sensical way.” (236).

Pieter A. Verhoef: “[I]t is impossible to make sense of the Hebrew as it stands, especially in v. 15a. . . . The wording of this text is grammatically and syntactically incomplete. None of the ancient versions has an appropriate rendering. Endeavors to emend the text are numerous, but none can be considered an absolute and objective solution to the various problems of v. 15.” (275).

“The passage has always been a crux, and has received many interpretations.” (*Malachi*, *The Pulpit Commentary*, 23).

Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen: “[T]he situation is such that any interpretation and translation must be understood to be tentative.” (21A:349).

- c. The **complexities** of this verse are difficult to **enumerate**, much less **understand** and **resolve**⁴⁹
- d. There are **three major views** of this verse: (*King James Version Bible Commentary*, 1853-1854)
- 1) The first view proposes **an alternate reading** and **retranslates** the verse like this: **“And not one hath done so who had a residue of the spirit”**
 - a) According to this view, Malachi is saying that one possessing a **residue** of the **Holy Spirit** would **not divorce** his wife and **remarry** a foreign woman
 - b) Objections:
 1. This **does not fit** into the context
 2. It **does not fit smoothly** with the remainder of the verse (*King James Version Bible Commentary*, 1853)
 - 2) The second view, held by early Jewish Rabbis, understands the **“one”** to be **Abraham**
 - a) According to this view, God’s people are appealing to **Abraham’s actions** as **justification** for their actions of **divorce** and **remarriage**
 1. Some argue that **Abraham** had a **remnant** of the **Holy Spirit**, and under the Spirit’s ministry, he **took Hagar** because he sought a **godly seed**
 2. Others argue that having a **remnant** of the **Holy Spirit** and seeking a **godly seed**, explain why Abraham **dismissed Hagar** (i.e. because God promised to give him this “godly seed” through Isaac, not Ishmael). Thus, Abraham was simply **acting in obedience** to God’s instructions (cf. Gen. 21:12)
 - b) Objections:
 1. This is a very **strained exegesis** at best

⁴⁹ *Richard A. Taylor & E. Ray Clendenen*: “A literal rendering would be ‘And not one [he] did/made, and a remnant of spirit [is/was?] to him [i.e., ‘and he has/had a remnant of spirit’]. And what [is/ was] the one? Seeking seed of God.’ The difficulties here suggest to many the likelihood of textual corruption. As it stands, the syntactical and exegetical problems are legion. Is ‘one’ (*’ehād*) in the first clause the subject or object (or predicate adjective) of ‘did/made’ (*’āsā*)? Does it refer back to *’ehād* in v. 10? If it is the subject, what is the understood object (perhaps ‘it,’ ‘her,’ or ‘them’)? Does ‘one’ refer to God (or to Adam or Abraham, especially if ‘one father’ in v. 10 refers to one of these) or to the marital relationship of v. 14 (perhaps alluding to Gen 2:24) or to the one guilty of unfaithfulness (noting similarities to the curse in v. 12, especially ‘to the man who does it’)? Or is it pronominal with *lō*, ‘not,’ with the sense ‘no one’ (cf. Job 14:4)? If ‘one’ is the object, who is the understood subject of the verb? Does the verb *’āsā* here mean ‘do’ or ‘make’? Is the clause a statement (e.g., ‘And no one did [it]’ or ‘And he did not make one’) or a question (e.g., ‘And did he not make [them] one?’)? In the second clause is the ‘spirit’ (*rūah*) here human or divine? If human does it refer to spiritual insight or creative power? Does the pronoun ‘him’ refer back to ‘one’ or to the subject of ‘did/made’ (if that is different) or to someone or something else? How is this second clause related to the first (adjectival modifying *’ehād* or concessive [‘although ...’])? Should ‘seeking’ (*mēbaqqēš*) be read (against the massoretic accentuation) with the previous words (‘what is the one seeking’) or the following words (‘seeking seed of God’)? Does ‘the one’ (*hā’ehād*) have the same referent as ‘one’ at the beginning of the verse (i.e., God, Adam, Abraham, the guilty person, etc.), or does it refer to someone or something else? What relationship does ‘of God’ have to ‘seed’? Attributive (‘godly seed’) or source (‘seed from God’)? The almost limitless multiplicity of interpretations of this verse result from the various combinations of answers to these many questions. Even more interpretations result from various proposals for emending the verse.” (21A:350-351).

- a. It introduces a **character** not previously in view
2. The **situations** of **Abraham** and the **remnant** in the time of Malachi are **not parallel**
 - a. Abraham did not **divorce Sarah to marry Hagar**. He **took her in addition** to Sarah at Sarah's suggestion (Gen. 16:1-4)
- 3) The third view proposes that the "**one**" is **God**, and this is an allusion to His establishment of the **marriage relationship** in the very beginning (Gen. 2:18, 21-24)
 - a) According to this view, the **original institution of marriage** does not permit the remnant's current **divorce and remarriage practices**
 1. "The thought is that had He so desired, Jehovah could have had the Holy Spirit create **any number of wives** for Adam. **Polygamy is not God's design for marriage**. By divorcing their wives and entering into further marital unions with heathen women, the men of Malachi's day were actually **entering into polygamy**; for **their divorces did not break their former obligations**. Had God intended polygamy, He could have created **multiple wives** for Adam. He did not do this; He created only one." (Bold emphasis added, *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1854)
 - b) Objections:
 1. Although **the bond** continues to exist (Rom. 7:2-3), a sinful divorce **ends** the marriage relationship (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
 2. Therefore, the remnant's **divorce and remarriage** practices would not have constituted **polygamy**
 3. However, **divorce and remarriage** to foreign women would not have been **conducive** to rearing **godly children**
- e. Question 1: But did **He** not make them **one** having a **remnant** of the **Spirit**?
 - 1) If "one" is the **subject** of the verb "make," then "**Has not one made?**"
 - a) This "**one**" in context is a reference to **God**, and the object of the verb must be supplied
 1. NJPS: "Did not the One make [all]?"
 2. NRSV: "Did not one God make **her**?"
 - 2) If "one" is the **object** of the verb "make," then "**Has not he made one?**"
 - a) The "one" is understood as **the object** of the third-person verb form ("he made"), with the implied subject **the Lord** (v. 14) or **one God** (v. 10)
 1. NIV⁸⁴: "Has not [the Lord] made **them one**?"
 2. NIV: "Has not the one God made **you**?"
 3. NAB: "Did he not make **one being**?"
 4. NJB: "Did he not create a **single being**?"
 - 3) Lit. "Even a **residue** of spirit belongs to him"
 - a) *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: "The phrase '**and a residue of spirit to him**' may be taken as qualifying either '**God**' or '**no one**.'"

Only by changing the Hebrew text to **‘flesh,’** instead of keeping **‘residue,’** can the words be taken to qualify an object like **‘Adam.’**”
(Bold emphasis added, 421)

b) Some English versions emend the word **“remnant”** (*se’ar*) to **“flesh”** or **“body”** (*se’er*)

1. NAB: “Did he not make one being, with **flesh** and **spirit**?”
2. NIV: “In **flesh** and **spirit** they are his”
3. NLT: “In **body** and **spirit** you are his”
4. NRSV: “Both **flesh** and **spirit** are his”

c) The term **“spirit”** [*ruah*] could refer to:

1. The **Holy Spirit** (ASV; ESV; NET; NASB; NKJV; YLT)
 - a. But how can there be a **remnant** (which means “to remain or be left over from a larger number or quantity which has in some way been disposed of”) of the **Holy Spirit**? (cf. Num. 11:25) (Verhoef, 276)
2. The **breath of life** (cf. Gen. 2:7) (CSB [?]; HCSB; KJV; LEB; NAB; NIV; NRSV; RSV)
 - a. This **makes sense** in this context
 - b. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “The idea is that God made Adam and Eve **one flesh**, although he had enough **breath of life** (cf. Gen. 2:7) left so that he could have made Adam **more wives.**” (Bold emphasis added, 276)
3. **Intelligence** or **sound judgment** (cf. Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9; Josh. 5:1; 1 K. 10:5; Isa. 19:3) (Verhoef, 276)
- 4) *Andrew Hill*: “The gist of the first portion of verse 15 seems to be that God created man and woman to be **one being** (assuming the marital relationship of Gen. 2:24?), and that **all life belongs to God** (implying that the union of man and woman is fixed in the creation principle and is not to be **violated** or **severed**?).” (Bold emphasis added, 28:325)
- 5) *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “From the multitude of possibilities, the one that is **closest to the Hebrew** as it stands is the one that treats the words as a **statement**, and takes **‘no one’** as the **subject** of the verb ‘has made.’ The second part of the sentence would then function as a **conditional clause**, and the translation would be **‘No one has acted like that if he has a remnant of the spirit.’** **‘Like that’** would refer back to **a man divorcing his first wife**, as described in verse 14. In this context **‘a remnant of the spirit’** is probably best taken as **‘any trace of moral sense’** (MFT) or **‘anything of the principles of the covenant’** (GECL).” (Bold emphasis added, 421)

f. Question 2: Why **one**? He seeks **godly offspring**

- 1) *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “The next words are probably to be taken as a *question* and *answer*, and may be literally rendered: *‘And what does the one seek? Seed of God.’* Those translations that took *‘one’* to refer to *God* in the first part of the verse, do so again here (RSV/NRSV, NEB/REB). Those who translated as *‘no one’* in the first part of the verse take *‘the one’* here to refer to a *person* who has *moral sense* or *loyalty to the*

covenant, and does not divorce his first wife. ‘*Seed of God*’ is generally understood as **Godly offspring** (RSV/NRSV, NAB, NIV, Beck) or better ‘*godly children*’ (NEB/REB, NLT). This means *children born within the covenant community, God’s chosen people....*” (Italics added, 421)

- 2) The **participial form** of “seeks” conveys the sense of God **continually seeking**

g. **Three possible interpretations** might be feasible:

- 1) **Interpretation #1**: God is the **subject** and “one” is understood as “**one flesh**”

a) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “The idea is that **God gave Adam only one wife**, although he had ‘**spirit**’ (Calvin: “overflowing power”) **left** and if need be could have given him **more wives**. God, however, made **two human beings one** with the specific purpose of giving them **godly offspring**. This purpose is contrary to both **divorce** and **mixed marriages**. It is **contrary to divorce** because it does not rest with the husband to act faithlessly with his legal wife. God has made them **one**. It is also **contrary to mixed marriages** because such a marriage cannot yield **godly offspring**.” (Bold emphasis added, 277)

- 2) **Interpretation #2**: The “**one**” refers to **Abraham**, who, some protested, **married Hagar**, and so set a **precedent** for taking a **second wife**

a) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “The prophet would then have replied that Abraham did it for a **different reason**: he sought a **godly offspring**, while you indulge in your own lusts and desires!” (Bold emphasis added, 277)

b) **Objections**:

1. Abraham **did not send away** the “wife of his youth”
2. This does not provide a **strong case** for Malachi’s main argument

- 3) **Interpretation #3**: Paraphrase: “But **no one does it** (as a rule) in whom there is a **remnant of spirit** (intelligence, sound judgment). Yet what does the one (do)? He is seeking **godly offspring**.” (Verhoef, 277)

a) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “In other words the person who **seeks a godly offspring** has **spiritual insight** and **does not violate the marriage** as a divine institution. Such a person **will not send his legal wife away** in order to marry a heathen girl, because he has consideration for the elevated character and purpose of marriage.” (Bold emphasis added, 277)

h. Some say this is the **most difficult verse** in Malachi to **translate**, and this is evidenced by the **various ways** it is translated in our English versions

- 1) ASV: And did **he** not make **one**, although he had the **residue** of the **Spirit**? And **wherefore one**? He sought a **godly seed**. Therefore **take heed** to your **spirit**, and **let none deal treacherously** against the **wife of his youth**.
- 2) CSB: Didn’t **God** make **them one** and give them a **portion** of **spirit**? What is the **one seeking**? **Godly offspring**. So **watch yourselves carefully**, so that **no one acts treacherously** against the **wife of his youth**.
- 3) ESV: Did **he** not make **them one**, with a **portion** of the **Spirit** in their union? And what was the **one God seeking**? **Godly offspring**. So **guard yourselves** in your **spirit**, and **let none of you be faithless** to the **wife of your youth**.

- 4) HCSB: Didn't the **one God** make **us** with a **remnant** of His **life-breath**? And what does the **One** seek? A **godly offspring**. So **watch yourselves carefully**, and **do not act treacherously** against the **wife of your youth**.
 - 5) KJV: And did not **he** make **one**? Yet had he the **residue** of the **spirit**. And wherefore **one**? That he might seek a **godly seed**. Therefore **take heed** to your **spirit**, And **let none deal treacherously** against the **wife of his youth**.
 - 6) LEB: Did not **one God** make **them**? But a **remnant** of *the* spirit is his. And what does the **one God** desire? An **offspring of God**. You must be **attentive to your spirit**, and you must **not be unfaithful** to the **wife of your youth**.
 - 7) NET: No one who has even a **small portion** of the **Spirit** in him **does this**. What did **our ancestor** do when **seeking a child** from God? **Be attentive**, then, to **your own spirit**, for one should **not be disloyal** to the **wife he took in his youth**.
 - 8) NAB: 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 **wife of your youth**.
 - 9) NASB: "But **not one** has done *so* who has a **remnant** of the **Spirit**. And what did *that one* do while **he** was **seeking a godly offspring**? **Take heed** then to your **spirit**, and **let no one deal treacherously** against the **wife of your youth**.
 - 10)NIV: Has not the **one God** made **you**? You belong to him in **body** and **spirit**. And what does the **one God** seek? **Godly offspring**. So be on **your guard**, and **do not be unfaithful** to the **wife of your youth**.
 - 11)NIV⁸⁴: Has not the **LORD** made them **one**? In **flesh** and **spirit** they are **his**. And why **one**? Because he was seeking **godly offspring**. So **guard yourself in your spirit**, and **do not break faith** with the **wife of your youth**.
 - 12)NKJV: But did **He** not make *them* **one**, Having a **remnant** of the **Spirit**? And why **one**? He seeks **godly offspring**. "Therefore **take heed to your spirit**, And **let none deal treacherously** with the **wife of his youth**.
 - 13)NRSV: Did not **one God** make **her**? Both **flesh** and **spirit** are his. And what does the **one God** desire? **Godly offspring**. So **look to yourselves**, and do not **let anyone be faithless** to the **wife of his youth**.
 - 14)RSV: Has not the **one God** made and sustained for us the **spirit of life**? And what does **he** desire? **Godly offspring**. So **take heed** to yourselves, and **let none be faithless** to the **wife of his youth**.
 - 15)YLT: And **He** did not make **one only**, And He hath the **remnant** of the **Spirit**. And what *is* the **one alone**! He is seeking a **godly seed**. And ye have been **watchful over your spirit**, And with the **wife of thy youth**, **None doth deal treacherously**.
- i. There are **several questions** for the interpreter to answer:
- 1) Who is the "**He**"?
 - a) **God**
 - b) **Abraham**
 - 2) Who or what is the "**one**"?
 - 3) What does "**remnant**" mean?

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- 4) What is the “Spirit”?
- a) The **Holy Spirit**?
 - b) The **human spirit**?
 - c) A **particular attitude**?
- j. **Different answers** to these questions have resulted in vastly different **interpretations**
- 1) The “one” is **Abraham**
 - a) Some view Abraham **positively**
 1. “Abraham did not do so, *i.e.* **did not repudiate his legitimate wife**, though barren; and he had a **share of the spirit of right**, or he had **excellence of spirit**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Malachi*, The Pulpit Commentary, 23)
 2. “Abraham at Sarah’s request **took Hagar to wife**, in order to have **the promised seed**; he **dismissed her** in order to carry out the purpose of God in confining the promise to Isaac. Therefore his conduct is **no support** for those who **repudiate their own wives** and **marry strange women**, not to raise up children for God, but to satisfy their carnal lusts.” (Bold emphasis added, *Malachi*, The Pulpit Commentary, 23)
 - a. Would Malachi’s original readers have **understood** this allusion without **further explanation**?
 - b) Others view Abraham **negatively**
 1. *Eugene H. Merrill*: “To make his point, Malachi (in an extremely elliptical Hebrew construction) makes indirect reference to **Abraham** (v. 15). First he points out that **no one would behave as these Jewish men are behaving** if he had in him even the **least bit of the Spirit of God**. What, then, did that ‘one’ (i.e., Abraham) seek? He sought an **offspring from God**. In doing so, he **bypassed his wife**, Sarah, and had a son by his concubine, Hagar. Though clearly there was **no divorce and remarriage** in that case, the way Abraham handled the matter was tantamount to **rejecting one wife and taking another**. **This example**, Malachi says, is a **poor one to set**, one not to be emulated whatsoever.” (Bold emphasis added, 8:856)
 - a. This ingenious explanation seems **highly unlikely**, if not **impossible**, to me
 - 2) The “one” is a **righteous man**
 - a) “The Hebrew may be translated more satisfactorily, ‘**Not any one has done so who has a remnant of the spirit** (*ruach*).’ No one acts as you have done who has in him any of that Divine life which God at first breathed into man; in other words, **no man of conscience and virtue has ever thus divorced his wife**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Malachi*, The Pulpit Commentary, 23)
7. Malachi issues a **command** (Mal. 2:15b)
- a. **Take heed** to your **spirit**

b. Let none **deal treacherously** with the wife of his youth

1) *Andrew E. Hill*: “The construction of the admonition has the force and urgency of **calling a halt to activity already in progress** (‘Stop being faithless!’).” (Bold emphasis added, 28:326)

8. Malachi offers an **explanation** for his previous command (Mal. 2:16)

a. This verse is **variously translated** in our English versions:

1) ASV: For **I hate putting away**, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, and him that **covereth his garment with violence**, saith Jehovah of hosts: therefore **take heed to your spirit**, that ye **deal not treacherously**.

2) CSB: “**If he hates and divorces his wife**,” says the LORD God of Israel, “**he covers his garment with injustice**,” says the LORD of Armies. Therefore, **watch yourselves carefully**, and **do not act treacherously**.

3) ESV: “For the man who **does not love his wife** but **divorces her**, says the LORD, the God of Israel, **covers his garment with violence**, says the LORD of hosts. So **guard yourselves in your spirit**, and **do not be faithless**.”

4) HCSB: “**If he hates and divorces his wife**,” says the LORD God of Israel, “**he covers his garment with injustice**,” says the LORD of Hosts. Therefore, **watch yourselves carefully**, and **do not act treacherously**.

5) KJV: For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that **he hateth putting away**: For one **covereth violence with his garment**, saith the LORD of hosts: Therefore **take heed to your spirit**, that ye **deal not treacherously**.

6) LEB: “For **I hate divorce**,” says Yahweh, the God of Israel, “and he who **covers his clothing with violence**,” says Yahweh of hosts. “You must be **attentive to your spirit** and you **must not be unfaithful**.”

7) NET: “**I hate divorce**,” says the LORD God of Israel, “and the one who is **guilty of violence**,” says the LORD who rules over all. “**Pay attention to your conscience**, and **do not be unfaithful**.”

8) NAB: For **I hate divorce**, says the LORD, the God of Israel, And **covering one’s garment with injustice**, says the LORD of hosts; You must then **safeguard life** that is your own, and **not break faith**.

9) NASB: “For **I hate divorce**,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who **covers his garment with wrong**,” says the LORD of hosts. “So **take heed to your spirit**, that you **do not deal treacherously**.”

10)NIV: “**The man who hates and divorces his wife**,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “**does violence** to the one he should **protect**,” says the LORD Almighty. So **be on your guard**, and **do not be unfaithful**.

11)NIV⁸⁴: “**I hate divorce**,” says the LORD God of Israel, “and I hate a man’s **covering himself with violence** as well as with his **garment**,” says the LORD Almighty. So **guard yourself in your spirit**, and **do not break faith**.

12)NKJV: “For the LORD God of Israel says That **He hates divorce**, For it **covers one’s garment with violence**,” Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore **take heed to your spirit**, That you **do not deal treacherously**.”

13)NRSV: For **I hate divorce**, says the LORD, the God of Israel, and **covering one’s garment with violence**, says the LORD of hosts. So **take heed to yourselves** and **do not be faithless**.

14)RSV: “For **I hate divorce**, says the LORD the God of Israel, and **covering one’s garment with violence**, says the LORD of hosts. So **take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless.**”

15)YLT: For **I hate sending away**, said Jehovah, God of Israel, And He who hath **covered violence with his clothing**, said Jehovah of Hosts, And ye have been **watchful over your spirit**, And ye **do not deal treacherously.**

b. There are **several issues** in this passage:

1) Is the particle *Ki* **conditional** or **causal**?

a) *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “The Hebrew word **Kî** introducing the admonition is rendered by the LXX, Targum, and some modern versions in a **conditional sense**: ‘if a man divorces or puts away his spouse.’ Most modern interpreters and versions prefer the **causal sense**, *For, because*, or they **do not translate it** (cf. NIV).” (Bold emphasis added, 278)

2) Who is doing the **hating**?

a) **God**

1. *Mignon R. Jacobs*: “[O]ne suggestion is to read ‘**I hate,**’ with **Yahweh** as the speaker and subject, followed by the **object**, which is **divorce** (the infinitive construct form of *šālah*). Without the emendation, Yahweh is still the subject of the verb *šānē*, ‘to hate.’” (Bold emphasis added, 261)

2. This interpretation is reflected in **many English versions**

a. Several English versions have God saying, “**I hate divorce**” (ASV; LEB; NET; NAB; NASB; NIV⁸⁴; NRSV; RSV; YLT)⁵⁰

b. Two English versions have God saying that “**he hates divorce**” (KJV; NKJV)

3. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “The Masoretic punctuation of the Hebrew word for *hate* is that of the perfect third person masculine singular: **he hated**. The third person singular, with God as subject, is, however, **contrary to the direct speech**, according to which God is introduced in the first person: *says the Lord*. The alternative is to suggest an **impersonal subject** and to translate: ‘**If one sends away out of hate,**’ or: ‘**If one hates, (let him) send away.**’ The assumption is based upon the LXX and Targum, both of which **justify divorce** when a man **hates** his wife.” (Bold emphasis added, 278)

4. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “[S]uch a reading **undermines** all that the prophet is seeking to convey. Therefore, we prefer the reading according to which **God is the subject**, and **only the Masoretic punctuation is altered** to provide a participle with a suppressed

⁵⁰ “The verb שָׂנֵא (*sane*) appears to be a third person form, ‘he hates,’ which makes little sense in the context, unless one emends the following word to a third person verb as well. Then one might translate, ‘he [who] hates [his wife] [and] divorces her ... is guilty of violence.’ However, it is possible that the first person pronoun אֲנִי (*anokhi*, ‘I’) has accidentally dropped from the text after כִּי (*ki*). If one restores the pronoun, the form שָׂנֵא can be taken as a participle and the text translated, ‘for I hate’ (so NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT).” (*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*).

Mignon R. Jacobs: “BHS suggests *šānēʾtî* (first common singular), ‘I hate,’ in place of *šānē*ʾ (third masculine singular), ‘he hates.’” (252, n. g).

personal pronoun: **‘I hate, I am hating.’** The participle suggests **continuity. The Lord continually and habitually hates.** The object of his hate is denoted in terms of a Piel infinitive construct, *šallah*, **‘to send away.’** In Isa. 50:1 the Hebrew verb has the meaning of **divorce**, in connection with the ‘certificate of divorce.’ The same applies to Deut. 22:19, where *šallah* is used in the sense of **divorce.**” (Bold emphasis added, 278-279)

5. *Andrew Hill*: “The MT, *he hates*, makes good sense if one presumes the **subject** (‘the One’) of the verb has been **intentionally omitted** from verse 15 (‘For [the One] hates divorce’).” (Bold emphasis added, 28:326)

b) The **husband** who is divorcing his wife (cf. Dt. 22:13, 16; Jdg. 15:2)

1. *Mignon R. Jacobs*: “A second suggestion is that the **subject** of *šānē* is not Yahweh but **the man**, and **‘divorce’** is not the **object** of the verb (a noun) but is the second (verb) of a three-verb sequence of interconnected actions: ‘the one who **hates, divorces, and covers** his garment with violence.’” (Bold emphasis added, 261-262)
2. A few English versions have the man **hating** and **divorcing** his wife (CSB; ESV; HCSB; NIV)
3. *E. Ray Clendenen*: “[A]fter a conjunction opening v. 16 (meaning ‘because,’ ‘if,’ ‘when,’ ‘that,’ or ‘indeed’) is a verb that clearly means **‘he hates,’** although most translations change it to **‘I hate.’** But **the subject apparently is the one who ‘acts treacherously,’** and who also **covers his garment with injustice.** The one speaking is **the Lord God of Israel**, and contrary to KJV, NKJV, etc., there is **no indication of indirect discourse** (‘says that’), so **God cannot be the subject of ‘he hates.’** This verse specifies how wives were being betrayed. **Their husbands were ‘hating’ so as to ‘divorce’** (a Hb infinitive) them for no legitimate reason (Dt 24:3), which was a heinous injustice.” (Bold emphasis added, *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, 1472)
4. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “The real problem is that the Hebrew words behind **For I hate divorce** can be taken to mean almost *the opposite* of what RSV says. They could mean *‘If someone hates, let him divorce,’* with the unstated object being *‘his wife’* in both clauses (as brought out in HOTTP, Septuagint, Vulgate, Luther, NEB/REB). If the words carry this meaning, they could be seen as *contradicting the general thrust of Malachi’s argument* through this section. On the other hand, if the rendering of RSV and most other versions is followed, Malachi may appear to be *contradicting the legislation about divorce* in Deut 24:1-4.” (Italics added, 423)
5. *Daniel I. Block*: “In the combination of *šānē* (**‘to hate’**) and *šallah* (**‘to send away/divorce’**), we hear **echoes** of Deuteronomy 24:1-4.” (Bold emphasis added, 561)

3) What does **covering one’s garment with violence** mean?

- a) There are three ways to understand the word **“For”** (*waw*):

1. It is a **simple conjunction** that supplies an **additional practice** that YHWH hates (ASV; LEB; NET; NAB; NASB; NIV⁸⁴; NRSV; RSV; YLT)
 2. It is **causal**, thus indicating a **rationale** for the declaration (KJV; NKJV)
 3. It is **consequential**, thus expressing **the outcome** of a prior action (CSB; ESV; HCSB; NIV) (Jacobs, 262)
- b) If “**violence**” [*hamas*] is the **subject** of the verb, the clause should be translated: “**and violence covers his garment**” (KJV)
1. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “This is then interpreted as a **figurative expression** for all kinds of **gross injustice** which, like the blood of a murdered victim, **leave their mark** for all to see....” (Bold emphasis added, 279)
 2. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “If the words carry their ordinary meaning, then **covering one’s garment with violence** probably carries the idea of *getting blood on a garment* when making a violent attack on someone else. This would be a *second object* of the verb **hate** in the previous clause, and the effect of the whole sentence would be to say that *divorce is as bad as attacking innocent victims.*” (Italics added, 423)
- c) If “**violence**” [*hamas*] is an **accusative**, the clause should be translated: “**and who covers his garment with violence**” (ASV; CSB; ESV; HCSB; LEB; NAB; NASB; NKJV; NRSV; RSV)
1. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “Those versions that, like the Vulgate, translate the previous clause as ‘**if you hate your wife, divorce her**’ treat this clause as the **unwelcome result** of such action and say, ‘**however, iniquity will cover your garment.**’” (Bold emphasis added, 423-424)
- d) “**Garment**” [*lebus*] is interpreted in different ways:
1. It is a figurative expression for **obtaining a wife by covering her** with one’s garment (cf. Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8)
 2. It is a metaphor for a **wife**
 - a. *Pieter A. Verhoef*: “In the **Koran** it is stated that the **wife** is the ‘**garment**’ of the man and vice versa (Sura 2:183). The assumption is that **God hates those husbands** who are **sending away** their legal wives in order to blemish themselves with **frivolous marriages.**” (Bold emphasis added, 279)
 - b. Objections:
 1. The **Koran** was written over **1,000 years after Malachi**
 2. Nowhere in the OT does *lebus* have **such a meaning**, or even a similar one (Verhoef, 297)
 3. It refers to **covering violence** with a garment (KJV)
 - a. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “It is also possible (though much less likely) that the words can mean ‘**cover violence with his garment**’ (compare KJV). This possibility is found in NJB with ‘**I hate divorce ... and people**

concealing their cruelty under a cloak.” (Bold emphasis added, 424)

4. It refers to covering oneself with **violence as with a garment**
 - a. *David J. Clark & Howard A. Hatton*: “Other renderings are ‘**I detest divorce ... and covering oneself with lawlessness as with a garment**’ (NJPSV) and ‘**I hate divorce ... and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment**’ (NIV). These both depend on **adding one letter to the traditional Hebrew text**. Neither rendering however succeeds in showing what the relationship is between divorce and violence, so they cannot be recommended.” (Bold emphasis added, 424)
 5. It refers to **violence** (something else that God hates) to illustrate the severity of God’s hatred of divorce (Verhoef, 279)
 6. It refers to the **violence** committed against the **animals** they sacrificed (cf. Mal. 2:12-13) (Verhoef, 279)
 - a. This explanation seems quite **forced** to me
 - e) Taking it **literally**, the idea is that of **getting blood on a garment** when making a violent attack on someone else (cf. Ps. 73:6)
 - f) Taking it figuratively, the idea is that of **clothing oneself with violence** as one might don a garment
 - g) It might be a figure of speech for **one’s inward character** (cf. NIV) (Hill, 28:326)
 - h) This alludes to the custom of **putting one’s garment over a woman to claim her as a wife** (Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8). **Divorce covers that garment with violence** (*King James Version Bible Commentary*, 1855)
 1. *A. R. Fausset*: “Whereas they ought to have spread the skirt of their garment over their wives, for the **protection** of those so dear, *they covered their garment with violence toward them*. The garment is the symbol of **conjugal faith** and **protection** (see Deut. 22:30; Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8).” (Bold emphasis added, IV:719)
- 4) *Joe Sprinkle*: “But this rendering [‘I hate divorce’ (ASV; LEB; NET; NAB; NASB; NIV84; NRSV; RSV; YLT)] is an **impossible translation** of the MT, one that can only be retained on the basis of **conjectural emendation without any manuscript support**. In the MT the verse reads literally ‘*kī* [a particle with a wide variety of senses] **he** [third person, not first person] **hated/hates** (*sane*) **sending away** (*sallah*), says the LORD.’ It is **not grammatically impossible** to render the verse as a **command** in favor of divorce. Hence some manuscripts of the LXX render ‘**If you hate your wife, put her away,**’ which takes *sallah* as an **imperative** rather than an **infinitive**. However, the LXX rendering **hardly fits the context**, where the divorcing of Jewish wives has already been condemned and where the second half of the verse again expresses a note of disapproval of these divorces.
- “If we keep the MT I would render it something like ‘**When he hates so as to divorce, says the LORD God of Israel, then he covers himself with lawlessness as with a garment.**’ The expression ‘**he hates**’ may relate to the **divorce formula**. In a fifth-century Jewish divorce certificate from

Elephantine in Egypt the divorce formula is **‘I hate my wife’ or ‘I hate my husband’**.... There is **no need to emend Mal 2:16.**” (Bold emphasis added, 539-540)

9. Despite the difficulties of this passage, in both translation and interpretation, the **basic message** of this oracle is clearly twofold:
 - a. God did not want His people to **marry foreigners** (Mal. 2:10-12)
 - b. God did not want His people to **divorce** (Mal. 2:13-16)
 - 1) Divorce is **a treacherous act** in the eyes of God Mal. 2:14
 - 2) Divorce is an act of **“violence”** (ASV; ESV; KJV; LEB; NET; NIV; NKJV; NRSV; RSV; YLT) or **“injustice”** (CSB; HCSB; NAB;) or **“wrong”** (NASB) (Mal. 2:16)
 - a) Just as the **blood** of a murdered victim **covers the garment** of a murderer, **divorce leaves its mark** for all to see (Baldwin, 28:262)
 - 3) YHWH commanded the Israelites **not to deal treacherously** with their wives in divorcing them (Mal. 2:15-16)
 - a) *Joe Sprinkle*: “However one renders v. 16, what is **condemned** in context is not necessarily **every divorce** under **every condition**—as if the text is opposed to the actions of Ezra and Nehemiah—but specifically the **divorce of innocent Jewish wives** simply because their husbands **prefer foreign wives** to their Jewish ones. There are thus two points of condemnation: (1) They are **marrying pagan wives** who will undermine Israel’s religion and their covenant with God, and (2) they are **too cavalier in repudiating without cause** the marriage covenant with their original Jewish wives.
 “We cannot conclude from this verse, however, that **God opposes divorce** in any and every circumstance. The context is a limited one. God is opposed to these particular divorces, not any and every divorce regardless of circumstance.” (Bold emphasis added, 540)

I. How does **Dt. 24:1-4** relate to these other OT passages on MDR?

1. I suppose that some might conclude that YHWH’s repeated request for reconciliation (Jer. 3:7, 12, 14, 22; 4:1) was a case of **God not practicing what He preached** (Dt. 24:1-4)
2. Others might suggest that these passages are an example of **mercy triumphing over judgment** (Jas. 2:13)
 - a. **God’s grace trumps God’s law**
 - 1) Cf. God’s forgiveness of **David** (2 Sam. 12:113) despite the requirements of God’s law that adulterers be executed (Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:22)
 - 2) Cf. God’s dealing with **Ruth** despite the exclusion of Moabites from the assembly of Israel (Dt. 23:3)
 - b. *Duane A. Garrett*: “Deuteronomy 24:1-4 **forbids** a man to **remarry** his wife after a **divorce** if she has **married another man** in the interim. Although probably not **technically** in **violation** of this law, because it does not seem that she had **remarried** in the interim, Hosea’s action of taking Gomer back **pushes the envelope**. If it was **wrong** for a man to **take back** a woman after she had been **married** to another man, what was Hosea doing **taking Gomer back** after she had been with **countless men**?

“Surprisingly, however, the very offense of Hosea’s action strongly confirms that this is indeed the correct interpretation. **God has divorced Israel** just as **Hosea has divorced Gomer**, but in both cases **grace triumphs over righteous jealousy and the demands of the law**. Like the cross itself, Hosea’s action is a stumbling block. A man does not **normally take back** a woman who has behaved the way Gomer did. But we must acknowledge this as a revelation of **grace through suffering**.” (Bold emphasis added, 19A:49)

- c. *Charles Feinberg*: “God operated by **grace beyond the law**. So God was ready to **forgive Judah** in spite of all her past failures. **Legal claims to the contrary**, God calls Judah to the solution to her predicament—namely, **repentance**.” (Bold emphasis added, 6:397)
3. John Calvin argued that the Deuteronomic law was necessary to “**preserve order in society**,” but it would **not apply** to God’s relationship with Israel (Calvin, 1:155-156; Brown, 7:105-106)
 - a. *Matthew Henry*: “**God has not tied himself by the laws which he made for us**, nor has he the peevish resentment that men have; he will be **more kind to Israel**, for the sake of his **covenant** with them, than ever **any injured husband** was to an adulterous wife; for in **receiving penitents**, as much as in any thing, he is **God and not man**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, 1225)
4. R. K. Harrison suggests that Israel **could not be restored** as YHWH’s wife, but she could be **forgiven** if she were truly penitent (Harrison, 21:67)
5. Some argue that God **did not really divorce** Israel
 - a. *Joe Sprinkle*: “The question here seems to be whether **God gave Judah** (whom he calls his audience’s mother, the wife of Yahweh by covenant) **a certificate of divorce** so as to **finally forsake her**. As J. A. Motyer notes from Deut 24:1-4, divorce could set in train a series of events that would make reconciliation and reconstitution of a marriage (seemingly) impossible. The implied answer to the question appears to be ‘No.’ It was true that Judah was to be **punished, sold** into slavery for her sins when she did not answer God’s calling out to her through the prophets and **sent away** into Babylonian exile. But she was **given no certificate of divorce**. God had not **completely and finally dissolved the covenant relationship**. And therefore there remains the **possibility of redemption**.
“Here the language of the **possibility of divorce** is used, but **no divorce** between God and Judah **actually takes place**. The analogy does assume divorce as an established Israelite institution.” (Bold emphasis added, 541-5 42)
 - b. But God explicitly says, “for your transgressions your mother has been **put away**” (Isa. 50:1)
 - c. God says the **same thing** once again (Jer. 3:8)
 - d. If the **Assyrian Captivity** was **Israel’s putting away**, why wouldn’t the **Babylonian Captivity** be **Judah’s putting away**?
6. Another possible explanation is that these passages **do not contradict** the teaching of Dt. 24:1-4 because they are **not parallel**
 - a. *J. A. Thompson*: “There was, perhaps, a **loophole** in the law. Israel had not, in fact, **married** a particular lover but was a **prostitute** to several lovers, in much the same way as **Gomer**. But there were abundant grounds for **divorce** in either case, although the husband had **not issued a document** (cf. Isa. 50:1).” (Bold emphasis added, 191)

Dt. 24:1-4 & Other OT Passages	
Dt. 24:1-4	Other OT MDR Passages
Marriage	Marriage
Some Uncleaness	Harlotry
Divorce	Divorce (or Separation)
Remarriage	No Second Marriage
Divorce or Death	
No Reconciliation	Reconciliation

- 1) If Israel **did not marry** her idol lovers, then **reconciliation** to YHWH would not be a **violation** of Dt. 24:1-4
- 2) Also, if Mal. 2:13-16 contemplates divorce for some reason other than **“some uncleanness”** (Dt. 24:1), Malachi would **not contradict** Moses

II. Deuteronomy 24 And Other Related NT Passages

A. Matthew 5:31-32

1. There is a contrast in this passage between **“it has been said”** and **“But I say to you”**
 - a. Is this a contrast between:
 - 1) The **law of Moses** and **Jesus’ teaching**?
 - 2) **Rabbinic teaching** and **Jesus’ teaching**?
 - b. Arguments for Option #1:
 - 1) The **introductory formula** “You have heard that it was said” was used to introduce **“a divine utterance or a scriptural quotation”** (Stine & Newman, 130)
 - 2) Throughout this context, **Jesus quotes OT Scripture**
 - a) “You shall not **murder**” (Mt. 5:21; cf. Ex. 20:13; Dt. 5:17)
 - b) “You shall not commit **adultery**” (Mt. 5:27; cf. Ex. 20:14; Dt. 5:18)
 - c) “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a **certificate of divorce**” (Mt. 5:31; cf. Dt. 24:1)
 1. *Note:* This is not an **exact translation** of the OT text
 - d) “You shall not **swear falsely**, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord” (Mt. 5:33; cf. Lev. 19:12)
 - e) “An **eye** for an eye and a **tooth** for a tooth” (Mt. 5:38; cf. Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Dt. 19:21)
 - f) “You shall **love** your neighbor and **hate** you enemy” (Mt. 5:43; cf. Lev. 19:18; Psa. 101:3-8; 119:139; 139:21-22)
 - c. Arguments for Option #2:
 - 1) The **introductory formula** “You have heard that it was said” was not the **typical formula** to introduce an OT quotation
 - 2) Moses’ legislation did not say, **“Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce”**; it said, “When a man takes a wife and marries

her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, **and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house....**” (Dt. 24:1)

- 3) Jesus demanded a **greater righteousness** in His discussion of **murder, adultery, and divorce**
 - 4) Jesus **set aside** certain provisions of the OT in His discussion of **oaths, retaliation, and probably love for enemies** (*Holman Bible Handbook*, 546)
2. Jesus teaches that divorce causes **adultery**
- a. **The Rule**: “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife... **causes her to commit adultery**; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced **commits adultery**.
 - 1) *Note*: Presumably, Jesus’ teaching applies to a **God-approved marriage** initially (not a God-disapproved marriage), and it must be interpreted and applied accordingly. Married couples in **God-disapproved marriages** were instructed to **divorce** to remedy their sinful relationship
 - a) The **remnant** in the days of Ezra (Ezra 10:2-3, 10-11, 19, 44)
 - b) **Herod and Herodias** (Mt. 14:3-4; Mk. 6:17-18)
 - b. Jesus does not mean that **the act of divorce itself causes adultery**
 - c. He assumes that this divorce will likely result in her **marrying someone else**
 - 1) In this passage, Jesus is **speaking proleptically** in anticipation of that which could very easily and would quite probably take place
 - 2) When a man divorces his wife, he puts her in a **very vulnerable position**
 - a) This was especially true in **the first century**
 1. *Kyle Pope*: “The world of ancient times was a **hard place** for a woman on her own. The example of **Ruth** and **Naomi** illustrates the **perilous situation** that women faced when left alone (Ruth 1:1-22). The woman generally was **not allowed the right of divorce** (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.7.10; 18.5.4).” (Bold emphasis added, 157)
 2. How was a woman to **survive** after a divorce?
 - a. **Begging**
 - b. **Working**
 - c. **Prostitution**
 - d. **Remarriage**
 - b) While a woman in the 21st century has **more options, remarriage** will often, if not usually, occur
 - d. And when a divorced wife remarries, she will be **committing adultery**
 - 1) Jesus uses the **present tense** here, and **the force** of Jesus’ statement could be represented as:
 - a) Mt. 5:32: “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality [**is causing**] her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced [**is committing adultery**].

- e. When a husband divorces his wife, he **shares in her guilt** when she **remarries** someone else and thus **commits adultery**
- 1) *Note*: The responsibility of the “**divorcer**” for the “**divorcee’s**” **adultery** is conditioned upon **the response** of the “divorcee” (cf. Num. 31:16; Jn. 4:1; Acts 15:3; Col. 4:16)
 - a) Sometimes in **Hebrew idiom**, an **active verb** is used when the idea is not **the actual doing of something**, but rather that of **providing an occasion** for it to be done (cf. Acts 1:18 & Mt. 27:3-8)
 - 2) When a man puts away his wife, he provides her with **an occasion to remarry** and virtually forces her to do so when she has **no right**; she thus becomes an **adulteress**, and **he shares in her guilt**
 - a) He becomes an “**accessory before the fact**”
- f. Objection: When the husband divorces his wife, he **stigmatizes** her as an **adulteress** (when she really is not)
- 1) Jesus **says nothing** about **stigmatizing** a wife as an adulteress, let alone doing such when she really is not
 - 2) Jesus uses the verb “**commit adultery**” (*moichao*) not the noun “**adulteress**” (*moichalis*), and this construction refutes this interpretation (See Carson, 186)
- g. While the Pharisees were concerned with **legal technicalities** (i.e. the “certificate of divorce”), Jesus is concerned with **the effect** that divorce will likely have on one’s mate
3. Jesus teaches that divorce for sexual immorality or fornication **does not cause adultery**
- a. The Exception: “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for sexual immorality [**does not cause**] her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.
 - 1) Chart: “What Does It Mean?”
 - 2) Obviously, when a man puts away his wife for fornication, he does not **make her an adulteress**; she already **is an adulteress**
 - 3) That is why she is **being divorced**
 - b. When a husband divorces his wife for sexual immorality or fornication, he **does not share in her guilt** when she **remarries** someone else and thus **commits adultery**
4. Jesus teaches that **divorce causes adultery** for **the divorcee** and **her new mate**
- a. *Barclay Moon Newman & Philip C. Stine*: “Some Greek manuscripts **omit this clause**. But the UBS Greek New Testament favors the opinion that **its omission is due to the overzealousness of certain scribes** who may have regarded these words as **unnecessary in light of the previous statement**, makes her an adulteress (so TC-GNT).” (Bold emphasis added, 142)
 - b. *Note*: The **exception clause** in this passage does not discuss **remarriage**
 - c. *Note*: In this passage, Jesus contemplates a **husband divorcing his wife**, but the same principles would apply if a **wife divorces her husband**

5. So, Matthew 5:31-32 highlights **the effect** of divorce and remarriage on the **one who is put away** by his/her mate
- a. *Note:* Nothing is stated or implied in this passage about **anyone's right to remarry**

B. Matthew 19:1-12

1. The Pharisees' question: Mt. 19:3; (Mk. 10:2)⁵¹

- a. This question was based upon the **rabbinic interpretations** of Deuteronomy 24:1-4

- 1) The **Qumran community** did not believe that divorce was permissible/legitimate for any reason (Constable on Mt. 19:3, n.p.)

a) *D. A. Carson:* "Among the **Qumran covenanters, divorce** was judged **illicit under all circumstances** (CD 4:21; esp. 11QTa 57:17-19; see J. R. Mueller, 'The Temple Scroll and the Gospel Divorce Texts,' RevQ 38 [1980]: 247ff.)." (Bold emphasis added, Rev. Ed., 9:465)

- 2) The **school of Shammai** (50 BC – AD 30) believed that divorce was only permissible for **gross indecency**

- 3) The **school of Hillel** (110 BC – AD 10 [?]) believed that divorce was permissible for **all kinds of offenses**⁵²

- 4) **Josephus** favored divorce for **any reason**

a) *Josephus:* "He that desires to be **divorced** from his wife **for any cause whatsoever** (and many such causes happen among men), let him in **writing** give assurance that he will **never use her as his wife any more**; for by this means she may be at **liberty to marry another husband**, although before this **bill of divorce** be given, she is not to be permitted so to do; but if she be misused by him also, or if, when he is dead, her first husband would marry her again, it shall not be lawful for her to return to him." (Bold emphasis added, *Antiquities*, 4:8:23:253, 120)

b) *Josephus:* "I also received from Vespasian no small quantity of land, as a free gift, in Judea; (426) about which time **I divorced my wife** also, as **not pleased with her behavior**, though not till she had been the mother of three children; two of whom are dead, and one, whom I named Hyrcanus, is alive. (427) **After this I married a wife** who had lived at Crete, but a Jewess by birth: a woman she was of eminent parents, and such as were the most illustrious in all the country, and whose character

⁵¹ *Leon Morris:* "It was accepted throughout Judaism that a man had the right to divorce his wife, though a woman had no such right to divorce her husband. In some circumstances she could petition the court, and the court might direct her husband to divorce her, but even then the actual divorcing was done by the husband. The husband was given the right by an express provision of the law (Deut. 24:1-4); the Pharisees' question was not whether a man had the right to divorce his wife, but rather what grounds justified him in proceeding to divorce her. They ask whether it is lawful for him to divorce her *on every ground*...." (480).

⁵² *Mark Moore:* "By the time of the Talmud, valid reasons for divorce according to the Hillelites included (1) burning a husband's dinner (b. Gitt 90a), (2) going out in public with her head uncovered, (3) talking with men, (4) spinning in the public streets, (5) speaking disrespectfully of her in-laws in front of her husband, (6) being troublesome or quarrelsome, (7) not bearing children within ten years." (460, n. 73)

was beyond that of most other women, as her future life did demonstrate.” (Bold emphasis added, *Life*, 425-427, 26)

5) **Rabbi Akiba** argued that divorce was permissible if a **prettier woman** came along

a) **The Mishna** summarizes the various views of the Rabbis:

1. Gittin 9:10: “The **House of Shammai** say, ‘A man should divorce his wife only because he has found grounds for it in **unchastity**, ‘since it is said, *Because he has found in her indecency in anything* (Dt. 24:).’ And the **House of Hillel** say, ‘Even if she **spoiled his dish**, ‘since it is said, *Because he has found in her indecency in anything*. **R. Akiba** says, ‘Even if he found **someone else prettier than she**, ‘since it is said, *And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes* (Dt. 24:1).” (Bold emphasis added, Neusner, 487)

b) *D. A. Carson*: “In mainstream Palestinian Judaism, opinion was divided roughly into **two opposing camps**. Both the school of Hillel and the school of Shammai **permitted divorce** (of the woman by the man; the reverse was not considered) on the grounds of ‘*erwat dābār*’ (‘something indecent,’ Dt 24:1), but they **disagreed on what ‘indecent’ might include**. **Shammai** and his followers interpreted the expression to refer to **gross indecency**, though not necessarily adultery; **Hillel** extended the meaning beyond sin to **all kinds of real or imagined offenses**, including an improperly cooked meal. The Hillelite **R. Akiba** permitted divorce in the case of a **roving eye for prettier women** (m. Giṭ. 9:10).” (Bold emphasis added, EBC, Rev. Ed., 9:465-466)

c) *William Barclay*: “On this point **the Jewish Rabbis were violently divided**, and it was here that Jesus’s questioners wished to involve him. The **school of Shammai** were quite clear that *a matter of indecency* meant **fornication**, and fornication alone, and that for no other cause could a wife be put away....On the other hand, the **school of Hillel** interpreted this *matter of indecency* in the widest possible way. They said that it meant that a man could divorce his wife if she **spoiled his dinner**, if she **spun**, or went with **unbound hair**, or **spoke to men in the streets**, if she **spoke disrespectfully of his parents** in his presence, if she was a **brawling woman** whose voice could be heard in the next house. **Rabbi Akiba** even went the length of saying that the phrase *if she finds no favour in his eyes* meant that a man could divorce his wife if he found a woman whom he **liked better and considered more beautiful**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 2:231)

b. The Pharisees’ question was designed to **entrap Jesus** on the “**horns of a dilemma**”

1) They tried to **trap Jesus** on other occasions as well (cf. Mt. 16:1 // Mk. 8:11; Mt. 22:15, 18 // Mk. 12:13, 15 // Lk. 20:20, 23; Mt. 22:34-35; Lk. 11:16; Jn. 8:6)⁵³

⁵³ *Tom Constable*: “Perhaps they hoped Jesus would oppose Herod as John had done and would suffer a similar fate. The Machaerus fortress where Herod Antipas had imprisoned and beheaded John was nearby, east of the north part of the Dead Sea. Undoubtedly the Pharisees hoped Jesus would say something that they could use against Him.” (Notes on Mt. 19:3, n.p.).

Kyle Pope: “Josephus identifies Perea as part of the territory ruled by Herod Antipas (Antiquities 17.8.1).” (600).

c. *Note:* Their question concerned **divorce**, not remarriage

2. Jesus' answer: Mt. 19:4-6; (Mk. 10:6-9)

a. Jesus completely **sidesteps the rabbinic controversy** and refers the Pharisees to what God had said about marriage in **the very beginning** (Mt. 19:4-5)⁵⁴

1) Gen. 1:26-28: ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them.** ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

2) Gen. 2:24: ²⁴ Therefore a man shall **leave** his father and mother and **be joined** to his wife, and they shall become **one flesh.**

a) *R. T. France:* "Gn. 1:27 does not in itself **directly relate** to the issue of marriage and divorce..., but is included as the **necessary basis** for the second quotation. When God designed **humanity** as ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυ [male and female, ksk] it was with a view to the **sexual union** which Gn. 2:24 spells out." (Bold emphasis added, 392)

3) While the Pharisees were preoccupied with the **grounds for divorce**, Jesus was concerned with the **institution of marriage**

4) God had said that a man is to "**leave**" father and mother

a) "**Leave**" (*kataleipo*)

1. *Kenneth Wuest:* "The word 'leave' (*kataleipō* (καταλειπω) is a **strong word**. The simple verb means '**to leave,**' the prefixed preposition *kata* (κατα), being used to **intensify** the already existing idea in the verb. The compound word means '**to leave behind, to depart from, to forsake.**'" (Bold emphasis added, 1:196)

b) While this leaving father and mother may not necessarily demand a **physical separation** from the house, it most assuredly demands a **psychological separation** in the heart⁵⁵

1. Those who marry must "**cut the apron strings**"

2. They must leave behind their **old family relationships** to establish a **new relationship** with one another

a. Now this certainly does not **negate** their **filial obligations** to their parents (cf. Pr. 23:22; Eph. 6:1-2; Col. 3:20; *et al.*)

⁵⁴ *Leon Morris:* "[B]y appealing to the creation he was making use of a rabbinic method of disputation, namely, 'the more original, the weightier.' This meant that what happened as early as the creation narrative was weightier than what Moses said considerably later (though, of course, it did not do away with the Mosaic regulation; that regulation was still part of the law and was to be respected, but it must be interpreted in the light of the more original statement)." (480-481).

⁵⁵ *John Nolland:* "In Israelite culture the married couple in fact normally lived in or near the home of the man's parents, not the woman's. So the leaving is not literal." (772). Isaac took Rebekah into his mother's tent when she became his wife (Gen. 24:67). Jacob lived with his father-in-law Laban after he married Leah and Rachel (Gen. 29:25-30; 30:25-26). Moses lived with his father-in-law Jethro after he married Zipporah (Ex. 2:21).

- b. But **the relationship** with father and mother **must change**
- c. The **new relationship** as husband and wife must **take precedence** over all other earthly relationships
- 5) God had said that a man was to “**cleave**” to his wife
- a) “**Cleave**” (*kollaomai*)
1. *Vine*: “**to join fast together, to glue, cement**, is primarily said of metals and other materials (from *kolla*, glue). In the N.T. it is used only in the Passive Voice, with reflexive force, in the sense of cleaving unto, as of cleaving to one’s wife, Matt. 19:5....” (Bold emphasis added, 2:104)
 2. *Kenneth Wuest*: “The word ‘cleave’ is *proskollaō* (προσκολλᾶω) ‘**to glue to, to join one’s self to, to cleave closely, to stick to.**’ The idea in the verb therefore includes the **initial act of joining** one’s self to another and then **remaining thus joined.**” (Bold emphasis added, 1:196)
- b) This is not merely **cohabitation**, like the Samaritan woman and her partner (cf. Jn. 4:18), but the establishment of a **permanent union**
1. *Craig Blomberg*: “To ‘**leave ... and be united**’ means to **transfer one’s fundamental allegiance from parents to spouse**. In the biblical world this did not often refer to setting up a separate domicile; **extended families regularly lived together.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Matthew*, 22:290)
- 6) God had said that a man and his wife were to “**become one flesh**”
- a) Paul’s use of this text (1 Cor. 6:16) clearly indicates that this “**one flesh**” **union involves sexual intercourse**
- b) However, this is not just the union of **two bodies** in sexual intercourse; it is also the uniting of **two beings** in a life together⁵⁶
1. *Craig Blomberg*: ““**One flesh**’ describes the **interpersonal intimacy** that should characterize the marriage partnership and culminate in **sexual relations.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Matthew*, 22:290)

⁵⁶ *Kyle Pope*: “That does not mean that sexual contact constitutes marriage. Under Mosaic Law a man who violated a betrothed woman was to be put to death but he was not considered the husband of the woman, even though he was the first to have sexual contact with her (Deut. 22:25). If a man violated a virgin who was not betrothed he could marry her with the father’s permission, but was not automatically considered her husband because of sexual contact (Exod. 22:16-17). (1139-1140).

“The Bible clearly indicates that sexual union does not itself constitute marriage, which is fundamentally a covenantal agreement between two partners for life (cf. Prov 2:17; Mal 2:14, ‘wife of thy covenant’).” (Hindson & Kroll, 1933).

Mark Moore: “Sexual intercourse, in and of itself, does not constitute a marriage. A marriage requires both intimacy (consummated in sexual intercourse) and commitment. Although 1 Cor 6:16 affirms that sexual intercourse with a prostitute creates a bond that transcends physical contact, it does not go so far as to say that the couple becomes husband and wife. If it did, then Jesus would have been mistaken when he told the woman at the well that the man she was living with was not her husband (Jn 4:18). That is precisely why intercourse outside of marriage is so dangerous. It creates a unity between two people without a commitment of the couple. The consequences are often devastating.” (461, n. 75).

2. *C. G. Scorer*: “Nothing can happen to one without the other being influenced, no matter what the impact happens to be. What they **hear** and **see** and **touch** they **share**. They are united in their **joys** and **disappointments**, their **patience** and their **pain**, or whatever the world brings to them.” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible and Sex Ethics Today*, 30, quoted in Gene Frost, *The Sanctity of Marriage*, 7)
- b. Jesus then **interprets** this statement to be a **tacit condemnation** of divorce (Mt. 19:6)⁵⁷
- 1) They are no more two but **one**⁵⁸
 - 2) What God has “**joined together**,”⁵⁹ let not man “**separate**”
 - a) “**Joined together**” (*sunzeugnumi*)
 1. *BDAG*: “lit. ‘yoke together’ ...then gener. **to make a pair, join together, pair**....” (954)
 2. *Vine*: “to yoke together (*sun*, with, *zugos*, a yoke), is used metaphorically of union in wedlock, in Matt. 19:6; Mark 10:9.” (606)
 3. *Robertson*: “The word for ‘**joined together**’ means ‘**yoked together**,’ a common verb for marriage in ancient Greek.” (Bold emphasis added, n.p.)
 4. *Kenneth Wuest*: “The words ‘**joined together**’ are *suzeugnumi* (συζευγνυμι) ‘**to fasten to one yoke, to yoke together**,’ of the marriage tie, ‘**to join together, to unite**.’ The word is made up of the Greek word for a **yoke**, such as is put on an animal, and the prefixed preposition *sun* (συν) which means ‘**with**.’ The same word is used in Philippians 4:3 and translated ‘yokefellow.’ It speaks of one who pulls well in double-harness.” (Bold emphasis added, 1:197)
 - b) “**Separate**” (*chorizo*)
 1. *BDAG*: “1. **to cause separation through use of space between, divide, separate**, act. τὴ *someh*. (opp. συζεύγνυμι) Mt 19:6; Mk 10:9....” (1095)
 2. *Thayer*: “fr. Hdt. down; *to separate, divide, part, put asunder*....Mt. xix. 6; Mk. x. 9.... Mid. and 1 aor. pass. with a reflex. signif. *to separate one’s self from, to depart*; a. *to leave a husband or wife*: of divorce, 1 Co. vii. 11, 15.... b. *to depart, go away*....” (674)
 - c) This is a **present tense imperative** that means in effect: “**keep on not letting man put asunder**”
 1. This would include **anyone**: The **husband** or his **wife** or **anyone else**

⁵⁷ *Leon Morris*: “ὥστε, which Matthew has 15 times, more than in any other New Testament writing, indicates the logical consequence, ‘for this reason,’ ‘it follows that—.’ Here it is followed by the indicative rather than the infinitive, which puts some emphasis on the actuality of the result.” (481, n. 4).

⁵⁸ *John Nolland*: “Jesus’ initial comment focuses sharply on the language of ‘one flesh’: ‘no longer two but one flesh’ aligns divorce with the violence of something like mutilation, amputation, or dismemberment.” (773).

⁵⁹ *John Nolland*: “In marriage God makes of a man and woman a linked pair, partnered for the needs, responsibilities, and eventualities of life.” (*Ibid.*).

- d) Some have taken this to mean that man **cannot separate** what God has joined together.⁶⁰ But that is **not true**⁶¹
1. Jesus **would not** have said that a man **should not** put away his wife if he **could not** put her away in the first place
 2. This implies that man has the **ability** and the **power**, but not the **authority** and the **permission** to separate what God has joined together
 3. This certainly appears to be the implication of **other “let not” statements** (cf. Mt. 6:3; Lk. 21:21; Jn. 14:1, 27; Rom. 6:12; 14:3, 16; Eph. 4:26; 1 Tim. 5:16; Jas. 1:7; 3:1)
- c. The Pharisees had asked, **“Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause”** (Mt. 19:3). This is **Jesus’ answer**, and His answer is **“No!”**
- d. *Note*: Jesus’ answer also concerned **divorce**, not remarriage
3. The Pharisees’ objection: Mt. 19:7; (Mk. 10:3-4)
- a. The Pharisees understand that Jesus has very clearly and very emphatically **condemned divorce**
 - b. But they consider this to be a **contradiction** of the law of Moses, and so they question Jesus (Mt. 19:7)
 - 1) *D. A. Carson*: “The Pharisees refer to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, which they interpret to mean something like this: ‘If a man takes a wife ... and she does not find favor in his eyes ... he shall **write a bill of divorce** ... and shall send her away from his house’ (so also Vul.). But **the Hebrew more naturally means something like this**: ‘If a man takes a wife ... and she does not find favor in his eyes ... and he writes a bill of divorce ... and he sends her away from his house ... and her second husband does the same thing, then her first husband **must not marry her again**’ (presumably because that would be a kind of incest; cf. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, para. 458; G. J. Wenham, ‘The Restoration of Marriage Reconsidered,’ *JJS* 30 [1979]: 36-40). In other words, Moses did not **command** divorce but **permitted** it for *‘erwat dābār* (‘something indecent’); and the text is less concerned with explaining the

⁶⁰ *R. T. France*: “The threefold pattern of Gn. 2:24..., leaving parents, union with wife, and man and woman becoming μία σάρξ [one flesh, ksk], provides the essential basis for marriage, and its relevance to divorce is that the imagery of a single ‘flesh’ could hardly be more clearly designed to express that which is permanent and indivisible. It lifts marriage from being a mere contract of mutual convenience to an ‘ontological’ status. It is not merely that ‘one flesh’ *should* not be separated; it *cannot*.” (Italics original, *The Gospel Of Mark*, 392).

Craig Keener: “[B]ecause God does not accept divorce as valid, any man who divorces his wife is *not really divorced*, and if he marries someone else, he commits adultery.” (Italics added, comment on Mk. 10:11; *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, n.p.)

Gordon Wenham: “[T]he Creator himself had created man in two sexes so that when they meet, they become one flesh, that is, as closely related to each other as brother and sister or parent and child. These are relationships that *cannot be undone*. ‘What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.’” (Italics added, *Jesus, Divorce, & Remarriage: In Their Historical Setting*, 73).

⁶¹ *Craig Blomberg*: “From this text he draws the conclusion that God is the one who joins marriages together. Humans therefore have no right to separate what God has united (19:6). *The text does not say that marriages cannot be broken, but rather that they should not be broken. Marriage is not an indissoluble, mystical union; it is a covenant that, tragically, can, but ought not be, violated....*” (Italics added, *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, 59).

nature of that indecency (the precise expression is found in only one other place in the OT: Dt 23:14, with reference to human excrement) than with prohibiting remarriage of the twice-divorced woman to her first husband. Divorce and remarriage are therefore **presupposed** by Moses; i.e., he **‘permitted’** them (v. 8).” (Bold emphasis added, EBC, Rev. Ed., 9:467)

4. Jesus’ reply: Mt. 19:8-9; (Mk. 10:5)

a. While the Pharisees viewed Moses’ provision for divorce as a **command**, Jesus said that it was a **concession**⁶²

b. Jesus points out the fact that Moses did not **“command”** divorce; he merely **“permitted”** it because of their **“hardness of heart”**⁶³ (Mt. 19:8a)

1) *Louis Barbieri, Jr.*: “‘Because your hearts were hard’ is literally, **‘toward your hardness of heart’**” (Bold emphasis added, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2:63)

2) Chart: Dt. 24

3) Chart: Point Of Dt. 24

a) *Craig Blomberg*: “Deuteronomy 24:1-4 **granted no permission for divorce** but **prohibited** a woman who had already been divorced and remarried from **being remarried to her original husband**. Still, it is understandable that such legislation should be seen as presupposing that God did permit divorce under certain circumstances. . . .” (Bold emphasis added, Matthew, 2:291)

4) At best, the law of Moses **allowed** divorce; it did not **approve** it

a) *John Murray*: “The word that Jesus uses is one that implies **sufferance** or **tolerance** but in no way implies **approval** or **sanction** of the practice, far less **authorisation** [*sic*] or **commandment** of it.” (Bold emphasis added, 32)

b) God allowed **Balaam** to go with the princes of Balak, but He did not approve of his action (Num. 22:15-35)

c) The law apparently **allowed**:

1. **Polygamy** (2 Sam. 12:8; *et al.*)

2. **Concubinage** (Gen. 25:6)

3. **Divorce** (Ex. 21:2-6; Dt. 22:19, 29; *et al.*)

4. Etc.

d) But **“the times of ignorance therefore God overlooked...”** (Acts 17:30; cf. Acts 14:15-17)

⁶² *David E. Garland*: “Jesus’ line of reasoning becomes clear. If the Mosaic legislation on this issue had its roots in men’s hardness of heart—willful defiance against God—then it cannot reflect God’s will. Moses may have given laws to regulate divorce, but divorce is not God’s will for marriage. One therefore should not construe the stipulations in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 to mean that God condones discarding a wife or that it will not come under God’s judgment if one follows the guidelines to the letter. Divorce is sin in God’s eyes because it originates in human hardness of heart.” (379-380).

⁶³ *Kenneth Wuest*: “The words ‘hardness of heart’ are in the Greek, *sklērokardia* (σκληροκαρδια), *sklēros* (σκληρος) meaning ‘hard, harsh, rough, stiff,’ when used of men, ‘harsh, stern, hard,’ and the Greek word for ‘heart,’ *kardia* (καρδια).” (1:196).

- 5) The only reason the law **allowed divorce** was because of the **recalcitrance** of God's people
- c. Jesus also points out that divorce had not been **in keeping with God's will from the beginning** (Mt. 19:8b)
- 1) Jesus says, in effect: **"This was not so in the beginning and has continued unchanged down to this present time"**
 - a) *Marvin R. Vincent*: "The A.V. is commonly understood to mean, **it was not so in the beginning**. But that is **not Christ's meaning**. The verb is in the **perfect tense** (denoting the continuance of past action or its results down to the present). He means: Notwithstanding Moses' permission, **the case has not been so from the beginning until now**. The original ordinance has never been abrogated nor superseded, but continues in force." (Bold emphasis added, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 1:108)
 - b) *A. T. Robertson*: "*But from the beginning it hath not been so (ap' arches de ouk gegonen houtos)*. The present perfect active of *ginomai* to emphasize the permanence of the divine ideal." (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 154)
 - c) *Maurice Barnett*: "Notice how He words it: '*From the beginning*'. Mark 10:6 says, '**from the beginning of creation.**' He did not say '**at**' the beginning of creation, but '**from**' the beginning of creation, down to his time of speaking. God's will on whether man can put away his wife for any and every cause is revealed in the nature of his creation of male and female. Any rules regarding that, extend 'from' the time of creation to the time Jesus was speaking. As long as that sex distinction exists, the rules that go with it exists." (Bold emphasis added, "Divorce And Remarriage," *Caprock Church Bulletin*, March 1, 1989, 21:10:1)
 - d) *David Catchpole*: "**What Moses commanded, the historical Jesus rejects**. In Mark x. 2-9 Jesus makes a decision about divorce, in effect, a decision about Moses. Nothing should blunt the sharp edge of his words. **He diverges from all tradition**, whether of Hillelite liberals or of Shammaite conservatives. Paradoxically, by taking a position more conservative than that of the conservative Shammaites, **he takes a position more radical than all**. For this is an abrogation of a law, '**an openly declared criticism of the law of Moses**', '**not an accentuation of the Torah but an annulling of it.**'" (Bold emphasis added, 120)
 - e) *John Murray*: "From the beginning there was **no such permission**. It is not simply that the practice was not **commanded**, not simply that it was not **authorised** [*sic*], not simply that it was not **approved**, but rather that it was not even **permitted**. The **Mosaic permission** was, therefore, a **departure** from the **creation ordinance** and from the practice to which it obligated men." (Bold emphasis added, 32)
- d. Jesus teaches that **remarriage** to someone else after a divorce, unless the divorce is for the cause of **fornication** or **sexual immorality**, results in **adultery**
- 1) The Rule: "And I say to you, whoever **divorces** his wife...and **marries** another, commits **adultery**; and whoever **marries** her who is divorced commits **adultery**."
 - a) "**And I say to you**" stresses **Jesus' authority** (cf. Mt. 5:18, 20, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 8:10; 16:18, 28)
 - 2) Remarriage is adultery for **all the parties** involved:

- a) The **divorcer**
 1. *Example:* If Jack puts away Jill and marries Jane, he commits adultery
 - b) The **“third party”** who marries the divorcee
 1. *Example:* If Jack puts away Jill, and she marries Jim, he commits adultery
 - c) The **divorcee** (implication)
 1. *Example:* If Jack puts away Jill, and she marries Jim, she commits adultery
- 3) Remarriage to anyone else **continues to be adultery** as long as one’s first mate is alive
- a) “Commits adultery” is a **present tense verb**
 - b) The **present tense**, in Koine Greek, usually denotes **continuous action**
 1. *Ray Summers:* “The present tense indicates **progressive action at the present time.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Essentials Of New Testament Greek*, 11)
 2. *William H. Davis:* “The main idea of tense is **the ‘kind of action,’** the state of action. Even in the indicative time is a secondary idea. **Continued action**, or a **state of incompleteness**, is denoted by the present tense, -- this kind of action is called **durative** or **linear**. The action of the verb is shown **in progress**, as **going on.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Beginner’s Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 25)
 3. *Ernest D. Burton:* “The Present Indicative is used of **action in progress in present time...**The most constant characteristic of the Present Indicative is that it denotes **action in progress.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Syntax Of The Moods And Tenses In New Testament Greek*, 7-8)
 - c) Thus, the **force** of Jesus’ statement could be represented as follows:
 1. Mt. 19:9: “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, [**is committing adultery**]; and whoever marries her who is divorced [**is committing adultery**].”
 2. *Leonard Latkovsky* [Professor of Classical Languages, Bellarmine College, Louisville, Ky.]: “And the present tense form of the Greek form *moichatai* = commits adultery means ‘continuous action at any time’, i.e. as long as the condition of the second marriage continues to exist.” (Written statement to Gene Frost, quoted in “Circumventing Matthew 19:9,” *Gospel Anchor*, 12/78, 5:4:5)
 - d) Thus, those who divorce and remarry **LIVE IN ADULTERY** (cf. Col. 3:5-7)
 - e) Those who divorce and remarry **live in adultery** even though:
 1. They **love each other**
 2. **Children** are involved
 3. **Society accepts** and even approves the relationship
 4. They are **ignorant of God’s law** on marriage
 5. Etc.

- 4) Paul explains that the reason remarriage is adultery is because one is “**joined**” to someone else while still “**bound by law**” to another (Rom. 7:2-3)
- a) Chart: “Why Remarriage Is Adultery”
 - b) The word “**joined**” in this context signifies **marriage**
 1. *Maurice Barnett*: “Her marriage to the second man was *marriage*. It would have been **acceptable**, if her husband were **dead**. What the woman established with the second man was **marriage** whether her husband was dead or alive. Obviously she hadn’t just ‘**taken up with**’ the man; wasn’t just ‘**living**’ with him without it being marriage. If just a ‘**living arrangement**’ is all that it means we must conclude that such an arrangement is **acceptable** if the husband is **dead**, seeing that the same word is used under both circumstances.” (Bold emphasis added, “Barnett - Cheatham Discussion on Divorce and Remarriage,” *Gospel Anchor*, 7:79, 5:11:26)
 - c) Please note that **the second marriage**, in and of itself, does not make this woman **an adulteress**
 1. She is **in the second marriage** before and after the death of her first husband
 2. In one case she is “**an adulteress,**” and in the other she is “**no adulteress**”
 - d) The thing that makes this woman an adulteress is that she is “**joined**” to one while still “**bound by law**” to another
- 5) *Note*: Mt. 19:9b is not found in some Greek MSS and as a result it is omitted by several English versions (CSB; ESV; HCSB; NET; NAB; NASB; NIV; NRSV; RSV)⁶⁴
- a) If this phrase is **not original** here, it certainly is **original** in Mt. 5:32 and Lk. 16:18, so this teaching is preserved in these passages
 - b) On the other hand, there are good reasons to conclude that this phrase is **original** in Mt. 19:9 and should not be omitted from our English versions
 1. *William Heth*: “The decision of the UBSGNT to omit the longer reading is a **poor decision**. It is supported by p²⁵, B, C, W, Family 1 & 13, the Majority text, lat, sy^{p,h} and bo.” (Bold emphasis added, “Another Look At The Erasmusian View Of Divorce And Remarriage,” 263, n. 1)

⁶⁴ *Barclay Moon Newman* and *Philip C. Stine*: “There are two textual problems in this verse which need some attention: (1) After the word unchastity (TEV ‘unfaithfulness’) some manuscripts add ‘makes her commit adultery’ (see the RSV footnote). If this is an original part of the text, it means ‘makes her commit adultery when she marries again.’ However, it is the opinion of TC-GNT that this is a later addition, introduced on the basis of 5:32. Apparently none of the modern translations include this wording. (2) At the end of the verse, some manuscripts add ‘and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery’ (see the RSV footnote). Although it is possible that this statement was accidentally omitted by copyists, TC-GNT believes it more probable that the wording represents a later attempt to make the text similar to 5:32. Of the modern translations this clause is found only in Mft and NAB.” (593)

Leon Morris: “There is a complicated textual problem with μη ἐπι πορνεία read by κ C³ K L etc., and παρεχτός λόγου πορνείας by B fl boh etc., a reading that Metzger thinks has probably been assimilated to that in 5:32. There are other problems, but the important point is that there is no real doubt that the words about fornication are to be accepted.” (483, n. 3).

2. *Kyle Pope*: “Many modern translations (RSV, NASB, NIV, ESV) *reject the last portion* of this verse **and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery** largely because of its *absence in the fourth century Sinai manuscript*. This is a *poor editorial decision* because forms of this reading are found in the *fourth century Vatican manuscript*, as well as the papyri fragment of this passage in the *fourth century P²⁵*, along with the *majority of Greek manuscripts and most ancient translations*. It is retained in KJV, ASV and the NKJV.” (Italics added, 612)
- e. If the divorce is for the cause of **fornication** or **sexual immorality**, then the divorcer **does not commit adultery** if he remarries
- 1) The Exception: “And I say to you, whoever **divorces** his wife...**for sexual immorality**, and **marries** another, [**does not commit**] **adultery**; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” (Mt. 19:9)
 - 2) The exception is **divorce for “fornication”**
 - a) This exception clause is **interpreted** in different ways:
 1. Some argue that the exception clause **does not really express an exception**
 - a. Explanation:
 1. *Davidson Razafiarivony*: “The meaning of the exceptive clause would be ‘**not even adultery**.’ The saying in Matt 19:9 would run, ‘**whoever divorces his wife, even if she has committed adultery, and marries another, commits adultery**.’ In other words, **even adultery does not constitute a valid ground for divorce, much less remarriage**. *Parektos* of Matt 5:32 is brought forth in favor of such interpretation with a forceful inclusive usage into ‘**even including**.’” (Bold emphasis added, 2)
 - b. Refutation:
 1. *Tom Constable*: “This view requires interpreting the Greek preposition *epi* (‘except’) as ‘**in addition to**’ or ‘**apart from**.’ However when *me* (‘not’) introduces *epi* it **always introduces an exception elsewhere** in the Greek New Testament.” (Bold emphasis added, Notes on Mt. 19:9, n.p.)
 2. *Gordon Wenham*: “This is a neat solution to the problem, but it is **difficult to justify grammatically**. The so-called exceptive clause (*mē epi porneia*) is not being understood as a **clause** but as a **parenthetical phrase**, and it is **unlikely** that it can be **construed that way**. It must be taken as an **elliptical conditional clause**. The only way to understand *mē epi porneia* (not for sexual immorality) is as an **ellipsis** for a longer conditional clause ‘if he does not put her away for sexual immorality.’ The full statement then becomes ‘whoever puts away his wife, if he does not put her away for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.’” (Bold emphasis added, s, Divorce, & Remarriage, 83)

3. This interpretation **does not harmonize with OT teaching** on divorce and remarriage. God divorced Israel for (spiritual) adultery (Hos. 2:2 [?]; Jer. 3:6-14)
2. Some argue that the exception is **an exception to the whole proposition**, not just to the verb “divorce” (Vawter, 155-167)
 - a. Explanation:
 1. The terms “except” [*parektos*] (Mt. 5:32) and “except” [*me epi*] (Mt. 19:9), normally translated “except,” should be read in a **preteritive fashion** which excepts the **entire proposition** (Janzen, 67)
 2. So, the exception clauses should be translated, rather than “except for fornication,” something like this: **“setting aside the matter of fornication”** [that I am not discussing right now] (Janzen, 68)
 - b. Refutation:
 1. *David Janzen*: “Such a position has been almost **universally dismissed** by scholars simply because **the Greek syntax does not support it**, a point that Vawter himself later admitted.”⁶⁵ (Bold emphasis added, 67)
3. Some argue that when Jesus used the Greek verb **“divorces”** (*apolyo*), He permitted **separation but not divorce** (Wenham, “May Divorced Christians Remarry?,” 150-61)
 - a. Explanation:
 1. This means there can be **no remarriage** since the **marriage bond** is still intact
 - b. Refutation:
 1. *Apoluo* **always means “divorce”** in contexts concerning marriage (*The ESV Study Bible*, 1860)
 2. And *apolyo* in verse 3 clearly means **“divorce”** (Constable, Notes on Mt. 19:9, n.p.)
 3. The **debate** among the **Jewish rabbis** of Jesus’ day was about **divorce**, not separation (*The ESV Study Bible*, 1860)
4. Some argue that Jesus meant that in some cases divorce is **not adulterous** rather than that in some cases divorce is **not morally wrong** (Kilgallen, 102-105)
 - a. Explanation:
 - b. Refutation:
 1. *Tom Constable*: “In the case of *porneia* the husband does not make her adulterous; she is **already adulterous**. However the text does not say he makes her adulterous or an adulteress; it says he makes her **commit adultery**. If the woman had committed *porneia*, divorce and remarriage would not make her **adulterous**. However

⁶⁵ See Bruce Vawter, “Divorce and the New Testament,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 39 (1977), 528-542.

divorce and remarriage would make her **commit adultery**. The major flaw in this view is that in verse 9 it is **the man who commits adultery**, not his wife.” (Bold emphasis added, Notes on Mt. 19:9, n.p.)

5. Many/most argue that the exception clause grants the innocent party the right to **divorce** an **immoral mate** and **marry** another without committing **adultery**
 - a. Explanation:
 1. This is the **logical implication** of Jesus’ statement
 - b. Refutation:
 1. There are **no sound arguments** against this interpretation
- b) Jesus **permits**, although He does not **require**, divorce for fornication
 1. *John D. Grassmick*: “Rabbinic law **compelled** a husband to divorce an adulterous wife (cf. Mishnah *Sotah* 1. 4-5; *Gittin* 4. 7).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2:149)
- c) **“Fornication”** (*porneia*) has been interpreted in different ways
 1. **Incest** [only] (cf. Lev. 18; 20) (Fitzmyer, 208-211)
 - a. Explanation:
 1. *Joseph Fitzmyer*: “[T]here is clear first-century Palestinian support for an interpretation of *porneia* in Mt 5:32 and 19:9 in the specific sense of *zēnūt* as an **illicit marital union** between persons of **close kinship**.” (Bold emphasis added, 221)
 2. The LXX employs *porneia* to translate Hebrew *zēnut*
 3. The **Damascus Document** uses *znwt* to refer to **illicit kinship unions** (5:7-8; cf. Lev. 18)
 4. Matthew **could have used** *zēnut*, which he translated *porneia*, to refer to precisely the same thing
 5. Luke appears to use *porneia* to refer to **illicit kinship unions** among the Gentiles (Acts 15:19-21, 28-29)⁶⁶
 - b. Refutation:
 1. The Hebrew term *zēnut*, which is translated by *porneia* in the LXX, **nowhere appears in Leviticus 18**
 2. While the semantic range of *porneia* would certainly include **incest**, it is **not limited** to it
 - a} *David Janzen*: “True, the Septuagint does use roots

⁶⁶ *David Janzen*: “In this account of the Apostolic Council, the Jerusalem church agrees to admit Gentiles into the church, so long as they abstain from a list of behaviors enumerated in [Acts] 15.20, all of which appear to be proscribed in Leviticus 17 and 18. One of the things that the Council demands that the Gentile Christians avoid is *porneia*, and given the parallels between the list and Leviticus 17-18, it is possible that Luke uses *porneia* here to refer to the illicit kinship unions of Lev. 18.6-18.” (69).

from *porn-* to translate words from the Hebrew root *znh* but the Hebrew verb and its related nouns refer to **acting as a prostitute**, and never (in the Bible, at any rate) to **incestuous marriages**. The only real evidence for such a usage in Hebrew is at Qumran, and there only once. This one bit of evidence has to bear too great a probative load when we lump Matthew's usages of *porneia* in the exception clauses on it."

(Bold emphasis added, 70)

3. The Jews did not regard "an **incestuous relationship** as constituting **marriage**" (Bold emphasis added, Constable on Mt. 19:9)
4. When James mentioned "**sexual immorality**" [*porneia*] (Acts 15:19-21, 28-29), he may also have been alluding to **other sexual sins** in addition to incest that are mentioned in Lev 18-20 (Wenham, *Jesus Divorce & Remarriage*, 82)
 - a} **Homosexuality** (Lev. 18:22; 20:13)
 - b} **Bestiality** (Lev. 18:23; 20:15-16)
5. Paul used the word *porneia* to refer to **prostitution or harlotry** (1 Cor. 6:13, 16), so the word does not mean just incest

2. Premarital sex during betrothal period (Geldard, 134-143)

a. Explanation:

1. This view limits the application of Jesus' teaching to **betrothal marriage**
2. "However, if **fornication** be viewed in its *usual meaning*, and referred here to *unchastity by the bride during betrothal* (cf. Joseph's suspicions, Mt 1:18, 19) then *Christ allowed no grounds whatever for divorce of married persons.*" (Italics added, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, n.p.)

b. Refutation:

1. *Tom Constable*: "Even though the Jews considered a man and a woman to be **husband** and **wife** during their engagement period, they were **not really married**. Consequently to consider this grounds for a divorce seems to require a **redefinition of marriage** that most interpreters resist." (Bold emphasis added, Notes on Mt. 19:9)
2. "Betrothal" is **not clearly identified** in any of the MDR texts as it is in other passages (cf. Mt. 1:18; Lk. 1:27; 2:5)
3. Jesus contemplates **marriage**, not betrothal (Mt. 19:4-6)
 - a} He describes a relationship after **leaving, cleaving**, and becoming **one flesh**
 - b} He describes a relationship that is **joined** by God. Does God **join a betrothed couple**?

4. Dt. 24:1-4 contemplates **marriage**, not betrothal
 - a} A man **takes** a wife
 - b} A man **marries** her
 - c} She finds **no favor** in his eyes
 - d} He has found **“some uncleanness”** in her
 - e} He writes her a **certificate of divorce**
 - f} He **puts** it in her hand
 - g} He sends her **out of his house**
5. Since the Pharisees see a **“contradiction”** with Moses, Jesus must have been describing **the same kind of relationship** that is contemplated in Dt. 24:1-4
6. This view is an **inference** based on the mistaken idea that **fornication cannot be committed by married people**
7. But **fornication can be committed by married people** (see below)
 - a} *Gordon Wenham*: “*Porneia* would certainly include the sin of **premarital**, as well as **postmarital**, adultery and **other sexual sins**, but unless the wider context requires it, there is no reason to restrict its sense to premarital adultery...*porneia* is an **umbrella term**.”
(Bold emphasis added, *Jesus, Divorce, & Remarriage*, 83)
8. So, this is not a **necessary inference**
9. Why would **remarriage be adultery** following “betrothal” divorce? (Mt. 5:31-32)
10. Why mention **“eunuchs”** if Jesus is just contemplating “betrothal”? (Mt. 19:11-12)
11. This view has Jesus more concerned about **faithfulness prior** to marriage than **during** it

d) Adultery

1. Explanation:

2. Refutation:

- a. The school of Shammai interpreted **“some uncleanness”** [*`erwat dabar*] as “adultery”; therefore it would be strange for Jesus to wind up agreeing with them (Janzen, 68)

1. However, it is unlikely that **“some uncleanness”** [*`erwat dabar*] originally referred to **“adultery,”** since adulterers were to be **executed** (Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:22)

2. Furthermore, Jesus' teaching on MDR is **stricter** than both Shammai and Hillel
3. *Andrew David Naselli*: "Both Shammai and Hillel **required** divorce for πορνεία, but Jesus only **permits** it."
(Bold emphasis added, 11)
- b. The normal Greek word for adultery is *moicheia* which is distinguished from *porneia* (Mt. 15:19)
- c. If Jesus intended only "adultery," He could have used the word *moicheia* to convey that concept
- d. *Porneia* has a **much wider semantic range** than simple adultery

e) All unlawful sexual intercourse

1. Explanation:

a. *Porneia* is so defined by the **lexicons**

1. *BDAG*: "(of various kinds of 'unsanctioned sexual intercourse' ...) 1. **Unlawful sexual intercourse, prostitution, unchastity, fornication**....Differentiated fr. μοιχεία. ... Mt 15:19; Mk 7:21 On the other hand μοιχεία appears as πορνεία Of the sexual unfaithfulness of a married woman Mt 5:32; 19:9...." (854)
2. *Thayer*: "*fornication*...used a. prop. of illicit sexual intercourse in general....it is distinguished from *moicheia* in Mt. xv. 19; Mk. vii. 21; and Gal. v. 19 Rec.; used of adultery...Mt. v. 32; xix. 9. b. In accordance with a form of speech common in the O.T. and among the Jews which represents the close relationship existing between Jehovah and his people under the figure of a marriage... *porneia* is used metaphorically of the worship of idols...." (531-532)
3. *Vine*: "is used (a) of illicit sexual intercourse....in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9 it stands for, or includes, adultery; it is distinguished from it in 15:19 and Mark 7:21; (b) metaphorically, of the association of pagan idolatry with doctrines of, and professed adherence to, the Christian faith...." (455)

b. Various Bible passages explicitly indicate that "**fornication**" (*porneia*) includes: ⁶⁷

1. Chart: "Fornication"
2. **Fornication** [pre-marital sex] (Dt. 22:21; 1 Cor. 7:2)

⁶⁷ "There is abundant evidence that *porneia* is a broad term referring to all illicit sexual intercourse, despite Abel Isaksson's claim that 'we can find no unequivocal examples of the use of the word to denote a wife's adultery.'" (*Marriage and Ministry*, 134, via Freeman, 18).

Warren Wiersbe: "Are we to believe that the 23,000 men who committed fornication under the enticement of Baalam [*sic*] (Num. 25) were all unmarried men? Was the admonition of Acts 15:20, 29 sent only to single church members?" (*The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:71).

3. **Adultery** [extra-marital sex] (Sir. 23:23; Herm. Mand. 4.1.5; T. Jos. 3:8)
 - a} Sometimes “**fornication**” is distinguished from “**adultery**” (cf. Mt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21)
 - b} Sometimes the words are used almost **interchangeably** (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1; Rev. 2:20-22)
 - c} Several OT passages in the LXX use a cognate form of “**fornication**” [*porneia*] to include a cognate form of “**adultery**” [*moichia*] (cf. Isa. 57:3; Jer. 3:8-9; 5:7; 13:27 Ezek. 16:8, 15-17, 25-26, 28-29, 32-34; 23:1-5, 7-8, 43-44; Hos. 1:3, 8-9; 2:2, 4-5; 3:3; 4:13-14; Amos 7:17)
 - d} **All adultery is fornication, but not all fornication is adultery**⁶⁸
4. **Homosexuality** (Jude 7)
5. **Incest** (1 Cor. 5:1; cf. Lev. 18:6-8; Dt. 22:30; 27:20)
6. **Prostitution** (Lev. 19:29)
7. **Bestiality** (Ex. 22:19; Lev. 18:23; Dt. 27:21)

2. The breadth of *porneia*'s semantic range may also be indicated by **implication**

- a. *Richard M. Davidson*: “To what does *porneia* refer when used without any qualifiers in the context? I believe that its parallel usage (again without qualifiers) in Acts 15, and the intertextual allusions to Lev 17-18 in this latter passage, provide helpful guidance here. Acts 15 lists **four prohibitions** for Gentile Christians given by the Jerusalem Council: ‘that you abstain from things offered to **idols**, from **blood**, from things **strangled** [i.e. not drained of their blood], and from **sexual immorality** [*porneia*]' (vs. 29). Particularly striking is that this is the **same list, in the same order**, as the four major legal prohibitions explicitly stated to be applicable to the stranger/alien as well as to native Israelites in Lev 17-18. In these OT chapters we find (1) sacrificing to **demons/idols** (Lev 17:7-9); (2) eating **blood** (Lev 17:10-12); (3) eating anything that has not been immediately **drained of its blood** (Lev 17:13-16); and (4) **various illicit sexual practices** (Lev 18). In this clear case of intertextuality, the Jerusalem Council undoubtedly concluded that the practices forbidden to the alien in Leviticus 17-18 were what should be prohibited to Gentile Christians in the church. The parallel of the fourth prohibition in each passage is unambiguous: what Acts 15 labels *porneia* are those **illicit**

⁶⁸ *R. T. France*: “The use of *πορνεία* rather than *μοιχεία* (the normal term for adultery) may be due to the fact that it is the wife’s action which is referred to, whereas adultery was thought of primarily as a male sin against another man (as in [Mt. 5:] 27-28); after all, *μοιχεία* is not used in LXX Deut 24:1 either. Davies & Allison, 1. 531, appeal to J. B. Bauer’s finding that ‘in biblical Greek the *μοιχ*-root tends to be used of men, the *πορν*-root of women.’” (209, n. 107); See also Bloomberg, (111).

sexual activities included in Leviticus 18. These activities may be summarized in general as **illicit sexual intercourse** -- including **incest, adultery, homosexual practices, and bestiality**. Various scholars have recognized this intertextual connection. The correlation between Acts 15 and Leviticus 17-18 seems to provide a solid foundation for determining what the early church understood by the term *porneia*.” (Bold emphasis added, 7-8)

3. Some argue that **fornication** by the guilty spouse permits **divorce**, but not **remarriage**, because the exception clause applies only to the first verb “**divorces**,” not the second verb “**marries**”
4. This conclusion **cannot be correct**
 - a. I agree that the exception clause “for sexual immorality” applies to the first verb “divorces” because that is the only application that makes sense
 1. One does not **remarry** “for sexuality immorality”; he **divorces** “for sexual immorality”
 - b. If the exception clause allows **divorce for fornication**, it must allow **remarriage**, or Jesus statement makes no sense
 1. Jesus doesn’t say: **Divorce = Adultery**
 2. Jesus says: **Divorce + Remarriage = Adultery**
 3. The construction of Mt. 19:9 contains a **compound predicate**: he (1) puts away his wife AND (2) marries another
 4. It is a compound predicate connected by the **copulative conjunction** AND which connects words or phrases of equal rank (cf. Mk. 16:16)
 5. What **actions** are **predicated** to the “**whoever**” of this verse? Not one action alone, but two actions
 - a} It is not merely **putting away** his wife or divorcing her, but also **marrying** another
 - b} Then you have a **limiting phrase** which modifies the predicate, and it modifies **both members** of it
 - c} Hence, the one who **puts away** his wife for the cause of **fornication** and **remarries**, does not **commit** adultery
 6. “Whoever divorces his wife **for fornication**” is an **incomplete statement** unless you continue to read “**and shall marry another [does not] commit adultery**”
 - b) It is a **physical sexual act**
 1. It is so defined by **Hebrew** and **Greek** lexicons (and **English** dictionaries)
 2. This is confirmed by **contextual descriptions**

-
- a. Going into a **neighbor's wife** (Pr. 6:29)
 - b. Acting like a **dromedary** and a **donkey** (Jer. 2:23-24)
 - c. **Spreading your legs** (Ezek. 16:25)
 - 1. Some English versions translate this **euphemistically** to soften the graphic language of the original Hebrew text (D-R; ESV; GNB; GW; NCV; NIV⁸⁴; NKJV; NLT; NRSV; RSV)
 - 2. Other English versions translate this **literally** to preserve the graphic language (ASV; CJB; CSB; ERV; HCSB; KJV; LEB; NAB; NASB; NET; NIV; TNIV; YLT)
 - d. **Taking strangers** instead of a husband (Ezek. 16:32)
 - e. Pressing the **bosom** (Ezek. 23:8)
 - f. Coming into the **bed of love** (Ezek. 23:17)
 - g. Uncovering **nakedness** (Ezek. 23:18)
 - h. Caught in **the act** of adultery (Jn. 8:4)
 - 3. It is not a **mental act** (despite arguments to the contrary)
 - a. One cannot commit "**mental fornication**" or "**mental adultery**"
 - b. Jesus was speaking **figuratively** not literally in Matthew 5:27-28
 - 1. Some argue that "**lust**" is actually "**adultery**" and therefore grounds for divorce
 - 2. If so, could one argue that "**hatred**" is actually "**murder**" (1 Jn. 3:15) and therefore grounds for capital punishment?
 - 3. If so, could one argue that "**friendship with the world**" is actually "**adultery**" (Jas. 4:4) and therefore grounds for divorce?
 - c. Jesus is teaching that **lust** is **just as much a sin** as **adultery**, not that lust is the **sin of adultery**
 - 4. It is not "**adulteration of the covenant**" (despite arguments to the contrary)
 - d. Israel's **idolatry** was figuratively described as "**sexual adultery**"
 - 1. Chart: "Israel's 'Adultery'"
 - e. When a term is used **figuratively** to describe something else, it does not change its **basic meaning**
 - 1. Chart: "'Drunk' â God's Judgment"
- 2) The **only exception** to the rule is **divorce for fornication**
- a) Sexual immorality is the **only justifiable reason** for divorce, let alone remarriage
-

1. **Fornication** on the part of one's mate does not give one the **right to remarry**. It gives one the **right to put away** one's mate
- b) God gives **no other grounds** for divorce, not:
 1. **Incompatibility** (sexual, intellectual, emotional, etc.)
 2. **Abuse** (physical, psychological, etc.)
 3. **Desertion**
 4. **Drunkenness**
 5. **Insanity**
 6. **Imprisonment**
 7. **Financial irresponsibility**
 8. **Irreconcilable differences**
 9. **Alienation of affection**
 10. **Irritability**
 11. **Drug abuse**
 12. **Persecution**
 13. **Suspected immorality**
 14. Etc.
- c) *Note*: I am not necessarily saying that "**fornication**" must be what is written on **the civil divorce decree**, but it must be **the reason** for the divorce
 1. One cannot obtain a divorce decree "**for fornication**" in many states today
 2. But that fact does not **change** what Jesus **permits**
- 3) Furthermore, fornication must be **the cause** for the divorce, not **the consequence** of the divorce -- it must occur **before the fact**
 - a) Mt. 19:9: "But I say to you that whoever **dismisses** the wife of him not of (for) **fornication** and **marries** another, commits **adultery**" (Marshall's Interlinear)
 - b) Mt. 19:9: "And I say to you, that, whoever may **put away** his wife, if not for **whoredom**, and may **marry** another, doth commit **adultery**; and he who did **marry** her that hath been put away, doth commit **adultery**." (Young's Literal Translation)
- 4) Finally, the exception is only given to the **one who puts away** his mate for **fornication**
 - a) Fornication on the part of one's mate does not give one **the right to remarry**. It gives one **the right to put away one's mate**. It is only **divorce for fornication** that gives one **the right to remarry**
 - b) The **right to remarry**, following a divorce, is not given to:
 1. Chart: "Remarriage Is Adultery"
 2. The **one who is put away** ("**the divorcee**") Mt. 5:31-32
 - a. This is true whether:

1. **Fornication** occurred or not
 2. The person **desired the divorce** or not
 3. The person **protested the divorce** or not
 4. The person was **innocent** or not
 5. The person was **a Christian** or not
 6. Etc.
- b. As long as one's first mate is alive, one who is **put away** cannot remarry another without **committing adultery** Rom. 7:2-3
3. The one who **marries a "put-away-person"** ("the third party") Mt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Lk. 16:18b
- a. This is true whether:
 1. **Fornication** occurred or not
 2. The person **desired the divorce** or not
 3. The person **protested the divorce** or not
 4. The person was **innocent** or not
 5. The person was **a Christian** or not
 6. Etc.
 - b. One who **marries a "put-away-person"** cannot do so without **committing adultery** as long as the other mate is alive
- c) The **right to remarry**, following a divorce, is only given to **the one who puts away** his mate for **sexual immorality** (Mt. 19:9)
1. Grammatically, the exception can **only apply to the first clause** of Jesus' statement
 - a. *Gene Frost*: "In the first clause -- 'whosoever shall put away his wife' -- **the exception modifies the verb**, 'shall put away,' and therefore is *adverbial*. However, in the second clause -- 'whoso marrieth her which is put away' -- **the exception modifies 'her which is put away,'** and therefore is *adjectival*. 'Her that is put away' is translated from one word, *apolelumenan*, which is a participial substantive. In tense it is *perfect*, indicating completed action, i.e. the having-been-put-away woman. It is a **grammatical perversion** to take an **adverbial exception**, modifying *apoluse*: a verb, and in the same sentence **elliptically** make it an **adjectival exception**, modifying *apolelumenan*." ("Circumventing Matthew 19:9," *Gospel Anchor*, 11/78, 5:3:9)
 - b. *Leonard Latkovski* [Professor of Classical Languages, Bellarmine College, Louisville, Ky.]: "In Matthew 19:9 the original Greek text translated '**except for fornication**' **modifies the 'putting away' on the part of the man** and does not modify the person who is put away." (Bold emphasis added, "Written statement to Gene Frost, quoted in "Circumventing Matthew 19:9," *Gospel Anchor*, 11/78, 5:3:9)

2. Jesus speaks of a **“whoever”** [the subject of the sentence] who **“commits adultery”** [the main verb of this sentence]
 - a. It is not just any and every **“whoever”**
 - b. It is a **“whoever”** who **“divorces”** his wife and **“marries”** another
 - c. The exception clause is given to **this “whoever,”** not anyone else
 - d. Jesus is **silent** about any other scenario
 1. We don’t have **any information** about any other scenario
 2. We don’t have **authority** for any other scenario
3. This means that the **“innocent party”** must be the one to **“put away”** the **“guilty party”** for **“fornication”**
 - a. Whatever is involved in **“putting away”** (and this deserves careful study) must be done by the innocent party
 - b. If this does not occur, and the **“guilty party”** **“puts away”** the **“innocent party”** then:
 1. The divorce is **not for the cause of fornication**, and therefore, neither party would have the right to remarry
 - a} The fornicator cannot and does not put away the innocent party for **fornication**. The innocent party is not guilty
 - b} Thus, the divorce would be obtained for a **different reason** than the one Jesus allowed
 2. The **“innocent party”** would become a **“put-away-person,”** and a **“put-away-person”** (in a God-approved marriage) is not given the right to remarry
 - c. From a **human standpoint**, this may seem harsh and unfair, but this is the only conclusion that I have been able to reach based upon my study of God’s word
 1. Actually, the predicament of the **“innocent party”** who is put away by the **“guilty party”** is **no more unfair** than the predicament of the **“innocent party”** who is put away for **some trivial reason**
 2. It is possible for people to fall into circumstances, through no fault of their own, that require them to **remain celibate** if they are to be faithful to God
 3. Some have assumed as a foregone conclusion that God would **never require** anyone, especially if they are innocent, to **live in celibacy**
 - a} He commanded **Jeremiah** not to marry (Jer. 16:1-4)
 4. But this is not the case; **celibacy may be imposed** on the innocent by:

- a} **Illness** (physical, mental)
- b} **Accident**
- c} **Separation** (MIA's, POW's, convicts, etc.)
- d} **Unlawful divorce** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- e} Etc.

5. **Life is not always fair** (Eccl. 9:11-12; 10:5-7)
6. Sometimes the innocent suffers because of **the sins of others** (cf. Ex. 20:5; 1 Ki. 21:29)
7. Sometimes innocent people suffer as a result of **other's disrespect for God's law on marriage** (cf. Ezra 10:1-4, 18-19, 44)
8. If God built a **hedge** around the innocent so that they never suffered, then man would serve God out of **convenience** and not **conviction** (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6)
9. But **the glory to be revealed** in the next life "**beyond the sunset**" will more than make up for **the sacrifice and suffering** in this life "**under the sun**" (Rom. 8:18)

5. The disciples' reaction (Mt. 19:10)

- a. *Kyle Pope*: "English translations generally do not expose the connection that exists between the disciples' question and the Pharisees' question at the beginning of this discourse. The word translated **the case** (*he aitia*) is the same as the word translated '**cause**' in verse three. Recognizing what Jesus has just taught, the disciples conclude 'if this is the only cause of separation a man has with his wife'—**it is not good to marry** (*ou sumpherei gamesai*)—'it is better not to marry' (NASB, NKJV). (623-624)
- b. *Craig Blomberg*: "Given that Jesus' position proves **stricter than Shammai's**, even with the exception clause, the disciples think that **fulfilling marital obligations** may be **harder than remaining single**." (Bold emphasis added, Matthew, 22:294)

6. Jesus' response Mt. 19:11-12

- a. The interpretation of Jesus' response depends on the reference of "**this saying**" (or "this word [*logos*]"")
- b. Does it refer to **the disciples' reaction** (v. 10) or to **Jesus' teaching** (vv. 4-6, 9)?⁶⁹
 - 1) Arguments for the former:
 - a) The disciples' statement is the **nearest possible antecedent**

⁶⁹ *John Nolland*: "A third option is to refer 'this word' forward to what is coming in v. 12, but this makes v. 11 a fresh start and leaves v. 10 as a rather odd conclusion to vv. 3-9. It also leaves the connecting γάρ at the beginning of v. 12 without force, which is linguistically possible but unlikely. A fourth option is attractive for those who take Mt. 19:9 as allowing the man to divorce but not remarry in the case of marital infidelity on the part of his wife. On this understanding, to divorce but not remarry is eunuch-like behaviour, called for on the part of those who will engage with the coming of the kingdom of God in relation to Jesus." (776, n. 38).

b) Jesus' response "addresses conditions under which men or women might be **unable** (or unwilling) to marry" (Bold emphasis added, Pope, 624)

2) Arguments for the latter:

a) If the disciples' reaction (v. 10) is only a statement of **dismay** at the **strictness** of **Jesus' MDR teaching**, then the reference must be to Jesus' teaching (Nolland, 776)

b) The **echo** with **Mt. 13:11** suggests that "this saying" refers to Jesus' teaching (Gundry, 83)

c. What does Jesus' response mean?

1) Jesus cannot mean: "If you **can't accept** My teaching, you **can ignore** it"

a) Jesus expects His disciples to give Him **unwavering loyalty** and **unquestioned obedience** (Jn. 21:20-23)

2) Jesus may mean that celibacy is an **unrealistic solution** except for three groups of people who are able to remain single (Haller, *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, 87)

3) Jesus more likely means that if one **cannot accept and abide** by His strict teaching on MDR, **it is better not to marry** (Pope, 625)

7. What does this passage teach us?

a. Divorce for any reason is **not permissible**

b. Divorce was **not God's will** originally

c. Divorce for fornication is **permissible**

d. Remarriage after divorce for all reasons but one is **adultery**

e. Remarriage after divorce for **fornication** is **not adultery**

8. Matthew 19:9 highlights **the effect** of divorce and remarriage on **the one who puts away** his/her mate

C. **Mark. 10:1-12**

1. *Note:* Since Mk. 10:1-12 is **parallel** with Mt. 19:1-12, we will only discuss the **differences** between these two accounts

2. In Mark's account, unlike Matthew's, the Pharisee's question is "**Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?**" not "**Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?**"

a. *R. T. France:* "[T]he phrasing of the question in Mark (contrast Matthew) focuses not on the **allowable grounds of divorce**, which was a legitimate matter of current debate, but on **whether divorce itself is permissible**, on which as far as we know mainstream Jewish teachers of the time were **agreed.**" (Bold emphasis added, 390)

b. *Rikk E. Watts:* "In the first century the **primary question** surrounding divorce in the public mind concerned **what constituted valid grounds**. Since it would make little sense to ask Jesus if divorce itself was lawful when everyone assumed that it was, **the Pharisees' question is almost certainly truncated**, the intent of it being this: **is it lawful to divorce for any matter . . .**" (Bold emphasis added, *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, 198)

3. In Mark's account, unlike Matthew's, Jesus replies to their question by asking "What did Moses **command** you?" (Mk. 10:3)

- a. When Jesus asked this question, “he may have had in mind **the whole of the Mosaic revelation**” which would have included Gen. 2:24 as well as Dt. 24:1-4 (Murray, 44)
 - b. Even if Jesus were alluding only to Dt. 24:1-4, His question may have simply meant “**What was the Mosaic legislation on this question?**” (Murray, 44)
 - c. Jesus’ question does not necessarily imply that Moses actually **commanded** his people to **divorce** in Dt. 24:1-4
4. In Mark’s account, unlike Matthew’s, the Pharisees reply, “Moses **permitted** a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her” (Mk. 10:4)
 - a. *R. T. France*: “That passage [Dt. 24:1-4] does not specifically ‘**command**’, or even ‘**permit**’, **divorce** but rather **regulates** (in v. 4) the situation which results after a divorce has taken place and been duly certified: vv. 1-3 consist only of **conditional clauses** setting up the scenario for which v. 4 provides a **legal ruling** (that the husband who divorced his wife may not remarry her). The **divorce** which created that situation is **presupposed** but is not itself the subject of the legislation. βιβλίον ἀποστασίου γράψαι καὶ ἀπολύσαι [a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss, ksk] is thus **not a quotation** from Dt. 24, but a **summary** of what is assumed to be its ‘**permission**’. To interpret this even as permission for divorce is a matter of **inference** from the fact that **divorce is envisaged without expressed disapproval**. It certainly **falls far short of a ‘command’**....” (Bold emphasis added, 390-391)
 - b. *Kyle Pope*: “This is one of the most **puzzling differences** between the accounts of Mark and Matthew. In Mark, Jesus asks, ‘What did Moses **command** you?’ (Mark 10:3) and it is the Pharisees that reply, ‘Moses **permitted** (*epetrepsen*) a man to write a certificate of divorce and put her away’ (Mark 10:4). It may be that **Jesus’ question** about Mosaic ‘command’ was offered to force them to **recognize the distinction** between **command** and **permission**.” (Bold emphasis added, 610, n. 4)
 - c. *Kyle Pope*: “Matthew and Mark relate the **sequence** of this discourse in a **slightly different order** but the **content is essentially the same**. With **no sequential indicators** (such as ‘first . . .’ or ‘after that . . .’), we must understand both accounts as records of **the content** of the discourse and not a **specific chronology** of when each element occurred.” (Bold emphasis added, 608)
 5. In Mark’s account, unlike Matthew’s, the words “**and be joined to his wife**” are **omitted** (in some Greek MSS)
 - a. “The **earliest witnesses**, as well as a **few other important MSS** (⋈ B Ψ 892* 2427 sys), **lack the rest of the quotation** from Gen 2:24, ‘**and will be united with his wife.**’ Most MSS ([A C] D [L N] W [Δ] Θ f[1],13 [579] ℣ lat co) **have the clause**. It could be argued that the **shorter reading** was an **accidental omission**, due to this clause and v. 8 both beginning with καί (*kai*, ‘and’). But if that were the case, one might expect to **see corrections in ⋈ or B**. This can be overstated, of course; both MSS combine in their errors on several other occasions. However, the **nature of the omission** here (both its length and the fact that it is from the OT) **argues that ⋈ and B reflect the original wording**. Further, the form of the longer reading is **identical with the LXX of Gen 2:24**, but **different from the quotation in Matt 19:5**....The significance of this is that **Matthew’s quotations of the OT** are often, if not usually, directly from the **Hebrew**—except when he is **following Mark’s quotation of the OT**. Matthew in fact only departs from Mark’s verbatim quotation of the LXX in 15:4 and 19:19, both texts quoting from Exod 20:12/Deut 5:6 (and in both places the only

difference from Mark/LXX is the dropping of σου [*sou*, ‘your’]). This might suggest that **the longer reading here was not part of what the first evangelist had in his copy of Mark**. Further, **the reading without this line is harder**, for the wife is not explicitly mentioned in v. 7; the casual reader could read ‘the two’ of v. 8 as referring to father and mother rather than husband and wife. (And **Mark is known for having harder, shorter readings that scribes tried to soften by explanatory expansion**: In this chapter alone, cf. the textual problems in v. 6 [the insertion of ὁ θεός]; in v. 13 [the replacement of αὐτοῖς with τοῖς προσφέρουσιν or τοῖς φέρουσιν]; in v. 24 [insertion of ἐστιν τοὺς πεποιθότας ἐπὶ χρήμασιν, πλούσιον, or τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες; and perhaps in v. 2 [possible insertion of προσελθόντες Φαρισαῖοι or similar permutations].) **Although a decision is difficult, the preferred reading lacks ‘and will be united with his wife.’ NA27 has the longer reading in brackets, indicating doubts as to its authenticity.**” (Bold emphasis added, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*)

b. *James Brooks*: “The words ‘**and be united to his wife**’ are **omitted** from the **two earliest Greek manuscripts** and a **few other good quality textual witnesses** (and from the NASB). The textual problem is whether the words were **added by copyists** to conform Mark to Gen 2:24 and/or Matt 19:5 or whether they were **accidentally omitted** when an early scribe skipped from the second ‘and’ in v. 7 to ‘and’ at the beginning of v. 8. It is impossible to say with confidence.” (Bold emphasis added, 23:157)

1) While this clause is **retained by the majority** of English versions, it is **omitted by some** (CSB; NET; NASB)

c. *James Edwards*: “Although **two major manuscripts (8 B) omit** the last part of v. 7 (‘and be united to his wife’), the reading should likely be **retained** because (1) the **manuscript evidence** for including it is both **widespread** and **diverse** and (2) without the reading ‘the two will become one flesh’ in v. 8 it could be **misunderstood** to refer to the father and mother rather than to the husband and wife.” (Bold emphasis added, 302, n. 13)

6. In Mark’s account, unlike Matthew’s, **the exception clause** -- “except for sexual immorality” (Mt. 19:9) is not mentioned

a. How should we **explain Mark’s omission**?

1) Some argue that **Jesus did not actually say the words “except for sexual immorality”** (Mt. 19:9), but Matthew **inserted** this exception clause later to make clear what Jesus’ audience already understood and would have taken for granted⁷⁰

a) But in light of repeated warnings throughout the OT not to **tamper** with God’s word⁷¹, is it reasonable to believe that Matthew would **put words in Jesus’ mouth**?

b) *Tom Constable*: “This view reflects a **low view of Scripture** since it makes Matthew distort Jesus’ words.” (Bold emphasis added, Notes on Mt. 19:9, n.p.)

⁷⁰ Murray discusses this view although he disagrees with it (46-47).

⁷¹ Do everything according to the pattern (Ex. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; 31:11; 39:42-43); don’t go beyond (Num. 22:18; 24:13); don’t add or subtract (Dt. 4:1-2; 12:32; Pr. 30:5-6); don’t turn aside (Dt. 5:32-33; 17:11, 18-20; 28:13-14; Josh. 1:7; 23:6; Pr. 4:26-27).

- 2) Perhaps Mark and Luke wanted to **emphasize the rule** rather than the exception
- a) *Tom Constable*: “Why then did Mark and Luke omit the exception clause? Probably they did so simply because it **expresses an exception** to the rule, and they wanted to **stress the main point** of Jesus’ words without dealing with the exceptional situation.” (Bold emphasis added, Notes on Mt. 19:9, n.p.)
 - b) *Tom Constable*: “Jesus’ specification of **marital unfaithfulness** as the sole ground for divorce **conflicted** with the law’s requirement that the Jews should **stone** those unfaithful in marriage. Jesus was also **abolishing the death penalty** for marital unfaithfulness by taking the position He took. He was teaching that His hearers could **deal with marital unfaithfulness through divorce rather than through execution**, though divorce was only a divine concession and not His preference.” (Bold emphasis added, Notes on Mt. 19:9, n.p.)
- 3) Others argue that Mark and Luke omit the exception clause because it was so **widely accepted** that **adultery** was **sufficient cause for divorce** that it did not need to be stated (Morris, 484)
- a) *The ESV Study Bible*: “The parallel passages in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18 **omit ‘except for sexual immorality,’** but that was probably because everyone, whatever their position in Jewish disputes over divorce..., **assumed that divorce was allowed in the case of adultery** (i.e., the question of divorce because of adultery was not at issue in the immediate context in Mark 10 and Luke 16).” (Bold emphasis added, 1861)
 1. Sometimes, Matthew includes **clarifying exceptions** not included by Mark and Luke (cf. Mk. 8:12 & Mt. 16:4)
- 4) I believe the simplest explanation is that Jesus’ statement to the disciples later in the house (Mk. 10:10-12) was made after they had already heard Him **mention the exception to the Pharisees** (Mt. 19:9) shortly before; therefore, He did not need to **mention the exception again**
- a) When Jesus said, “And I say to **you**” (Mt. 19:9), the pronoun “**you**” must have included the **Pharisees** (Mt. 19:3)
 1. This is readily apparent when you **trace the pronouns** in the passage back to their **antecedent**: “**you**” (v. 9), “**them**” (v. 8), “**they**” (v. 7), “**them**” (v. 4), and “**Pharisees**” (v. 3)
 - b) *Jeff Smelser*: “It seems that the statement recorded in Matthew 19:9 was made to the Pharisees, and then **the gist** of it was **reiterated** in the private conversation with the disciples.” (Bold emphasis added, “Matthew 19:1-12.” *Is It Lawful? A Comprehensive Study of Divorce*, 36)
 - c) *R.C.H. Lenski*: “In Matt. 19:9 we have **what Jesus said to the Pharisees**, in Mark **what he said in private to his disciples**. They would have to deal with Roman and Gentile believers, and Jesus instructed them accordingly.” (Bold emphasis added, 421)
 - d) Since Mark does not report what Jesus’ disciples **specifically asked** Him about “**the same matter**,” we cannot know (and should not assume) that their question(s) necessarily pertained to **the exception clause** that is mentioned in Matthew 19:9. If indeed this is the case,

there was **no need for Jesus to mention the exception** “for fornication” again

- e) This interpretation explains both the **absence of the exception clause** and the **additional clarification** concerning a **wife divorcing** her husband
 - f) Furthermore, if Jesus **did not address the Pharisees** in Mt. 19:9, then His answer to their original question (Mt. 19:3) was **incomplete** (cf. Mt. 19:4-6, 9)
7. In Mark’s account, unlike Matthew’s, the **disciples** ask Jesus again about His teaching (Mk. 10:10)
- a. It was not unusual for Jesus to give His disciples **private instruction** after His public teaching (cf. Mk. 4:10; 7:17; 9:28, 33; 10:10)
8. In Mark’s account, unlike Matthew’s, Jesus says: “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery **“against her”** [his original wife]
- a. Mk. 10:11: ¹¹ So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery **against her**.”⁷²
 - b. Though the weight of the evidence seems to suggest that the phrase **“against her”** refers to the **“put away” wife**, some expositors suggest that it refers to the **“other woman”**
 - 1) *R. T. France*: “The words ἐπ’ αὐτήν [against her, ksk] might conceivably be understood with reference to **the new wife** (‘with her’, literally ‘upon her’), but are **more naturally taken of the original wife** (‘against her’; cf. the uses of ἐπί with the accusative in 3:24-26; 13:8, 12).” (Bold emphasis added, 393-394)
 - 2) *Robert G. Bratcher & Eugene Albert Nida*: “*moichatai ep’ autēn* **‘he commits adultery with reference to her’**: the great majority of commentators and translators understand autēn **‘her’** to refer to **the first woman**, whom the husband divorced (not the second, whom he married). Lagrange: **‘with regard to her**: for it is with respect to her and to her rights that the second act is (an act of) adultery’ (cf. Arndt & Gingrich, Taylor). BFBS and N. Turner, however (*The Bible Translator* 7.151-52, 1956), understands it to mean **‘commits adultery with her’** (i.e. the **second woman**); Turner appeals to LXX Jer. 5:8 *chremetizō epi* ‘neigh after’: he cannot, however, cite any instance of Mark’s using *epi* with the accusative meaning ‘with.’” (Bold emphasis added, Mark, UBS Handbook Series, 313)

⁷² *William L. Lane*: “It is interesting to compare with this form of the text Ecclus. 23:22-23. After a long passage on the adulterer (Ch. 23:16-21), ben Sira continues: ‘So it is with a woman who leaves her husband and provides an heir by a stranger. For first of all, she has disobeyed the law of the Most High; second, she has committed an offense against her husband; and third, she has committed adultery through harlotry and brought forth children by another man.’ Cf. Rom. 7:2 f. which speaks of a woman living with another man while her husband is alive, but makes no mention of divorce.” (358, n. 20)

Robert Gundry: “The possibility of a wife’s divorcing her husband reflects Gentile rather than Jewish culture. In a male-dominated culture it went without saying that if a man commits adultery against his wife by divorcing her and marrying another woman, then a woman certainly commits adultery against her husband by divorcing him and marrying another man (compare Romans 7:2-3). So there’s no reason for Jesus to add ‘against him’ for a match with ‘against her.’ But Gentiles didn’t consider a woman who divorces her husband and marries another man an adulteress any more than Jews considered a man who divorces his wife and marries another woman an adulterer. Jesus’ pronouncement is countercultural across the board, then.” (182).

- 3) *Alexander Balmain Bruce*: “The ἐπ’ αὐτήν at the end of ver. 11 may mean either **against**, to the prejudice of, her (the first wife), or **with** her (the second). The former view is taken by the leading modern exegetes, the latter by Victor Ant., Euthy., Theophy., and, among moderns, Ewald and Bleek.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, 1:409)
- 4) Berry translates the phrase *ep’ auten* as “**against her**” in his Interlinear, but Marshall translates it as “**with her**” in his
- c. But even if the phrase “**against her**” refers to **the first wife**, this does not prove that **the first marriage has not really been dissolved by divorce**
- 1) After all, the apostle Paul says that **following a divorce**, no matter what the reason, **one is unmarried** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
 - 2) Well, how can a husband **commit adultery against his first wife** if they are really divorced and no longer married to one another?
 - 3) The apostle Paul answers that question when he says that a woman is **bound by law** to her husband “**for as long as he lives**” (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39)
 - a) Please note that Paul does not say that a woman is **bound** to her husband for as long as:
 1. They continue to **love** each other
 2. There are **no irreconcilable differences** between them
 3. They **remain married** to each other
 4. He does not **marry somebody else**
 - b) Paul says that she is bound by law to her husband **for as long as he lives**
 - c) Paul also says that if while the husband lives, a woman be “**joined**” to another man, she shall be called **an adulteress** (Rom. 7:3)
 1. The phrase “**be joined**” (*ginomai*), literally means “**to become**” and refers to **marriage** in this context
 - a. Chart: “What Is Paul Describing?”
 - b. Chart: “Joined” #1
 - c. Chart: “Joined Must Be Marriage”
 - d. Chart: “Joined” #2
 - d) Thus, the apostle Paul contemplates a situation in which a woman is **bound by law to one man** while she is **married to another**, and that is why she is **an adulteress**
 1. Chart: “Why Remarriage Is Adultery”
 - e) When a husband **divorces** his wife unscripturally and **marries** another woman, he **commits adultery against** his first wife, not because they are **still really married to one another**, but because they are **bound by law to one another**
 1. *James Brooks*: “The teaching of Jesus was **quite contrary** to that of **Judaism**. According to Jewish law, **a wife could commit adultery against her husband** by having relations with another man; and **a man, whether or not married, could commit**

court grounds for divorce and have the court persuade her husband to divorce her (*t. Ketub. 12:3*). **Generally, however, only men could initiate divorce proceedings** (Josephus, *Ant. 15.259*).” (Bold emphasis added, 2:235)

- d. *James Brooks*: “In ancient Jewish society **a wife did not have the right to divorce her husband**. The claim has often been made that Jesus did not speak the words in v. 12 but that they reflect the situation of the early Gentile church. In Roman society men and women had equal rights of divorce. A student of the Gospels must allow for the possibility that the Evangelists adapted the words of Jesus to make them relevant to their situation. This in no way denies that Jesus actually spoke the words. Roman law and Jewish law functioned side by side in first-century Palestine, and within limits a person could be governed by either. **If a Jewish woman demanded a divorce, she could get one on the basis of Roman law**, although this might cut her off from Jewish society. Furthermore, it is not impossible that Jesus foresaw the extension of his teachings beyond the bounds of Palestine.” (Bold emphasis added, 23:158)
- e. *James Edwards*: “It is often supposed that [Mk.] **10:12 could not have been spoken by Jesus** since **Jewish law did not grant the right of divorce to women** (Josephus, *Ant. 15.259*). V. 12 is commonly accepted, even by conservative scholars, as a **Markan interpretation** for the particular benefit of Gentile women, who did possess the right of divorce in Greco-Roman society. This conclusion is not necessary, however, and is almost certainly mistaken. First, the **supposed Hellenizing of the saying is not itself entirely satisfactory**, because **Gentiles did not consider a woman who divorces her husband and marries another an adulteress**, whereas Jesus does. Second, there is scattered evidence suggesting that **women did in fact possess the right to divorce their husbands in Judaism**. One example is the divorce of **Herodias** in [Mk.] 6:17, who divorced her first husband Philip in order to marry Antipas (*Ant. 18.110*). **The Mishnah also granted a Jewish woman the right of divorce** (a) if, on the basis of illness, occupation, impotence, or unwillingness, a husband could not fulfill his conjugal rights, (b) if the husband had coerced the woman to marry him, or (c) if the woman were underage. Again, **the Elephantine documents show that some Jewish Egyptian women were able to divorce their husbands as far back as the fifth century B.C.** Finally, and most importantly, a recently published **second-century Jewish divorce certificate** (*Se’elim 13*) substantially confirms that **women did possess the right of divorce in Judaism**. This legal document, written by a lawyer on behalf of a certain Shelmazion, daughter of Joseph Qebshan of En Gedi, states **‘that this is from me to you a bill of divorce and release.’** The foregoing evidence indicates that **the right of women to divorce men**, although perhaps not as widespread or as accessible to Jewish women as to Jewish men, **was neither impossible nor unknown.**” (Bold emphasis added, 304)
- f. *Kyle Pope*: “In applying the **same words** to the **woman**, which he had to the **man**, Jesus shows that the New Covenant teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage **applies equally to the woman** as it does to the man.” (Bold emphasis added, 620)
- g. *Walter W. Wessel & Mark L. Strauss*: “Jesus also did what the rabbis refused to do: he recognized that **a man could commit adultery against his wife** (v. 11). In rabbinic Judaism, a **woman**, by sexual infidelity, could **commit adultery against her husband**; and a **man**, by having sexual relations with another man’s wife, could **commit adultery against the woman’s husband**. But a **man could never commit adultery against his wife**, no matter what he did. Jesus, by putting the

husband under the same moral obligation as the wife, raised the status and dignity of women.” (Bold emphasis added, 858-859)

h. *Rodney Cooper*: “In Jewish society, **a woman could commit adultery against her husband. A man could commit adultery against another man** by having relations with that man’s wife (Deut. 22:13–29). **A man could not, however, commit adultery against his wife.** Jesus’ proclamation raised the status of women.” (Bold emphasis added, 2:165)

i. There is **no contradiction** between Matthew and Mark. Mark merely records some **additional information** that Jesus taught his disciples privately

1) Mk. 10:10: ¹⁰ **In the house His disciples** also asked Him **again** about the same matter.

10. What does this passage teach us?

- Divorce for any reason is **not permissible**
- Divorce was **not God’s will** originally
- Remarriage after divorce is **adultery against your original mate**
- A wife can** divorce her husband

1) In other words, divorce is **not just a husband’s prerogative**

D. Does Dt. 24:1-4 prohibit **remarrying an original spouse** in cases where there has been an intervening marriage?

- Concern for “**sin against the land**” would limit the application of the text to the **Israelites** under the **old covenant**
- On the other hand, the issue of the wife being “**defiled**” and concern to avoid “**an abomination before the Lord**” would argue against a temporal or limited application
- Since there is nothing in the New Testament that modifies or abrogates this clear command, there seems to be **no biblical basis for doing away with its present application**. (Laney, 15)
- I **disagree** with Laney because:
 - Jesus’ teaching on MDR was **different** than Moses’ teaching (see below)
 - The old covenant has been **replaced** by the new covenant (see below)

III. Dt. 24:1-4 And MDR Controversies

A. A Synopsis Of The One Covenant Doctrine Vs. Biblical Teaching

One Covenant Doctrine	Biblical Teaching
God has made one eternal covenant	God has made several “eternal” covenants
God’s one eternal covenant is unchanging	Many different eternal covenants
New covenant fulfilled in 536 BC	New covenant fulfilled in AD 30 @ cross
A covenant is not a law but has a law	A covenant can be a law
Jesus taught only Jews , not Gentiles	Jesus taught Jews & a few Gentiles

One Covenant Doctrine	Biblical Teaching
Jesus was a Jew who taught Jews how to be Jews under the law of Moses	Jesus also taught disciples how to be Christians in the gospel of the kingdom
Jesus taught only the law of Moses	Jesus taught the law of Moses & the Gospel
Gospels are OT documents	Gospels are NT documents
Only one universal moral law	God's moral law has changed
Jesus did not abrogate the law of Moses	Jesus did abrogate the law of Moses
Moses & Jesus taught the same moral law	Moses & Jesus taught different moral laws
Moses & Jesus taught the same MDR law	Moses & Jesus taught different MDR laws
"Some uncleanness" (Dt. 24:1) = fornication	Some uncleanness (Dt. 24:1) ≠ fornication
Adultery (Mt. 19:9) = non-sexual "adulteration" of the marriage covenant	Adultery (Mt. 19:9) = sexual intercourse with "another," not one's "bound" mate
Repentance demands cessation of "adulterating" the marriage covenant, not dissolution of marriage	Repentance demands cessation of "adultery" in unlawful marriage
Divorce was sinful under the old law (Dt. 24:4)	Divorce for fornication is not sinful (Mt. 19:9)
Remarriage after sinful divorce is permissible (Dt. 24:1-4)	Remarriage after sinful divorce is adultery and may not continue (Mt. 19:9)
Reconciliation with first mate impossible (Dt. 24:4)	Reconciliation with first mate possible (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
It is better to marry than to burn (1 Cor. 7:9)	Some marriages are adulterous (Mt. 19:9)
Celibacy is a gift (1 Cor. 7:7)	Celibacy is a requirement for all who cannot marry lawfully (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
One is to remain in his called state (1 Cor. 7:17-24)	One cannot remain in a sinful state (Rom. 6:1-4)
No NT example of dissolving a sinful marriage	There are examples of sinful marriages being dissolved
Jesus' MDR teaching was old covenant teaching and it has no application today under the new covenant	Jesus' MDR teaching reaffirmed God's original intention for marriage
1 Cor. 7:27-28 is the only NT doctrine for MDR	1 Cor. 7:27-28 is not the only NT doctrine for MDR

B. A Detailed Explanation And Refutation Of The One Covenant Doctrine

1. Argument 1: “God made one eternal covenant with Abraham”

a. Explanation:

- 1) The “**eternal/everlasting covenant**” (Heb. 13:20) is the **Abrahamic covenant** (Gen. 17:2, 4, 6-13)
- 2) While there have been **different renewals** of this covenant (1) at Sinai, (2) when the remnant returned from Babylonian exile, (3) at Christ’s death, there is **only one covenant** that God has made with mankind
 - a) *Stanley Paher*: “[A]ll people of God in every era are in one perfected body, all saved by grace through faith. **All in the same eternal covenant** (Heb. 13:20). . . .” (Bold emphasis added, 25)⁷⁵
 - b) *Stanley Paher*: “Three, and perhaps four, stages of everlasting covenant are found in I Chronicles 16:15-17; Jeremiah 32:36-40; Ezekiel 37:15-27. The old covenant is not old in the sense of **inferior** or **wanting**. The new covenant of Hebrews 8:8f is not **different from** or **superior to** any previous historic stages of **covenantal development**.” (Bold emphasis added, 94)
 - c) *Stanley Paher*: “[F]rom the time of Abraham through Moses, David, and the prophets, **the eternal covenant evolved** toward its **fuller and more complete and glorious state** under Jesus Christ, in which there is the ultimate forgiveness of sins because of His perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 10:1-10).” (Bold emphasis added, 96)
 - d) *Stanley Paher*: “[T]he everlasting covenant functioning in Old Testament times is legitimately described as ‘**new**’ in the present era, even though it had undergone **advances** and **changes** from the time of **Abraham** through **renewals** to Israel in the days of **Moses, David**, and the **prophets**.” (Bold emphasis added, 97)
 - e) *Stanley Paher*: “**Continuity of covenant** is a unifying Bible doctrine. The promises and the oath God made with **Abraham** and **Jacob** were renewed under **Moses, David** and the **prophets**, finding the complete fulfillment in **Jesus Christ**.” (Bold emphasis added, 98)
 - f) *Stanley Paher*: “Thus, the **covenant** enjoyed by **Abraham, Moses**, and the **people** at the time of Christ is the **same agreement**, the **same peace treaty**. It is the **eternal agreement** spoken of first by **Abraham** (Gen. 17:7-19), by several other holy men throughout the ages, including King **David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel**, and finally by the **writer of Hebrews** at the beginning of the Christian era (Heb. 13:20; see also Luke 1:67-75).” (Bold emphasis added, 98)
 - g) *Stanley Paher*: “Since these matters of covenant which extend from Abraham past the time of Christ to the present are so harmoniously intertwined, it serves **no useful purpose to separate them into old covenant and new covenants**, indicating a total passing away of an old order (and law system) in favor of inaugurating another. Rather, throughout the ages, there is **one eternal covenant** wherein the first

⁷⁵ In his book, *The Eternal Covenant Of Peace*, Stanley Paher does not discuss MDR, but he does acknowledge that the teachings of Jim Puterbaugh in the early 1980’s, influenced his thinking about “this great biblical theme” -- i.e. the one eternal covenant (286).

century era of preaching was the time of the **blooming spring flower** which for many centuries before had been a **life-containing bulb** embedded in the soil of Jewish covenant faithful.” (Bold emphasis added, 112)

- h) *Stanley Paher*: “The **continuity** of the **eternal/everlasting covenant** from Abraham to Moses, David, the era of the prophets, and the Christian age is amply shown in such passages as II Samuel 7:11-14, Ezekiel 37:15-27, and Jeremiah 33:14-26.” (Bold emphasis added, 117)
- i) *Stanley Paher*: “[N]o **new-in-kind covenant supplanted the everlasting one** given to Abraham, David, Jeremiah, and the contemporary prophets. **No new law of Christ superseding the law of Moses**. Assuredly, **God never gave a separate “everlasting covenant”** to Abraham, another to Moses, another to David, then still another to God’s people of the late Jewish period, only to replace them with a **new eternal covenant** for Christians this side of the cross.” (Bold emphasis added, 186)

b. Refutation:

- 1) God has made **several “eternal” covenants** with different men
 - a) The rainbow covenant with **Noah** (Gen. 6:18; 9:8ff)
 - b) The covenant of circumcision with **Abraham** (Gen. 12:1ff; 15:18ff; 17:1ff; 22:18; Acts 3:25)
 - c) The covenant with **Isaac** (Gen. 17:19)
 - d) The covenant with **Jacob** (1 Chr. 16:17; Psa. 105:10)⁷⁶
 - e) The covenant with **Israel at Sinai** (Ex. 19:5; 24:6ff; 34:10, 27-28; Dt. 4:13; 5:2-3)
 - f) The covenant of shewbread with **Aaron** (Lev. 24:8)
 - g) The covenant of an everlasting priesthood with **Phinehas** (Num. 25:11ff)
 - h) The covenant with Israel at **Moab** (Dt. 29:1)
 - i) The covenant with **David** (2 Sam. 23:5; cf. 2 Sam. 7; Psa. 89:3, 28)
 - j) The **new** covenant (Jer. 31:31ff; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8ff; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20)
- 2) One covenant advocates argue that **“the eternal covenant” must be perpetual**; but that is just not necessarily so
 - a) The Hebrew term *olam*, which is translated **“forever”** or **“everlasting,”** often means **age-lasting**, not endless
 1. *HALOT*: “1. **Long time, duration** (usually eternal, eternity, but not in a philosophical sense)... 2. future time... 3. **A long time back**, dark age of prehistory... 4. of God... 5. misc....” (798-799)
 2. *BDB*: “long duration, antiquity, futurity... 1. Of past time: a. *ancient time*... b. *...the long dead*... c. of God... d. of things... 2. a. indef. *futurity*, c. prep. *for ever, always* (sometimes – *during the lifetime*)... b. = *continuous existence*, (1) of

⁷⁶ The covenants with Isaac and Jacob were a renewal of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17:21; Ex. 2:24; Lev. 26:42; 2 Ki. 13:23; 1 Chr. 16:16-17; Psa. 105:9-10).

things.... (2) of nations.... (3) families.... (4) national relations.... c. of divine existence.... d. of God's covenant.... e. of God's laws.... f. of God's promises.... g. of relations between God and his people.... h. of Messianic dynasty and king.... i. = *indefinite, unending future*.... j. after death.... k. = *age (duration) of the world*.... l. pl. intens. *everlastingness, eternity*....” (761-762)

3. *Gesenius*: (A) pr. what is hidden; specially *hidden time, long*; **the beginning or end of which is either uncertain or else not defined**; *eternity, perpetuity*. It is used -- (1) *of time long past, antiquity*(2) It more often refers to *future time*, in such a manner, that **what is called the *terminus ad quem*, is always defined from the nature of the thing itself**. When it is applied to human affairs, and specially -- (a) to individual men, it commonly signifies *all the days of life*....(b) it belongs to a whole race (dynasty), or people, and it comprehends *all the time until their destruction*....(c) *the metaphysical idea of eternity*, at least that which has no end, is more nearly approached by the examples in which...is applied to the earth and the whole nature of things....(d) **The true notion of *eternity* is found in this word in those passages which speak of the immortal nature of God himself**....Also a peculiar class is formed of those places -- (e) in which the Hebrews use the metaphysical notion of eternity by hyperbole, in speaking of human things, especially in the expression of good wishes....(B) *the world*, from the Chaldee and Rabbinic usage...hence *the desire or pursuit of worldly things*....” (Bold emphasis added, 612-613)
4. *Strong*: “prop. *concealed*, i.e. the *vanishing point*; gen. **time out of mind** (past or fut.), i.e. (practically) *eternity*; freq. adv. (espec. with prep. pref.) *always*....” (Bold emphasis added, *Hebrew And Chaldee Dictionary*, 86)
5. *Young*: “*Age, age-lasting*” (310)

b) Several “**forever things**” have ceased or will cease

“Forever Things” Can Cease		
Forever		Cease
Gen. 17:11-14	Circumcision	Gal. 5:1-6; 6:15
Ex. 12:14, 24	Passover	Col. 2:16-17
Ex. 29:9; 40:15; Num. 25:13	Aaronic Priesthood	Heb. 7:11-17
Lev. 16:29, 31, 34; 23:31	Day of Atonement	Heb. 9:23-28; 10:1-12, 18
Psa. 119:151-152	Righteous Ordinances	Gal. 3:24-25; Heb. 9:10
Gen. 13:14-17; 17:7-8; 1 Chr. 16:16-18; Psa. 105:9-11	Land Possession	Dt. 28:45-46; 1 Chr. 28:9

“Forever Things” Can Cease		
Forever		Cease
Ex. 31:16-17	Sabbath	Col. 2:16-17
Psa. 78:69; Eccl. 1:4	Earth	2 Pet 3:7, 10-12

3) Furthermore, God’s institution of **marriage** (Gen. 2:18-25) **predated** all the other covenants we read about in the Bible, and Jesus **reinstated** God’s original intention for marriage (Mt. 19:8-9)

2. Argument 2: “God’s one eternal covenant is unchanging”

a. Explanation:

1) While God’s one eternal covenant has been **renewed** with various people at various times, it has **remained basically unchanged**

a) *Stanley Paher*: “[I]t is **impossible to isolate a distinct old covenant from a new covenant**. Rather, both Jeremiah and Ezekiel showed a **continuity of covenant people** throughout time.” (Bold emphasis added, 100)

b) *Stanley Paher*: “The **eternal covenant** mentioned by **David, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel** inextricably binds all of God’s chosen people in **one gracious saving agreement**, whether they lived before or after the cross, and makes them into **one body of called-out people....**” (Bold emphasis added, 100)

b. Refutation:

1) **God’s covenants** with various men or nations have been **different**

a) The Abrahamic covenant ≠ The Sinaitic covenant (Dt. 5:1-3)

b) Moab covenant (with Israel) ≠ The Sinai covenant (Dt. 29:1)

c) The New covenant ≠ The Sinai covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-12)

Old & New Covenants	
Old Covenant	New Covenant
Laws written on stone (Ex. 31:18; 2 Cor. 3:3, 7)	Laws written in hearts (Heb. 8:10; cf. 2 Cor. 3:3)
I will be their God and they shall be my people (Ex. 6:7; 19:5-6; Dt. 7:6; 2 Sam. 7:24)	I will be their God and they shall be my people (Heb. 8:10)
Taught to know God after covenant relationship	Taught to know God before covenant relationship (Heb. 8:11; Jn. 6:44-45)
Some knew God (Rom. 9:6-8, 27)	All will know God (Heb. 8:11)
Reminder of sin every year (Lev. 16:29-30; Heb. 10:1-3, 18)	Sins remembered no more (Heb. 8:12)

The Law & The Gospel	
The Law	The Gospel
Given by Moses (Jn. 1:17)	Given by Christ (Jn. 1:17)
God Spoke by Prophets (Heb. 1:1)	God Speaks by Christ (Heb. 1:2)
To Jews only (Dt. 5:1-5; Rom. 2:14)	To all (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:44-48)
Last till Christ (Gal. 3:19, 23-25)	Last till end (Mt. 28:20)
Pass away (Heb. 8:13)	Abides forever (1 Pet. 1:23-25)
Changeable priesthood (Heb. 7:12)	Unchangeable priesthood (Heb. 7:14)
Blood of animals (Heb. 10:4)	Blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14)
Reminder of sin (Heb. 10:3)	Sins remembered no more (Heb. 8:12)
High priest on earth (Heb. 8:3-4)	High priest in heaven (Heb. 8:4)
Law was good (Rom. 7:12)	Better covenant (Heb. 8:6)
Imperfect (Heb. 8:7)	Faultless (Heb. 8:7)
Children by fleshly birth (Jn. 8:33, 37)	Children by spiritual birth (Jn. 3:3-5)
Jew outwardly (Rom. 2:28)	Jew inwardly (Rom. 2:29)

Two Different Covenants	
Old Covenant	New Covenant
Old Israel (nation – Ex. 19:5-6)	New Israel (individuals)
Sinai (Heb. 12:18)	Zion (Heb. 12:22)
Reminder of sins (Heb. 10:3-4)	Sins not remembered (Heb. 8:12)
First covenant (Heb. 9:1)	Second covenant (Heb. 8:7)
Old covenant (Heb. 8:13)	New covenant (Heb. 8:13)
Faulty covenant (Heb. 8:7)	Better covenant (Heb. 8:6)
Obsolete covenant (Heb. 8:13)	Eternal covenant (Heb. 13:20)
Moses = Mediator (Gal. 3:19)	Christ = Mediator (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24)

Two Different Covenants	
Old Covenant	New Covenant
Old altar (Heb. 13:10)	New altar (Heb. 13:10)
Blood of animals (Heb. 9:12-13, 18-22)	Blood of Jesus (Heb. 9:12-14)
Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7:11-16)	Priesthood of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:11-16)
Takes away first [covenant or sacrifices] (Heb. 10:9)	Establish the second (Heb. 10:9)
Repeated sacrifices which could not take away sins (Heb. 10:11)	One sacrifice for sins forever (Heb. 10:12, 14-18)

d) The new covenant made the old covenant **obsolete** (Heb. 8:13)

2) There have been **two different priesthoods** which required a **change in law**

Two Priesthoods (Heb. 7:11-14)	
Levi	Melchizedek
Imperfection (11)	
Order of Aaron (11)	Order of Melchizedek (11)
Tribe of Levi (11)	Tribe of Judah (14)
Priesthood changed (12)	Change of law (12)
Law of fleshly commandment (16)	Power of endless life (16)
Annuling of former commandment (18)	Bringing in of better hope (19)
Weakness & unprofitableness (18)	
Law made nothing perfect (19)	Draw near to God (19)
Priests without oath (21)	Priest with oath (20-21)
	Surety of better covenant (22)
Many priests (23)	Unchangeable priesthood (24)
Prevented by death from continuing (23)	Continues forever (24)
Law made nothing perfect (19)	Able to save to uttermost (25)
	Ever lives to make intercession (25)
Daily (27)	Once for all (27)
[Animal] sacrifices (27)	Himself (27)

Two Priesthoods (Heb. 7:11-14)	
Levi	Melchizedek
Own sins & people's sin (27)	
Law appoints (28)	Word of oath (28)
Men of weakness (28)	Holy, harmless...Son perfected forever (28)

- 3) One covenant advocates seem to assume that there can be **only one** “eternal” covenant ⁷⁷ but God has made **different** “eternal” covenants with **different people** concerning **different things**

Person	Covenant	Reference
Noah	Rainbow: No more flood	Gen. 6:18; 9:6
Abraham	Circumcision	Gen. 17:7, 13
Isaac	Circumcision	Gen. 17:19
Jacob	Land	1 Chr. 16:17; Psa. 105:10
Aaron	Shewbread	Lev. 24:8
Aaron	Heave offerings	Num. 18:19
Phineas	Priesthood	Num. 25:13
Israel	Land	Psa. 111:6, 9
David	Throne	2 Sam. 23:5; 2 Chr. 13:5; Psa. 89:28
Remnant	Sure mercies of David	Isa. 55:3; 59:21; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26
New	Sin forgiven and remembered no more	Jer. 31:31-34; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8ff; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20

1. Argument 3: “**The new covenant was fulfilled in 536 BC**”

a. Explanation:

- 1) *Stanley Paher*: “Ezekiel 37:15-27 binds the Jewish and the New Testament eras under the **same covenant**, culminating with God’s promise that he will make a **covenant of peace** with them [Israel and Judah united]....

“This restoration of farms and villages took place in about **536 B.C.**, after the 50-year Babylonian captivity, when the Jews reclaimed their former land. It was a promise sandwiched between the renewal of David [Jesus] as

⁷⁷ *Stanley Paher*: “Since both the Mosaic old covenant and the new covenant, (as well as other covenants which are mentioned in the Old Testament) are spoken of as ‘eternal’ and ‘everlasting,’ how can two such covenants (and possibly others) be operable at the same time among the same people and, more importantly, from the same God?” (180).

their king (v. 24) and the fulfillment in Christ of the **everlasting peace covenant** (v. 26).” (Bold emphasis added, 99-100)

- 2) *Stanley Paher*: “Indeed, Jeremiah’s famous **new (renewed) covenant** of 31:31-34, first prophesied in about 593 BC was **realized about 60 years later** when God’s people in the houses of Judah and Israel, to whom the covenant oracle was specifically addressed, **returned from Babylonian exile**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Eternal Covenant Of Peace*, 194)
- 3) *Stanley Paher*: “Jeremiah did not at all prophesy of a **new-in-kind covenant** or agreement, or an entirely **different order**, attached to **another law** under the future Messiah. Rather, the prophet was comforting the beleaguered covenant faithful in Jerusalem during the years 600-586 B.C. by foretelling the **glorious time of renewal and spiritual prosperity** of the houses of Israel and Judah, only a **few generations** after their impending captivity.” (Bold emphasis added, 207)
- 4) *Jim Puterbaugh*: “The New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34 refers to **God renewing his covenant** first **when the Jews came out of Babylonian captivity**. To put the law in their hearts refers to Jer. 17:1. God’s law would replace the sin in their heart. There is **no reference to the Old Law and the New Law**.” (Bold emphasis added, Tape of “The Covenant”, 2-6-’95, via McDonald, “Confusion on the Covenants: Jeremiah 31 and the ‘One Covenant’ Controversy,” n.p.)

b. Refutation:

- 1) There is **no evidence** that the **new covenant** was **fulfilled in 536 BC**
 - a) None of the **post-exilic books** (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, & Malachi) give even a **hint** that the new covenant was fulfilled in the **remnant’s return** from Babylonian exile
- 2) There is **evidence** for the **continuation** of the **old covenant** after 536 BC
 - a) In the time of Ezra, pagan wives were divorced **“according to the law”** (Ezra 10:3)
 - b) **Animal sacrifices continued** after the return of the remnant (Ezra 9:4-5), but they were **necessary under the old covenant**, not the new
 1. Under the old covenant, there was a **reminder** of sins (Heb. 10:1-4), but under the new covenant, sins are **remembered no more** (Jer. 31:34)
 2. Jesus’ sacrifice **replaced** animal sacrifices (Heb. 9:11-15)
 3. With **remission of sin**, there is **no more offering** for sin (Heb. 10:15-18)
 4. Therefore, the new covenant was **not fulfilled** in 536 BC
 - c) In the days of Nehemiah, they separated the **mixed multitude** from Israel to comply with the **Book of Moses** (Neh. 13:1-3)
 - d) Nehemiah instituted **various reforms** because many of the people had “defiled the **priesthood** and the **covenant** of the **priesthood** and the **Levites**” (Neh. 13:15ff, 29)
- 3) **Jeremiah’s prophecy** of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) is in a **Messianic context**
 - a) **Bring back** from captivity (Jer. 30:1-3, 18)

- b) **Serve** the Lord their **God** and **David** their king (Jer. 30:9)
- c) Jacob shall **return**, have **rest**, and be **quiet** (Jer. 30:10)
- d) **City rebuilt** (Jer. 30:18; 31:4)
- e) My **people**, your **God** (Jer. 30:22; 31:1)
- f) In the **latter days** (Jer. 30:24)
- g) At the same time, I will be the **God** of all Israel (Jer. 31:1)
- h) Let us go up to **Zion** (Jer. 31:6; cf. Isa. 2:1-4)
- i) Save your **people**, the **remnant** of Israel (Jer. 31:7)
- j) **Gather** from ends of the earth (Jer. 31:8, 10)
- k) Come and sing in the height of **Zion** (Jer. 31:12)
- l) Turn mourning to **joy** (Jer. 31:13)
- m) Lord has created a **new thing** in the earth (Jer. 31:22)
- n) “The Lord bless you, O home of **justice**, and mountain of **holiness!**” (Jer. 31:23)
- o) I will watch over them to **build** and **plant** (Jer. 31:28)
- p) They will say no more: “The fathers have eaten **sour grapes**, And the children’s teeth are **set on edge**.” (Jer. 31:29-30)
- q) **New covenant** with Israel & Judah (Jer. 31:31)
- r) **Not according** to Sinai covenant (Jer. 31:32)
- s) My law in their **minds** and **hearts** (Jer. 31:33)
- t) Their **God** & my **people** (Jer. 31:33; 32:38)
- u) No more teach every man to **Know** the Lord (Jer. 31:34)
- v) They **all** shall know Me (Jer. 31:34)
- w) **Forgive** their iniquity & **remember** sin no more (Jer. 31:34)
- x) **City built** for the Lord and not **plucked up** or **thrown down** anymore forever (Jer. 31:38-40)
 - 1. This prophecy could not be referring to **physical Jerusalem**
 - a. The temple was **desecrated** by Antiochus Epiphanes (AD 167-164)
 - b. Herod’s temple was **destroyed** by the Romans (AD 70)
 - c. Jerusalem was **destroyed** again (AD 135)
 - 2. This must be a prophecy of **spiritual Jerusalem** (cf. Heb. 12:22)
- y) Great and **mighty things** (Jer. 33:3)
- z) I will bring it **health & healing** (Jer. 33:6)
 - a) I will reveal the abundance of **peace & truth** (Jer. 33:6)
 - b) Captives to **return & rebuild** (Jer. 33:7)
 - c) **Cleanse** them from all iniquity (Jer. 33:8)

- d) It shall be a name of **joy, praise, & honor** (Jer. 33:9)
 - e) Voice of **joy, gladness, bridegroom & bride** (Jer. 33:11)
 - f) **Sacrifice of praise** into the house of the Lord (Jer. 33:11)
 - g) Cause the captives to **return as at the first** (Jer. 33:11)
 - h) Dwelling place of **shepherds & flocks** (Jer. 33:12-13)
 - i) In those days, a **Branch** of righteousness (Jer. 33:15)
 - j) Judah will be **saved** & Jerusalem **dwelt safely** (Jer. 33:16)
 - k) **“The Lord Our Righteousness”** (Jer. 33:16)
 - l) **David** shall never **lack a man** to sit on the throne of Israel (Jer. 33:17)
 - m) Nor shall the **priests lack a man** to offer burnt offerings (Jer. 33:18)
 - n) Covenant with David **unbreakable** (Jer. 33:20-21)
 - o) **Multiply descendants** of David (Jer. 33:22)
 - p) I will cause **captives to return** (Jer. 33:26)
4. Argument 4: “A covenant is not a law but has a law”
- a. Explanation:
 - b. Refutation:
 - 1) The **ten commandments** are described as:
 - a) The **“words of the covenant”** (Ex. 34:27-28)
 - b) **“His covenant”** (Dt. 4:13)
 - c) The **“tables of the covenant”** (Dt. 9:9-11)
 - d) The **“covenant of YHWH”** (2 Chr. 6:11 & 1 Ki. 8:9, 21)
 - 2) The **ten commandments** were a **law** (Rom. 7:7; cf. Dt. 33:2; Neh. 9:13)
 - 3) So, a **covenant** can be a **law** (Psa. 78:10; Hos. 8:1)
5. Argument 5: “Jesus taught Jews, not Gentiles”
- a. Explanation:
 - 1) Jesus was sent to the **lost sheep of the house of Israel** (Mt. 15:24)
 - 2) Jesus sent His apostles only to the **lost sheep of the house of Israel** (Mt. 10:5-6)
 - 3) Jesus was a **servant to the circumcision** (Rom. 15:8)
 - 4) John the Baptist’s mission was to **prepare** the way of the Lord by **restoring** unfaithful Jews to God (Isa. 40:3; cf. Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:1-5; 9:12; Lk. 1:76; Jn. 1:23)
 - 5) Jesus **continued the mission** of John the Baptist (Isa. 49:6; cf. Lk. 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23)
 - 6) Jesus did not teach **Gentiles**
 - b. Refutation:
 - 1) Jesus taught **Jews and Gentiles**

- a) While His **primary mission** was to **Israel** (Mt. 1:21; 2:6; 15:24), He also **taught some Gentiles** during His Personal Ministry
1. Isaiah prophesied that “**Galilee of the Gentiles**” would see a **great light** (Isa. 9:1-2)
 - a. Matthew said that Jesus **fulfilled** this prophecy when He preached in Capernaum and the surrounding area (Mt. 4:12-17)
 2. Isaiah prophesied that God’s servant would bring forth **justice** to the **Gentiles** (Isa. 42:1-4)
 - a. **Jesus** said that He **fulfilled** this prophecy (Mt. 12:16-21)
 3. Isaiah prophesied that God’s servant would be a **light** to the **Gentiles** (Isa. 42:6-7; 49:6)
 - a. **Simeon** implied that Jesus would **fulfill** this prophecy (Lk. 2:27-32)
 - b. **Paul** applied this prophecy to Jesus (Acts 26:23)
- b) Jesus’ “**other sheep**” most likely are the Gentiles (Jn. 10:14-16)
- 2) Jesus had **some Gentile followers**
- a) Some from **beyond the Jordan, Tyre, & Sidon** came to Jesus to be healed (Mk. 3:7-8)
 - b) The **Syro-Phoenician’s daughter** was healed (Mt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30)
 - c) The **healed demoniac** told his story to those in **Decapolis**, which was Gentile territory (Mt. 8:28-34; Mk. 5:1-20; Lk. 8:26-39)
 - d) The **centurion’s servant** was healed (Mt. 8:5-13; Lk. 7:1-10)
 - e) Certain **Greeks** wanted to see Jesus (Jn. 12:20-21)
- 3) Finally, even if Jesus’ teaching had been exclusively **addressed to the Jews**, that does not prove that His teaching could/would not have **application to others**

Addressees & Application	
Addressees	Application
Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1-2)	One (Jn. 3:3, 5)
Samaritan Woman (Jn. 4:7)	True Worshipers (Jn. 4:23-24)
Multitude (Mt. 13:1-2)	Anyone (Mt. 13:19)
Jesus’ disciples (Mt. 24:3-4)	All nations (Mt. 25:31-32)
Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:18-21)	All men everywhere (Acts 17:30-31)
Multitudes & Disciples (Mt. 5:1-2)	Whoever (Mt. 5:31-32)
Pharisees & Disciples (Mt. 19:2-3, 10-12)	Whoever (Mt. 19:6, 9)

4) Jesus applied His teaching on MDR **universally**

Mt. 19		Mk. 10
2	Great multitudes present	1
3	Is it lawful for a man to divorce for any reason?	2
4	He who made them at the beginning	6
4	Made them male & female	6
5	A man leave, be joined, one flesh	7
6	What God has joined let not man separate	9
8	From the beginning it was not so	
9	Whoever divorces & whoever marries (cf. Mt. 5:32; Lk. 16:18)	11
	If a woman divorces her husband	12

b. By the **logic** of this argument, we would have to conclude that since all the NT was **addressed to someone else**, **none** of it **applies** to us today

c. **“What proves too much proves nothing at all!”**

6. Argument 6: **“Jesus was a Jew who taught Jews how to be Jews under the law of Moses”**

a. Explanation:

- 1) Jesus was a **Jew** (Jn. 4:9; 18:35)
- 2) Jesus **lived under** the law of Moses (Gal. 4:4)
- 3) Jesus **observed** the law of Moses
 - a) He observed the **Passover** (Mt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-15; Jn. 2:13, 23)
 - b) He taught in various **synagogues** (Mt. 13:54; Mk. 1:54; Lk. 4:16-21; Jn. 6:59)
 - c) He paid the **temple tax** (Mt. 17:24-27)
- 4) Jesus **kept** the law of Moses perfectly (Jn. 8:46)
 - a) Sin is the **transgression** of law (1 Sam. 15:24; Dan. 9:5, 11; 1 Jn. 3:4)
 - b) Jesus was **without sin** (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22-24; 1 Jn. 3:5)
 - c) Therefore, Jesus **perfectly kept the law** He lived under – the law of Moses (Heb. 10:5-10)
- 5) Jesus **taught** the law of Moses (Mt. 7:12)
 - a) *Dan Billingsly*: “Remember, Jesus said ‘in the sermon on the mount’ that **his teaching was from ‘the law and the prophets.’** ‘Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for **this is the law and the prophets**’ (Matt. 7:12).” (Bold emphasis added, “Understanding,” 61)

b) *Dan Billingsly*: “John the baptizer of Israel and Jesus Christ the Messiah were the next-to-last and last prophet that God sent to his old covenant nation of Israel. John and Jesus were **Old Testament ‘prophets’** during the time of MMLJ⁷⁸—before the cross, they were **not New Testament evangelists.**” (Bold emphasis added, “The Difference Between John’s Old Testament Baptism And ???,” 1)

c) *Dan Billingsly*: “Jesus was not a New Testament Christian teaching new covenant doctrine, he was the **Old Testament Messiah** teaching the **law of Moses** to the last generation of Jews in Israel.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ibid.*, 3)

d) *Dan Billingsly*: “MMLJ/BC⁷⁹ describe Jesus teaching the **true law of Moses** to the **Jews of Israel** and how they should live, worship and serve God faithfully under the **Old Testament law of Moses.**” (Bold emphasis added, “Understanding,” 25)

e) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus **echoed OT teaching**

1. Chart: “The OT & Jesus’ Sermon”

6) Jesus **taught others to keep** the law of Moses

a) A **cleansed leper** was taught to offer the appropriate OT sacrifices (Mt. 8:1-4; Mk. 1:40-45; Lk. 5:12-14)

b) The **rich young ruler** was taught to keep the commandments of the law (Mt. 19:16-19; Mk. 10:17-19; Lk. 18:18-27)

c) A **certain lawyer** was taught to keep the two great commandments of the law (Lk. 10:25-28)

d) A **scribe** was taught to keep the two great commandments of the law (Mt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-34)

e) **Multitudes & His disciples** were taught to observe and do what the Pharisees instructed (Mt. 23:1-3)

b. Refutation:

1) To be the **perfect sacrifice** for sin, Jesus had to **live a perfect life**, and that means He **kept the law** that He lived under perfectly

2) He also **taught** His contemporaries living under the same law He lived under, to **keep that law**, since that law remained **in effect until the cross** (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:15-17)

3) While Jesus taught **Jews** how to be **Jews** under the **law** of Moses, He also taught His **disciples** some things about how to be **Christians** in the **gospel** of the kingdom

7. Argument 7: “**Jesus taught only the law of Moses**”

a. Explanation:

1) *Dan Billingsly*: “**Christ did not teach or reveal New Testament doctrine** in MMLJ/BC while the Old Testament law of Moses was still in effect. **The Scriptures teach that the New Testament was not revealed or taught**”

⁷⁸ MMLJ = Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John.

⁷⁹ MMLJ/BC = Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John Before The Cross.

until the ‘death of the testator’ (Heb. 9:16-17).” (Bold emphasis added, “The Roman Catholic Heresy Of 1486 AD,” 4)

- 2) *Dan Billingsly*: “Christ declared more than 100 times that he was **teaching the law of Moses** in MMLJ—before the cross. Not once did Christ ever declare in MMLJ— that he was **teaching New Testament doctrine.**” (Bold emphasis added, “Doctrinal Harmony Within The Covenants, 1)
- 3) *Dan Billingsly*: “Any preacher among in [sic] the Lord’s church today who teaches anything out of MMLJ/BC as New Testament doctrine is **teaching error, rejects the New Testament ‘truth’ of Christ, deceives his fellow Christians** and continues to promote the Roman Catholic ‘heresy’ of 1486.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Roman Catholic Heresy Of 1486 AD,” 6)
- 4) While Jesus did teach some **parables and prophecies** of the coming kingdom, He did not reveal **NT truth and doctrine**
 - a) *Dan Billingsly*: “In MMLJ/BC, **Jesus taught the Old Testament law of Moses to Israel and practiced the Jews’ old covenant religion** during the closing thirty-three years of the Old Testament Mosaical ‘age.’ We must also understand that even though Jesus **‘prophesied’** and spoke in **‘parables’** of some new covenant teaching to come in this New Testament ‘age,’ **he did not reveal New Testament ‘truth’ and ‘doctrine’** in his teaching to Israel in MMLJ/BC.” (Bold emphasis added, “Understanding,” 1)
 - b) *Dan Billingsly*: “While Christ did often **‘prophesy’** of the New Testament age to come in MMLJ/BC, **no one preached the New Testament ‘gospel’** as a fact to be **believed and obeyed** – before the cross.” (Bold emphasis added, “Christ’s New Testament ‘Truth’ Versus Dan Mayfield’s ‘Error,’” 8)
 - c) *Dan Billingsly*: “Christ’s use of **Old Testament ‘parables’** in MMLJ/BC is his teaching **God’s old covenant ‘truth’ to Israel** that follows the pattern set by many of the earlier prophets sent to Israel (i.e. 2 Sam. 12:1-7; Isa. 5:1-7). In MMLJ/BC, Jesus uses his **Old Testament ‘parables’** to set forth **God’s old covenant ‘truth’ for Jewish life** under the **law of Moses**, and to point that ‘last generation’ of Israel to the coming of God’s new covenant ‘truth’ in the New Testament ‘age.’” (Bold emphasis added, “What About Christ’s Old Testament ‘Parables’ In MMLJ/BC?,” 1)
- d) Syllogism #1:
 1. *Major Premise*: No part of the NT could be delivered before the **“law of the Lord went forth”** (Isa. 2:3)
 2. *Minor Premise*: The law of the Lord went forth from **Jerusalem**, as recorded in Acts 2
 3. *Conclusion*: Therefore, **no part of the NT is recorded before Acts 2**
- e) Syllogism #2:
 1. *Major Premise*: For Jesus to reveal NT teaching that applies to us today, he would have to **cease teaching about the Law of Moses**
 2. *Minor Premise*: Jesus **did not cease to teach about the Law of Moses** because he lived under it, and it was not set aside until Jesus died on the cross

3. *Conclusion*: Therefore, **no NT teaching** that applies to us occurred until **after** Jesus died on the cross

f) Syllogism #3:

1. *Major Premise*: Jesus teaching NT truth before the cross would be **“mingling” two laws together**
2. *Minor Premise*: Jesus would **not do that**
3. *Conclusion*: Jesus did not reveal NT teaching **applicable to us today** before the cross

g) Syllogism #4:

1. *Major Premise*: Jesus taught against pouring **new wine** into **old wineskins** (Mt. 9:14-17)
2. *Minor Premise*: If Jesus were to teach anything that **applies** to us today, then he would be pouring **new wine** into **old wineskins**
3. *Conclusion*: Jesus **did not teach anything** that **applies to us** prior to the cross

h) Syllogism #5:

1. *Major Premise*: Jesus did **“prophecy”** some things regarding life in the NT kingdom
2. *Minor Premise*: All prophecy stated before Pentecost has **no binding authority** over those living in that kingdom
3. *Conclusion*: None of Jesus’ “prophecies” stated before the Pentecost of Acts 2 has **any authority** over His kingdom today

5) Therefore, we must not **interpret** or **apply** Jesus’ OT teaching to people in the NT age

a) The OT applied to the **Jews**; the NT applies to **Christians**

b) *Dan Billingsly*: “Old Testament teaching is **never New Testament doctrine**, and New Testament doctrine is **never Old Testament teaching**.”

c) *Dan Billingsly*: “The New Testament church today must look to and **use only 1 Corinthians 7:27-28** as New Testament doctrine for divorce and marriage.” (Bold emphasis added, “What About The ‘Ten Commandments’ In Matthew 19?” 4)

d) *Dan Billingsly*: “[N]either Christ, the Holy Spirit, the apostles (who were to reveal ‘all’ New Testament ‘truth’) nor the 1st century church ever – in any book, chapter or verse of the New Testament – **preached, quoted or referenced Matthew 19 as New Testament doctrine**.” (Bold emphasis added, “Christ’s New Testament ‘Truth’ Versus Dan Mayfield’s ‘Error,’” 7)

b. Refutation:

1) This is the **real issue**, and while Jesus taught **Jews** how to be **Jews** under the **law** of Moses, He also taught His **disciples** some things about how to be **Christians** in the **gospel** of the kingdom

2) Dan Billingsly’s syllogisms are **flawed**

a) The **major premise** of **Syllogism #1** is merely an **assumption** and an **assertion** without proof

1. A man's **last will and testament** becomes **effective** at the **death** of the testator (Heb. 9:15-17), but it is **written** (and might even be communicated) **before his death**
 - b) The **major premise** of **Syllogism #2** is merely an **assumption** and an **assertion** without proof
 1. Jesus taught both the **law of Moses** and the **gospel of the kingdom** (in anticipation of the new covenant)
 - c) The **major premise** of **Syllogism #3** is incorrect
 1. **New law** can be **communicated** before it goes into effect (e.g. new traffic laws, new tax laws, etc.)
 - d) The **minor premise** of **Syllogism #3** is **incorrect**
 1. Jesus' teaching on MDR was **different** from Moses' teaching
 - a. The **Pharisees** perceived a difference (Mt. 19:7)
 - b. The **apostles** also perceived a difference (Mt. 19:10)
 - e) **Syllogism #4** **ignores the context** of Jesus' statement
 1. Jesus was **responding** to the **question**: "Why do we and the Pharisees **fast often**, but Your disciples **do not fast**?" (Mt. 9:14)
 2. Jesus' answer to that question was that **fasting was inappropriate** at that time, and He illustrates His point with four examples
 - a. It is inappropriate for the friends of the bridegroom to **mourn** while he is still with them (Mt. 9:15 // Mk. 2:19-20 // Lk. 34-35)
 - b. It is inappropriate to put a piece of **unshrunk cloth** on an **old garment** (Mt. 9:16 // Mk. 2:21 // Lk. 5:36)
 - c. It is inappropriate to put **new wine** into **old wineskins** (Mt. 9:17 // Mk. 2:22 // Lk. 5:37-38)
 - d. No one having **drunk old wine desires new** for the old is better (Lk. 5:39)
 1. Jesus cannot be saying or implying that the **old covenant** was **better** than the **new** (Heb. 8:6-13)
 - f) The **minor premise** of **Syllogism #5** is merely **assumption** and **assertion** without proof
- 3) **Something different** was taught during the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus
 - a) Mark describes the work of **John the Baptist** as "the **beginning** of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ" (Mk 1:1-8)
 - b) The **law** and the **prophets** were preached until **John the Baptist**, after that the **kingdom of God** was preached (Lk. 16:16)
 - c) The **law** came through Moses, but **grace** and **truth** came through Jesus (Jn. 1:17)
 1. This does not mean that there was **no grace or truth** in the law of Moses (Ex. 33:13-17; Psa. 84:11; Jer. 31:1-2; Psa. 119:151; Neh. 9:13)

- a. The **OT sacrificial system** was an expression of God's grace
2. And this certainly does not mean that there is **no law** in the new covenant (1 Cor. 9:19-23; Gal. 6:2)
3. But this does mean that there are **fundamental differences** between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ
- 4) While Jesus taught His Jewish contemporaries to **keep the law** that they lived under (Mt. 5:17-19; 23:1-3), He also taught **something else** in addition to that law
 - a) Jesus preached **the gospel** (Mt. 11:5)
 - b) Jesus preached **the gospel of the kingdom** (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; Mk. 1:14; Lk. 4:43)
 - c) Jesus preached **the kingdom**
 1. The **"kingdom"** is mentioned **127x** in the Gospels
 2. The **"kingdom"** is mentioned **9x** in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:3, 10, 19-20; 6:10, 13, 33; 7:21; 4:17, 23)
 3. Jesus teaching on **MDR** (Mt. 19:1-12 // Mk. 10:1-12) is in a **kingdom context** (Mt. 19:12, 14, 23-24)
 - d) Jesus did not just prophesy/preach about the **coming** of the kingdom; He preached about **kingdom living**
 1. **Repent** for the kingdom is at hand (Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:14-15)
 2. Blessed are the **poor in spirit** (Mt. 5:3)
 3. Blessed are the **persecuted** (Mt. 5:10-12)
 4. Kingdom righteousness must **exceed** the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 5:19-20)
 5. **Pray** for the kingdom coming (Mt. 6:10; Lk. 11:2)
 6. **Seek first** the kingdom (Mt. 6:33; Lk. 12:31)
 7. **Doing the Father's will** is essential to entering the kingdom (Mt. 7:21-23)
 8. **Become as little children** to enter the kingdom (Mt. 18:3-4)
 9. **Forgiveness** in the kingdom (Mt. 18:23-35)
 10. Do whatever it takes to **avoid sin** (Mk. 9:45, 47)
 11. Some are **not fit** for the kingdom (Lk. 9:62)
 12. **Forsake all** for the kingdom (Lk. 18:29-30)
 13. **Be born again** (Jn. 3:3, 5)
 14. Etc.
- 5) Jesus taught some **new things** that were **different** from old covenant teaching
 - a) **Confess** Jesus as the Christ (Mt. 10:32-33)
 - b) Take up your **cross** and **follow** Me (Mt. 16:24)
 - c) **Disciplinary procedure** for personal offenses (Mt. 18:15-17)

- d) **Being a eunuch** for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Mt. 19:12)
 - e) The kingdom would be **taken from the Jews** (Mt. 21:43)
 - f) The **Lord's Supper** (Mt. 26:26-29)
 - g) The apostles would **judge** the 12 tribes of Israel (Lk. 22:30)
 - h) The **new birth** (Jn. 3:3, 5)
 - i) Worship **anywhere** (Jn. 4:21)
 - j) Worship in **spirit & truth** (Jn. 4:24)
 - k) **Eat flesh & drink blood** (Jn. 6:53-54)
 - l) **Believe** Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 8:23-24)
 - m) Jesus had "**other sheep**" [Gentiles] (Jn. 10:16)
 - n) The **new commandment** (Jn. 13:34; 1 Jn. 2:7-8; 2 Jn. 5)
 - o) "I am the **way**, the **truth**, and the **life**" (Jn. 14:6)
 - p) **Abide** in the vine (Jn. 15:1-8)
 - q) **DIVORCE FOR FORNICATION** (Mt. 19:9)
- 6) Jesus' preaching the gospel of the kingdom was **anticipatory**
- a) Jesus taught **the law** (Mt. 5:17-19; 23:1-3)
 - b) Jesus also preached the "**gospel of the kingdom**" (Mt. 4:23)
 - c) But the kingdom was not yet **established** (Mt. 10:7; 16:18-19; Lk. 19:11-27; 23:42, 51)
 - d) So, some of Jesus' teaching must have been **anticipatory**
 - e) Since Jesus taught **both the law of Moses** and the **gospel of the kingdom**, how do we distinguish between the two?
 1. If Jesus taught the **law** and also preached the **gospel of the kingdom**, asserting that Jesus merely **explained the law's teaching on MDR** is not enough; this must be **proven**. Where's the **proof**?
- 7) Teaching can be **anticipatory**
- a) The **law of Moses** went into effect at **Sinai** (Ex. 19; 24:12; Dt. 33:2), but certain parts of that law were **taught earlier**
 1. The **Passover** (Ex. 12)
 2. The **Feast of Unleavened Bread** (Ex. 13)
 3. The **Sabbath** (Ex. 16)
 - b) The **new covenant** went into effect at the **death of Jesus** (Heb. 9:15-17), but certain parts of this law were **taught earlier**
 1. The **new birth** (Jn. 3:3-5)
 2. **Worship anywhere** (Jn. 4:21-24)
 3. **Church discipline** (Mt. 18:15-17)
 4. The **Lord's Supper** (Mt. 26:26-29)

5. It is **more blessed to give** (Acts 20:35)

6. **Divorce for fornication** (Mt. 19:9)

7. Etc.

8) If Jesus **taught only the law of Moses**:

a) Why would the Holy Spirit **remind** the apostles of what Jesus had taught them? (Jn. 14:26)

b) Why did Jesus tell the apostles to **remember** His words? (Jn. 15:20)

c) Why did Jesus command the apostles to make disciples by “teaching them to **observe all things** that I have commanded you”? (Mt. 28:19-20)

d) How does God **speak through His Son** today? (Heb. 1:1-2)

1. Chart: “Obey Jesus’ Teaching”

8. Argument 8: “**The Gospels are OT documents**”

a. Explanation:

1) The Gospels are **not NT documents**

a) *Dan Billingsly*: “Simply stated, the Scriptures teach that **Malachi was not the ‘end’ or ‘last’ book of the Old Testament**, and that **the book of Matthew was not the ‘beginning’ or ‘first’ book of the New Testament**. The Scriptures teach that **Christ’s death on the cross** described in Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23 and John 19 **was the ‘end’ of the Old Testament** (Rom. 10:4; 7:4). The Scriptures teach that **Acts 2**, not Matthew 1, marks **the ‘beginning’ of the New Testament age** and revelation of new covenant ‘truth.’” (Bold emphasis added, Roman Catholic Heresy Of 1486 AD,” 2)

2) They describe the **last 33 years** of the old covenant

a) *Dan Billingsly*: “Matthew, Mark, Luke and John describe the **last thirty-three years of the Old Testament ‘age’**, with John the Baptist and Jesus Christ as the **last two Old Testament ‘prophets’** that God sent only to Old Testament Israel. **Only Acts 2 describes the beginning of the New Testament ‘age’ and the ‘first’ revelation of new covenant ‘doctrine.’**” (Bold emphasis added, “Christ’s New Testament ‘Truth’ Versus Dan Mayfield’s ‘Error,’” 2)

b. Refutation:

1) The Gospels are **NT documents**

a) Jesus became the **Mediator** of the **new covenant** at His **death** (Heb. 9:15-17)

b) Since the Gospels were **written after the cross** in the new covenant era (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6), they must be **NT documents**

2) The Gospels **report events** during the **old covenant era**

a) Jesus **lived and died** under the **old covenant**

b) The old covenant was **not replaced** by the **new covenant** until the **death** of the **testator** (Heb. 9:15-17)

- c) Therefore, the **Gospels report old covenant events** until Jesus' death on the cross
- d) However, this does not mean that the Gospels are **OT documents**
1. **Genesis** was written by **Moses** in the **Mosaic dispensation**, but it **reports earlier events** in the Patriarchal dispensation
- 3) The Gospels contain:
- a) **Old covenant law** (Mk. 1:44)
 - b) **Original moral law** (Mt. 19:4-9)
 - c) **Anticipatory kingdom law** (Mt. 18:15-17; Jn. 3:3-8)
9. Argument 9: “**There has been only one universal moral law**”
- a. Explanation:
 - 1) *Jeff Archer*: “God had **one universal law on marriage** from the beginning. The practice of the patriarchs and teaching of Moses only **clarified the original intent** of God. **Jesus did not teach anything different** from Moses or the patriarchs but sought to **reiterate and reconfirm** what was always true.”⁸⁰ (Bold emphasis added, “Did Jesus Teach Old Covenant Law On Marriage?,” 1)
 - 2) *Stanley Paher*: “Simply stated, **no ‘Christian religion’ was initiated** on that Pentecost day or at any other time; in fact, no Bible statement shows that Jesus ever started a **new religion**. **No new law replaced the moral precepts associated with Moses and the prophets**. No **‘New Testament church’** upstaged ancient Israel of Old Testament times for Israel was the ‘church,’ the people of God.” (Bold emphasis added, 158)
 - 3) *Stanley Paher*: “Thus, nearly two decades after the death of Christ, both **Jews and Gentiles** were **subjecting themselves to Moses’ moral teaching**.” (Bold emphasis added, 160)
 - b. Refutation:
 - 1) **God’s moral law has changed**. Under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, **God allowed or tolerated some moral departures** from His original intention for marriage
 - a) **Polygamy** (Dt. 17:17 & 2 Sam. 12:8)
 - b) **Concubinage** (Gen. 22:24)
 - c) **Divorce** for “some uncleanness” (Dt. 24:1-4) and other reasons (Ex. 21:7-8, 11)
 - d) **Levirate marriage** (Dt. 25:5-10)
 - 2) As the lawgiver, God has the right to **make exceptions** to His law and/or choose not to **enforce** certain parts of His law
 - a) Example: **David** was not executed for adultery (2 Sam. 12:13; cf. Dt. 22:22-24)
 - 3) But God **no longer tolerates** what He once permitted (Acts 14:15-17; 17:30-31; Mt. 19:8-9)

⁸⁰ Bro. Archer does not believe the one covenant doctrine. This is his explanation of this particular one covenant argument.

- 4) If the moral law has not changed at all, **two questions** need to be answered:
- a) Should we **allow**:
 1. **Concubinage** (Gen. 22:24)
 2. **Polygamy** (Dt. 17:17 & 2 Sam. 12:8)
 - b) Should we **require**:
 1. **“Shotgun weddings”** (Dt. 22:28-29)
 2. **Levirate marriage** (Dt. 25:5-10)
- 5) If the moral law has not changed at all, should we administer **capital punishment** for:
- a) **Homosexuality** (Lev. 20:13)
 - b) **Incest** (Lev. 20:14, 17)
 - c) **Bestiality** (Lev. 20:15-16)
 - d) **Prostitution** (Lev. 21:9)
 - e) **Pre-marital sex** (Dt. 22:20-21)
 - f) **Adultery** (Dt. 22:22-24)
 - g) **Rape** of an un-betrothed virgin (Dt. 22:25-26)
 - h) Etc.
- 6) **“What proves too much proves nothing at all!”**
10. Argument 10: **“Jesus did not abrogate the law of Moses”**
- a. Explanation:
 - 1) Jesus said that He came not to **destroy** the law but to **fulfill** it (Mt. 5:17)
 - a) *Stanley Paher*: “There are **not two peoples of God, Israel** under an **old covenant** governed by the **law of Moses**, and **Christ’s church** or *ekklesia*, said to be under a **different law**. Rather than **replace** or otherwise **do away with** the truths taught by the prophets of Israel (Matt. 5:17-18) Jesus Christ came to **fulfill** and **amplify** them, to give them the **full substance and meaning**.” (Bold emphasis added, 112-113)
 - 2) Jesus nailed **sin**, not the **law of Moses**, to the cross
 - 3) Only the **ceremonial aspects** of the law of Moses, which were a **shadow** of the good things to come (Heb. 10:1), have been **replaced**. God’s moral law is still the same
 - a) *Stanley Paher*: “[U]niversally applicable laws defining morals and ethics transcend all man-made dispensations, providing spiritual guidance for all men. On the other hand, God also commanded **ceremonial law**, a system of blood sacrifices and other offerings, as **types** and **shadows** of messianic realities, in covenantal evolution through Moses.
 “The latter duties were *pedagogues*, a tutor to guide the people of Israel to the ultimate Teacher who would appear in the fullness of time as the Christ of Jewish hope and promise. **Clearly distinct from this schoolmaster is the ‘holy, just and good’ (Rom. 7:12) portion of Moses law, consisting of long-established moral and ethical**

guidance....These moral precepts not only applied to the Jews (Deut. 12-13), but also guided disciples of Christ as well (I Tim. 1:8-10, II Tim. 3:15-17).” (Bold emphasis added, 233-234)

b) *Stanley Paher*: “The arrival of the **Substance** rendered the Jewish **types and shadows superfluous**....” (Bold emphasis added, 234)

b. Refutation:

1) Jesus **did fulfill** the Law and the Prophets

a) Syllogism #1:

1. *Major Premise*: Jesus came to **fulfill** the law (Mt. 5:17)

a. **Jesus’ fulfillment of OT prophecy** is repeatedly emphasized in the Gospels and Acts (Matt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9, 35; Mk. 14:49; 15:28; Lk. 4:21; 24:44; Jn. 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36-37; Acts 1:16; 3:18; 13:27, 29, 33)

2. *Minor Premise*: Jesus **accomplished** the work God sent Him to do (Jn. 17:14)

3. *Conclusion*: Therefore, Jesus **fulfilled** the law, and it could be **destroyed** (Mt. 5:17-18)

b) Syllogism #2:

1. *Major Premise*: One jot or tittle would **not pass away** from the law **till** all is fulfilled (Mt. 5:17-18)

2. *Minor Premise*: All has been **fulfilled** (Lk. 24:44-48; Jn. 19:28; Acts 3:18, 24; 13:29)

3. *Conclusion*: Therefore, the law and the prophets have been **replaced** (Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:13-15)

c) Syllogism #3:

1. *Major Premise*: One jot or tittle would **not pass away** from the law **till** all is fulfilled (Mt. 5:17-18)

2. *Minor Premise*: The law and the prophets have been **replaced** (Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:13-15)

3. *Conclusion*: Therefore, all has been **fulfilled** (Lk. 24:44-48; Jn. 19:28; Acts 3:18, 24; 13:29)

2) Jesus fulfilled the law and the prophets in **several ways**

a) By obeying its **laws** perfectly (cf. Rom 8:3-4; 1 Pet. 2:21-22; Heb. 4:15)

b) By fulfilling its **Messianic prophecies** (Lk. 24:25-27, 44-48; Jn. 19:28; Acts 3:18; 13:29)⁸¹

c) By embodying its **types and shadows** (e.g. 1 Cor. 5:7)

⁸¹ When Jesus said, “I did not come to destroy but to fulfill,” He must have been referring to His Incarnation and only the OT prophecies pertaining to it. Those who heard this statement could have conceived of nothing beyond His earthly sojourn, and it would have been impossible for Jesus to fulfill any OT prophecies that looked beyond the Incarnation (e.g. Dan. 9:24-27). If Jesus did what He came to do, and He must have if He was the Messiah and the Son of God, this is the only possible conclusion.

- d) By bearing **the curse** of the law (Gal. 3:10-14)
- e) By paying the **sufficient penalty** of the law as the **Substitute** for sinners (Isa. 53:5-6, 8, 10-12; 1 Pet. 2:24)
- f) By being **the end** [*i.e.* the goal] of the law for righteousness (Rom. 10:4)
- 3) This argument **ignores** the implication of the word “**till**”
- a) The word “**till**” (*heos*) denotes a **termination point**
1. *BDAG*: “1. **to denote the end of a period of time, till, until.**Mt 2:13 – 5:18....” (422)
 2. *Thayer*: “**a particle marking a limit**, and I. as a CONJUNCTION signifying 1. the temporal terminus ad quem, *till, until*....a. with an indic. pret., where something is spoken of which continued up to a certain time....b. with **αυ** and the aor. subjunc...where it is left doubtful when that will take place till which it is said a thing will continue....Mt ii. 13; add, v. 18....” (Bold emphasis added, #2193, 268)
- b) When the ending point marked by “till” is reached, **circumstances change**
1. Mt. 1:25: Joseph did not know Mary **till** she brought forth
 2. Mt. 2:13: Flee to Egypt **until** I bring word
 3. Mt. 2:15: Stayed in Egypt **until** death of Herod
 4. Mt. 11:13: Prophets & law **until** John
 5. Mt. 17:9: Don’t tell vision **until** Son of Man is risen
 6. Mt. 24:34: Generation not pass away **till** all these things take place
 7. Mt. 26:29: I will not drink **until** drink in Father’s kingdom
 8. Mt. 27:45: Darkness from 6th **until** 9th hour
 9. Acts 13:20: Judges **until** Samuel the prophet
 - 10.Etc.
- c) Chart: “Not Mutually Exclusive”
- 4) The OT **prophesied** that the old covenant **would be replaced** by the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)
- 5) The NT clearly and repeatedly teaches that the old covenant **has been replaced** by the new covenant
- a) At the transfiguration, God spoke from heaven and said “**Hear Him,**” and immediately Moses and Elijah **disappeared** (Mt. 17:5; Mk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35)
 1. Why did Moses and Elijah disappear? It is because God wants us to hear **Him**, not **them**
 - b) Christians are **dead** to the law (Rom. 7:4, 6-7)

c) The old covenant has **passed away** (2 Cor. 3:1-18)⁸²

The Two Covenants (2 Cor. 3:1-18)	
Epistle in ink (3)	Epistle by the Spirit (3)
Tables of stone (3, 7; cf. Ex. 31:18)	Tables of flesh (3)
Old covenant (14)	New covenant (6)
The letter (6)	The spirit (6)
Kills (6)	Gives life (6)
Ministry of death (7)	Ministry of spirit (8)
Was glorious (7)	Be more glorious (8)
Ministry of condemnation (9)	Ministry of righteousness (9)
Had glory (9)	Exceeds in glory (9)
PASSING AWAY (11, 13)	Remains (1)
Was glorious (11)	Much more glorious (11)
Moses wore a veil (13)	Great boldness of speech (12)
Veil remains unlifted (14)	Veil taken away in Christ (14)
Moses read & veil on heart (15)	Turns to Lord & veil taken away (16)

1. The “**law written on stones**” (2 Cor. 3:3, 7) can only refer to the **ten commandments** (Ex. 31:18)
2. It is this law and covenant that was a ministry of **death** and **condemnation** that was **passing away**
3. Therefore, it was not just the **ceremonial aspects** of the law of Moses that passed away
4. Chart: “NT Equivalentents Of The Ten Commandments”

d) We are no longer under a “**tutor**” (Gal. 3:23-25)

e) The Jews have been **freed from bondage** (Gal. 4:1-7)

⁸² Stanley Paher tries to explain away the teaching of this passage with these words: “Rejection of the gospel by approaching Moses’ teachings through *the traditions of Judaism*, is what Paul appropriately called, *ironically*, an ‘old covenant... a ministry of death [and] condemnation...’ (vv. 7, 9, 14). God’s agreement itself is not a ‘covenant that brought death,’ as often alleged. Rather, *Paul is addressing Judaism’s perversion of an old covenant*. Further, would God deliberately require his chosen people, Israel, to relate to him in an everlasting ‘covenant of death’? (see I Chron. 16:17).” (Italics added, 219).

f) The old covenant has been **cast out** (Gal. 4:21-31)⁸³

The Two Covenants (Gal. 4:21-31)	
Handmaid (22)	Freewoman (22)
Son by handmaid [Ishmael] (23)	Son by freewoman [Isaac] (23)
Born after flesh (23)	Born through promise (23)
Covenant from Mt. Sinai (24)	[Covenant from Mt. Zion] (Heb. 12:22)
Children unto bondage [Jews] (24)	Children of promise [Christians] (28)
Hagar (24)	Our mother [Sarah] (26)
Jerusalem now is (25)	Jerusalem above (26)
Bondage (25)	Free (26)
Born after flesh (29)	Born after Spirit (29)
Persecutor (29)	Persecuted (29)
CAST OUT handmaid and her son (30)	Son of the freewoman inherits (30)
We are not children of a handmaid (31)	We are children of the freewoman (31)

g) The law of Moses has been **abolished** (Eph. 2:11-18)

1. The law of Moses was given exclusively to **the Jews** (Ex. 19:3-5; 20:1-2; 24:7-8; Lev. 26:46; Dt. 5:1-6)
 - a. It was **not given** to anyone else
 1. The **fathers** (Dt. 5:2-5)
 2. The **other nations** (Dt. 4:7-8)
 3. The **Gentiles** (Rom. 2:14-16)
 - b. A law **applies** only to those to whom it is **addressed** (Rom. 3:19)
2. The **law of Moses** was a law of **commandments** contained in **ordinances** (1 Ki. 2:3; Ezra 7:10; Mal. 4:4; Rom. 2:26; Heb. 9:10)
3. It was the law of Moses that was “**the middle wall of separation**” between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14-15)

⁸³ Stanley Paher tries to explain away the teaching of this passage with these words: “In sharp contrast, the first-century Hagar/Mt. Sinai woman is *not a covenant at all*, for Paul equated her with *Christ-rejecting, Talmudic Judaism* with which the evangelist had to contend at times on each of his missionary journeys. Referring to *this human-device system as a covenant is surely ironical...*” (Italics added, 218).

4. That wall has been **broken down**

h) The handwriting of ordinances has been **nailed to the cross** (Col. 2:13-15)

1. What Paul says about the **“handwriting of ordinances”** could certainly apply to the **law of Moses**

Handwriting		Law of Moses
Col. 2:14	Requirements	Rom. 2:26; Eph. 2:15; Heb. 9:9-10
Col. 2:14	“Against Us”	Acts 15:10; Rom. 7:5; 8:3-4; Gal. 3:10-12; Heb. 7:18-19; 10:1-4, 11
Col. 2:14	Taken Away	Eph. 2:14-16; Heb. 7:18-19; 8:13; 10:8-9
Col. 2:16	Food or Drink	Lev. 11; Heb. 9:9-10
Col. 2:16	Feast, New Moon, Sabbath	1 Chr. 23:31; 2 Chr. 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Neh. 10:33; Ezek. 45:17
Col. 2:17	Shadow of Things to Come	Heb. 8:3-5; 10:1

2. If Col. 2:14 and Eph. 2:15 are **parallel passages**, and they appear to be, this suggests that Paul is talking about **the law of Moses**

3. Paul’s reference to a **festival, new moon, and sabbaths** (Col. 2:16) supports the conclusion that the **“handwriting of requirements”** that was nailed to the cross was the **law of Moses**

4. Just as the aforementioned items were a **shadow** of the good things to come (Col. 2:17), so was the **law of Moses** (Heb. 10:1)

5. Why couldn’t the law of Moses be **“a certificate of indebtedness”**? (cf. Gal. 5:1, 3; 3:10; Acts 15:10)

i) The **change** of the **priesthood** implies a **change** of the **law** (Heb. 7:11-14)

1. *Major Premise:* A change in the **priesthood** demands a change in the **law** (Heb. 7:12)

2. *Minor Premise:* The **priesthood** has been changed (Heb. 3:1; 4:14-15; 6:20; 7:24; 8:1-2)

3. *Conclusion:* Therefore, the **law** has been changed

j) The **carnal commandment** has been **disannulled** (Heb. 7:16-19)

k) The **death of Jesus** brought about the **end** of the **first covenant** (Heb. 9:15-17)

l) The law was a **shadow** of good things to come (Heb. 8:3-5; 10:1; Col. 2:16-17)

- m) The old covenant has been **replaced** by the new covenant (Heb. 8:6-13)

The Two Covenants (Heb. 8:7-13)	
Faulty (8:7-8)	Faultless (8:7-8)
Sinai covenant (8:9)	New covenant (8:8)
Laws in mind & heart (Pr. 3:1-3; 7:1-3; Psa. 37:31; 40:8; Isa. 51:7)	Laws in mind & heart (8:10)
Their God & My people (Ex. 6:7; Dt. 7:6; 2 Sam. 7:24)	Their God & My people (8:10)
Taught to know God after covenant relationship (8:11)	Taught to know God before covenant relationship (8:11; Jn. 6:44-45)
Some knew God (Rom. 9:6-8, 27)	All will know God (8:11)
Reminder of sin every year (Lev. 16:29-30; Heb. 10:1-3, 18)	Sins remembered no more (Heb. 8:12)
Obsolete (8:13)	New covenant (8:13)
Ready to vanish away (8:13)	Everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20)

- n) The first was **taken away** to establish the second (Heb. 10:1-10)
1. Does this refer to the taking away of **the sacrifices** of the old covenant and the establishment of the **sacrifice of Christ**?
 2. Does this refer to the taking away of **the old covenant** and the establishment of **the new covenant**?
 3. Either way, I don't believe it really matters, because **the sacrifices cannot be separated from the covenant itself** (Heb. 8:3-4; 10:1, 8)
- o) The old covenant was **removed** (Heb. 12:18-29)
1. **Mt. Sinai** is contrasted with **Mt. Zion** (Heb. 12:18-24)
 2. The **things shaken** at Mt. Sinai have been **removed** and **replaced** by a **kingdom** which **cannot be shaken** (Heb. 12:25-29)

11. Argument 11: "**Jesus taught what Moses taught on MDR**" (Dt. 24:1-4; Mt. 19:1-12)

a. Explanation:

- 1) *Dan Billingsly*: "[W]hat Jesus taught that 'last generation' of old covenant Jews in '**the sermon on the mount**' were **not new commands** or 'principles' of the New Testament, but '**principles of righteousness**' that had been in the **law of Moses** from Israel's beginning." (Bold emphasis added, "Understanding," 6)

- 2) *Dan Billingsly*: “[T]he ‘principles of righteousness’ which Jesus taught that ‘last generation’ of old covenant Jews in ‘the sermon on the mount’ was a **‘restatement’** of the **‘true’ and original Old Testament law of Moses** -- rather than the **‘revelation’** of **‘new’ New Testament ‘doctrine.’**” (Bold emphasis added, “Understanding,” 7)
- 3) *Dan Billingsly*: “In Matthew 5:31-32 and 19:3-12, Jesus gave a **direct interpretation of the ‘true’ law of Moses** concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage in Old Testament Israel, as originally stated by Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1-4.” (Bold emphasis added, “Understanding,” 17)
- 4) *Dan Billingsly*: “In Matthew 19 Jesus is **‘contrasting’ Israel’s ‘true’ old covenant law** with the **‘false’ rabbinical ‘traditions’** about the law of Moses. In these passages, Jesus was **not contrasting the law of Moses** with the **New Testament ‘gospel.’**” (Bold emphasis added, *Ibid.*, 17)

b. Refutation:

- 1) Jesus’ MDR teaching was **different** from Moses’
- “You have heard”** vs. **“But I say to you”** (Mt. 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44)
 - Jesus’ teaching reaffirmed **God’s original marriage law** before Moses (Mt. 19:4-6, 8)
 - The **Pharisees** perceived a difference between Jesus’ teaching and Moses’ teaching (Mt. 19:7)
 - The **reaction of the disciples** (Mt. 19:10) shows that Jesus’ teaching was stricter than Moses’
 - Moses said nothing about being **eunuchs** for the kingdom’s sake (Mt. 19:11-12)
 - Jesus and Moses **did not teach the same things** about MDR

Moses’ MDR Teaching	Jesus’ MDR Teaching
Moses permitted (Mt. 19:8)	Jesus commands (Mt. 19:4-6)
Proof Text: Dt. 24:1-4	Proof Texts: Gen. 1:27 & 2:24
Because of hard hearts (Mt. 19:8)	From beginning not so (Mt. 19:8)
Divorce for “some uncleanness” (Dt. 24:1)	Divorce for fornication (Mt. 19:9)
Adulteress executed (Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:22-24)	Adulteress divorced (Mt. 5:32; 19:9)
Divorce sends away (Dt. 24:1)	Divorce causes adultery (Mt. 5:32)
Remarriage is tolerated (Dt. 24:2)	Remarriage is adultery (Mt. 5:32)
Remarriage defiles (Dt. 24:4)	Remarriage is adultery (Mt. 5:32)
	Eunuch for kingdom (Mt. 19:12)
Reconciliation with 1 st mate impossible (Dt. 24:4)	Reconciliation with 1 st mate possible (1 Cor. 7:11)

Moses' MDR Teaching	Jesus' MDR Teaching
Rapist of un-betrothed virgin fined, must marry, no divorce (Dt. 22:28-29)	No such marriage requirement
Slave wife unequally treated could go free (Ex. 21:11)	Divorce forbidden (Mt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:10-11)
If no delight in captive wife she must be set free (Dt. 21:11-14)	Divorce for fornication (Mt. 5:32)
Polygamy tolerated (1 Sam. 25:43; 2 Sam. 12:8; Dt. 21:15-17)	Polygamy forbidden (1 Cor. 7:2)
Concubinage tolerated (2 Sam. 5:13; 1 Ki. 11:3)	Concubinage not mentioned
Levirate marriage (Dt. 25:5)	No Levirate marriage
Fornicators before marriage executed (Dt. 22:13-21)	Fornicators before marriage divorced (Mt. 19:9)
Unfaithful wife uncovered by bitter water diseased (Num. 5:19ff)	Unfaithful wife divorced (Mk. 10:11-12)

2) Chart: “Do These Passages Apply?”

12. Argument 12: “**Some uncleanness’ (Dt. 24:1) is fornication**

a. Explanation:

- 1) Dt. 24:1-4 permitted divorce for “**some uncleanness**”
- 2) Jesus was **explaining** Dt. 24:1-4
- 3) Jesus permitted divorce for “**fornication**” (Mt. 19:9)
- 4) Therefore, “**some uncleanness**” = “**fornication**”
 - a) *Dan Billingsly*: “**Sexual uncleanness’** in Deuteronomy 24:2 and **‘fornication’** in Matthew 19 means the **same thing**: ‘all manner of sexual immorality.’” (Bold emphasis added, “What About The 10 Commandments?” 2)
 - b) *Jerry Bassett*: Those grounds were a husband’s finding in his wife **some uncleanness**, stipulated by Jesus to be **sexual immorality** (Deuteronomy 24:1; Matt. 19:9).” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 7)
 - c) *Jerry Bassett*: “...Jesus’ statement recorded at Matthew 19:9 must be viewed as **an explanation** of what the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 24:1) actually taught—not only that the divorcing of a wife required **legal documentation**, but that the only legal grounds for this action was **sexual immorality**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 11)
 - d) *Jerry Bassett*: “Thus, the conclusion seems unavoidable that Deuteronomy 24:1 was the background of the Pharisees’ question and the basis of Jesus’ answer. What does this mean? Simply, that the **‘sexual immorality’** of Jesus’ answer recorded at Matthew 19:9 equates with the **‘uncleanness’** of Deuteronomy 24:1.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 12)

b. Refutation:

- 1) The Hebrew terms for “**adultery**,” “**fornication**,” and “**harlotry**” are not used in Dt. 24:1-4. Why not if that is what the passage is really referring to?
- 2) Since the penalty for “**adultery**,” under the law of Moses, was **death** (Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:22), not **divorce**, “**some uncleanness**” must refer to **something less than adultery**⁸⁴

13. Argument 13: “**Adultery**’ (Mt. 19:9) is non-sexual “**adulteration**” of the marriage covenanta. Explanation:

- 1) Adultery is not the ongoing **sexual relationship** in an unlawful marriage
- 2) **Divorce + Remarriage = Adultery**
 - a) *Jerry Bassett*: “The very act, Jesus said, of a man **divorcing** his wife and **marrying** another woman..., was itself an **act of adultery**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Rethinking Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 1991, p. 30)
 - b) *Jerry Bassett*: “Notice that Jesus used two verbs, ‘**divorces**’ and ‘**marries**,’ and said the result of these **two ACTIONS** is the commission of **adultery**...The very fact that the **adultery** Jesus talked about was the result of the two-fold action of **divorcing** and **marrying** argues that he was **not talking about adultery in the sense of sexual activity** later on in the marriage itself.” (Bold emphasis added, *Rethinking Marriage And Divorce*, 68-69)
 - c) *John L. Edwards*: “Therefore, the action of **adultery** is at the time of the **divorce** and the **remarriage**. It is the action of **divorcing** a faithful wife **for the purpose of marrying** someone else.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage and Divorce*, 52)
 - d) *John L. Edwards*: “[I]t is the act of **destroying the marriage** that is **adultery**, according to Jesus.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage and Divorce*, 55)
 - e) *John L. Edwards*: “**Adultery** is committed if one **divorces** a faithful spouse (this action is adultery).” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage and Divorce*, 61)
 - f) *John L. Edwards*: “To **marry** someone after they are **divorced** is **not a sin** in and of itself. **THE SIN WAS GETTING THE DIVORCE.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage and Divorce*, 64)
 - g) *John L. Edwards*: “**WE CONCLUDE THAT ADULTERY IS THE BREAKING OF A COVENANT.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage and Divorce*, 56)
- 3) A **married couple** cannot commit **adultery** with each other
 - a) *Jerry Bassett*: “Neither **Biblical passage** nor **lexical definition** describes **sexual activity** between a **married couple** as **adultery**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 4)
 - b) *Jerry Bassett*: “By definition, **sexual adultery** (‘...unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another,’ Wm. E. Vine) **does not occur** between people **married** to each other.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 21)
 - c) *Jerry Bassett*: “However, the fact is that **by definition** of the term, **sexual adultery does not occur** between people who are **married** to

⁸⁴ Several commentators have come to this same conclusion. See footnote 4.

one another. Again, ‘**adulterous marriage**’ is an **oxymoron**, a contradiction of terms.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 22)

- d) *Jerry Bassett*: “Remember, the **lexical definition** of an **adulterer** is one who has ‘...**unlawful intercourse** with the **spouse of another**’ (Wm. E. Vine). This argues that -- assertion to the contrary by those who rely on the lexicons for their definition of adultery -- it is **impossible** for a man and woman **married** to one another to **commit sexual adultery** within their marriage.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 38)

b. Refutation:

- 1) This argument is based on the **faulty premise** that Jesus was merely **explaining the law of Moses** on MDR (see above)
- 2) There is **no lexical support** for this explanation (BDAG; Thayer, Vine, *et al.*)
 - a) Jim Puterbaugh admits that the **lexicons do not define “adultery”** as he defines it
 - b) But he argues that the **“traditional view” does not accept lexical definitions** of “divorce” & “marries”
 1. “Divorce” in **man’s eyes** but not in **God’s eyes**
 2. “Married” in **man’s eyes** but not in **God’s eyes**
 - c) Jim Puterbaugh erects a **straw man argument**. He **refutes** it and thinks he has **refuted this objection**. But his straw man argument is **invalid**
 - d) Puterbaugh’s view and the so-called “traditional view” are **both wrong**
 1. Adultery is a **sexual sin**
 2. Divorce is **divorce** in the eyes of both man and God
 3. Marriage is **marriage** in the eyes of both man and God (except in the case of so-called “homosexual marriage”)
 4. **Remarriage**, following an unlawful divorce, is **adultery**, not because the divorce and the second marriage are **not real**, but because one is **married** to another while **bound** by God’s law to one’s original spouse (Rom. 7:2-3)
 - e) Isn’t it more than just a little bit **suspicious** that adultery turns out to be “non-sexual” only in the **disputed MDR passages**? (Mt. 5:28, 32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18)
- 3) Jesus teaches that a **married couple** can **commit adultery** with each other (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18)
- 4) Paul explains **why** this is so (Rom. 7:2-3)
- 5) “Adultery” as **non-sexual adulteration** of the covenant is **impossible** in Mt. 5:32
 - a) *Paul Earnhart*: “In Matthew 5:32, the adultery is committed not by a woman who unlawfully divorces her husband and marries another, but by a woman who is **unlawfully put away** from her husband and **marries** another, and by **‘whosoever’** (divorced or never married)

marries her. That makes the view that **adultery** here means **putting away** a lawful mate and **marrying** another **impossible**.” (Bold emphasis added, “Adultery Redefined,” *Christianity Magazine*, Jan. 1993, 1:10:10)

- 6) This argument results in **multiple definitions** of “adultery”
 - a) Definition 1: Adultery is **sex** with another’s spouse (Jn. 8:4)
 - b) Definition 2: Adultery is divorce + remarriage = **non-sexual adulteration** of the covenant (Mt. 19:9)
 - c) Definition 3: Adultery is being divorced + remarriage = **apparent adultery** (Mt. 5:32a; 1 Jn. 1:10; 5:10)
 1. The divorced wife is **stigmatized** as an adulteress even though she is not guilty
 - d) Definition 4: Adultery is divorced person + remarriage = **non-sexual “non-adulteration”** of the covenant (Mt. 19:9)
- 7) Adultery, by definition, is **sexual**
- 8) Figuratively speaking, Israel’s **spiritual adultery** was also **sexual**
 - a) God **married** Israel (Ezek. 16:8)
 - b) Israel committed (spiritual) **adultery** with idols (Jer. 3:8-9; Ezek. 16:15-17, 23-26, 28-34)
 - c) **Spiritual adultery** (Mt. 12:39; Jas. 4:4) is (figuratively) **sexual adultery**
 1. Like a **dromedary** & a wild **donkey** (Jer. 2:23-24)
 2. “**Lain** with men” (Jer. 3:2)
 3. Like well-fed **lustly stallions** (Jer. 5:8)
 4. “You spread your **legs**” (Ezek. 16:25, NASB; cf. ASV; KJV; CSB; HCSB; LEB; NET; NAB; NIV; YLT)
 5. “**Takes strangers** instead of her husband” (Ezek. 16:32)
 6. “**Nakedness uncovered** in your harlotry with your lovers” (Ezek. 16:36)
 7. “Their **breasts** were **embraced**” (Ezek. 23:3)
 - d) God **divorced** Israel (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:6-8)
- 9) Adultery is **not adulteration** of the marriage covenant
 - a) **Divorce** alone, for any reason except fornication, **violates** the marriage covenant (Mt. 5:32); but it is **not adultery**
 - b) **Remarriage** after sinful divorce is **adultery** (Mt. 19:9)
 - c) Therefore, this **adultery** is **not just breaking the marriage covenant**; it is the **sinful sexual relationship** in the unlawful marriage
- 10) The MDR passages (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3) describe two actions (divorce + remarriage) that lead to a **certain result** (adultery)
 - a) Divorce and remarriage is **not the definition** of “adultery”

- b) Adultery is the **result** that follows in the **conjugal relationship** of the unlawful second marriage
- 11) When “**adultery**” is mentioned in the MDR passages (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3), the **sexual relationship** in the unlawful marriage is **assumed** or **taken for granted**
- a) In other NT passages, **sex is assumed** though not specifically mentioned (1 Cor. 7:2, 9; Heb. 13:4)
- b) Jesus’ alludes to the **sexual relationship** throughout His MDR teaching
- 12) If we **substitute this definition** [Divorce + Remarriage = Adultery] for the term “**adultery**” in the MDR passages, will the meaning make sense?
14. Argument 14: “**Repentance demands cessation of ‘adulterating’ the marriage covenant, not the dissolution of the second marriage**”
- a. Explanation:
- b. Refutation:
- 1) **Remarriage**, after divorce not for fornication, is **adultery** (Mt. 19:9)
 - 2) Adultery is a **sin** (Rom. 13:8-10; Jas. 2:10-12)
 - 3) The sin of adultery can be **forgiven** (1 Cor. 6:9-11)
 - 4) Forgiveness of sin is granted when God’s **conditions of pardon** are met
 - 5) Repentance is a **prerequisite condition** for forgiveness of sin (Acts 3:19)
 - a) Non-Christian (Acts 2:38; 17:30-31)
 - b) Christian (Acts 8:20-24)
 - 6) Repentance requires **cessation** of sin (Pr. 28:13; Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 18:30; Mt. 12:41 & Jon. 3:10; Rev. 9:20-21)
 - 7) Baptism does not wash away sins **without repentance** (Acts 2:38)
 - 8) If the sin in unlawful marriages were merely “**adulterating**” the covenant, then this argument would be **valid**
 - 9) But the sin in unlawful marriages is the **sexual sin of adultery** (see above)
 - 10) Therefore, **unlawful marriages must be dissolved**
 - a) Unlawful marriages in the days of **Ezra** were dissolved (Ezra 10:2-3, 10-11, 19, 44)
 - b) John the Baptist told **Herod Antipas** that it was not lawful for him to have his brother’s wife (Mk. 6:17-18)
 - 11) Would this argument be true of “**spiritual adultery**”? (Jer. 3:8-9; Ezek. 23:37; Hos. 4:13)
 - a) Could Israel have **repented** of “**adulterating her covenant**” with Jehovah and then **kept her idols**?
15. Argument 15: “**Divorce was sinful under the old law (Dt. 24:1-4)**”
- a. Explanation:
- b. Refutation:

- 1) Under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, **God allowed or tolerated some moral departures** from His original intention for marriage
 - a) **Polygamy** (Dt. 17:17 & 2 Sam. 12:8)
 - b) **Concubinage** (Gen. 22:24)
 - c) **Divorce** for “some uncleanness” (Dt. 24:1-4) and other reasons (Ex. 21:7-8, 11)
 - d) **Levirate marriage** (Dt. 25:5-10)
 - 2) As the lawgiver God has the right to **make exceptions** to His law and/or choose not to **enforce** certain parts of His law
 - a) Example: **David** was not executed for adultery (2 Sam. 12:13; cf. Dt. 22:22-24)
 - 3) But God **no longer tolerates** what He once permitted (Acts 14:15-17; 17:30-31; Mt. 19:8-9)
 - 4) Dt. 24:1-4 does not explicitly say that the second marriage is **approved** by God
 - 5) Dt. 24:1-4 does say that the wife who was **divorced, remarried**, and then **divorced** or **widowed** is **defiled** (at least to her first husband)
 - 6) Mal. 2:13-16 describes divorce as a **treacherous and violent act**
 - 7) However, since God **prescribed divorce** under certain circumstances (Ex. 21:7-8, 11; Dt. 21:10-14), and God does not **tempt** men to sin (Jas. 1:13), it is hard for me to believe that those who divorced were **held accountable**
16. Argument 16: “**Remarriage after a sinful divorce is permissible**” (Dt. 24:1-4)
- a. Explanation:
 - 1) *Jerry Bassett*: “So, here was a woman **divorced** under the Law of Moses on the basis of **some uncleanness** in her who subsequently took a **second husband**. Notice that by this law, she and her second husband were **not treated as adulterers** to be executed, but as a **married couple** (Deuteronomy 24.1-4).” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 6)
 - 2) *Jerry Bassett*: “[P]eople who were **married** to one another though **divorced** from a former mate were not treated as **adulterers** under the very law, the Law of Moses, by which John condemned Herod and Herodias’ marriage (cf. Deuteronomy 24:1-4). Therefore, his charge against their marriage had to be on **some other basis** than its being **adulterous**. It was, as noted above, described as **incestuous** according to the Law of Moses.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 29)
 - 3) *Jerry Bassett*: “[T]he Law of Moses, according to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, did not treat **divorced and remarried** persons as **adulterers**. To the contrary, it referred to them as **husband and wife** -- people married to one another. This means that Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees delineating the true meaning of the Law of Moses cannot be taken to mean that **divorced people married to a subsequent mate are living in adultery**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage An Exposition Of The Scriptures*, 42)
 - b. Refutation:

- 1) Under the old covenant, God **tolerated remarriage** after divorce (Dt. 24:1-4)
 - 2) Under the new covenant, **remarriage** to another is **adultery** (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18)
 - a) This adultery **continues** as long as the **first mate lives** and one is **married** to another (Rom. 7:2-3)
 - 3) Adultery can be **forgiven** if there is **repentance** (1 Cor. 6:9-11)
 - 4) But **repentance** requires the **cessation** of sin (Pr. 28:13; Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 18:30; Mt. 12:41 & Jon. 3:10; Rev. 9:20-21)
 - 5) Therefore, **remarriage** after a sinful divorce is **not permissible**, and **sinful marriages** must be **dissolved**
 - a) If it is not permissible to **get married**, how can it be permissible to **stay married**?
 - 6) Several things can be said in response to Bro. Bassett's argument that Herod Antipas and Herodias were in an **incestuous marriage**:
 - a) First, we are not explicitly told **why** their marriage was unlawful (Mt. 14:4; Mk. 6:18)
 - b) Second, their marriage could have been unlawful for **several reasons**
 1. **Incest** (Lev. 18:16; 20:21)
 2. **Adultery** (Mt. 5:31-32)
 3. Their respective divorces were not for **"some uncleanness"** (Dt. 24:1)
 4. **Any combination** of these things
 - c) Third, since the **law** and the **prophets** were preached until John (Lk. 16:16), and then the **kingdom of God** was preached by both John the Baptist (Mt. 3:1-2) and Jesus (Mt. 4:17, 23), John's preaching on MDR, like Jesus' teaching, could very well have been **different** from the law of Moses
 - d) Fourth, what John told Herod ("It is not lawful...") clearly implies that **unlawful/sinful marriages** (for whatever reason) must be **dissolved**
 1. **Repentance** requires the **cessation** of sin (Pr. 28:13; Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 18:30; Mt. 12:41 & Jon. 3:10; Rev. 9:20-21)
 - a. Those who repent must bring forth **fruit worthy of repentance** (Mt. 3:8; Acts 26:20)
17. Argument 17: **"Reconciliation with one's first mate after divorce is impossible" (Dt. 24:4)**
- a. Explanation:
 - 1) Moses clearly forbade a divorced couple to **reconcile**
 - b. Refutation:
 - 1) Moses' teaching is **not our law today** (see above)
 - 2) Paul permits a divorced couple to **reconcile** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
18. Argument 18: **"It is better to marry than to burn"**

a. Explanation:

- 1) “God surely must allow me to **remarry** (though I’m divorced for an unscriptural reason) because **I cannot live alone**. **Remarriage** is better than **lust** or **fornication** (1 Cor. 7:1-2, 9). To deny me this is to deny me of God’s grace and my right to heaven”

b. Refutation:

- 1) In this passage, Paul is addressing the **single** (never married) and **widows**, not the divorced (1 Cor. 7:8)
- 2) Jesus clearly teaches that **remarriage** to another after a **divorce** for any reason other than **fornication** results in **adultery** (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3)
- 3) Paul teaches that those who divorce must remain **unmarried** or be **reconciled** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- 4) We must not interpret Paul’s teaching in a way that **contradicts** other MDR teaching
- 5) If it is true that God would **allow** a person to commit **adultery** (in an unscriptural remarriage) so as to **avoid lust**, then **the end justifies the means** -- it would be right to **do evil that good may come** (Rom. 3:8)
- 6) The Lord will provide a **way of escape** (1 Cor. 10:13)
 - a) The key to the solution is the same as that for **breaking any sinful habit**. How deep is your **conviction** and how **strong** is your **desire** to break it?
 - b) To one who **wants**, more than anything else, to be **saved**, and who is firmly **convinced** that he is **out of God’s favor**, because he is involved in an **unscriptural marriage relationship**, no power on earth will be strong enough to keep him from **untangling** himself from this sinful condition
 1. Christ gives **immeasurable strength** to those who are **really trying** to do His will (Phil. 4:13)
- 7) God’s law may **seem harsh** but:
 - a) In the OT, the adulterer was **stoned** (Lev. 20:10-11)
 - b) In the NT, he merely loses the **right to remarry** (Mt. 19:9)
- 8) Our society is so **SEX CRAZY** that one cannot hardly conceive of **contentment** without it. But there is at least one thing worse than **living without sexual satisfaction**, and that is **going to hell** in the next life and **losing all hope of spiritual satisfaction** in this one
- 9) One cannot legitimately take passages talking about **lawful marriages** and apply them to **unlawful marriages** (1 Cor. 7:5, 9, 27-28; Heb. 13:4)

19. Argument 19: “Celibacy is a gift”a. Explanation:

- 1) Celibacy is a **gift** from God (1 Cor. 7:7)
- 2) God does not expect someone to be **celibate** unless he **has the gift** of celibacy

b. Refutation:

- 1) We must not interpret Paul's statement about the gift of celibacy in such a way that it **contradicts** the clear teaching of other passages on MDR
 - 2) Paul instructs **single Christians to abstain from sexual immorality and possess his vessel in sanctification and honor** (1 Th. 4:3-8)
 - a) This means that the **sex drive is not irresistible**. It can and must be controlled outside of God-approved marriage
 - 3) Paul's reference to "**his own gift from God**" (1 Cor. 7:7) is in a section addressed to **married people** concerning their **sexual relationship** (1 Cor. 7:3-7)
 - 4) It is pure assumption that this "**gift**" [*charisma*] is some kind of a **supernatural gift** that is beyond the grasp of every person
 - a) *Gene Frost*: "Is it true that God demands self-control when there is no hope of real success without a spiritual gift? **The assumption that the charisma is a supernatural gift is suspect**. *Dorea* is the word that 'is always used in the N.T. of a spiritual or supernatural gift.' (Vine, vol. 2, p. 147) *Charisma* may be, but not necessarily so. When it is a *spiritual* gift, it is so identified. But the gift of celibacy is not so identified." (Bold emphasis added, "Gift Of Celibacy," *Gospel Anchor*, Oct. 1976, 3:2.n.p.)
 - 5) Paul instructs those who are **unmarried** and **widows** to marry if they cannot exercise **self-control** (1 Cor. 7:8-9)
 - a) The "**unmarried**" here are those who have **never married**, not those who are divorced
 1. Those who argue that this term includes those who have been **divorced** must **prove** this, not just **assert** it without proof
 - 6) Paul instructs married people **not to divorce** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
 - 7) Paul instructs those who have divorced to **remain unmarried** or be **reconciled** to their mates (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
 - 8) God requires Christians to exercise **self-control** (Gal. 5:23; 2 Pet. 1:6)
 - 9) Those who want to please God **can exercise self-control**
 - a) **Jeremiah** was commanded not to marry (Jer. 16:1-2)
 - b) **Paul** lived a celibate life (1 Cor. 7:7)
 - 10) A **life of celibacy** may have to be endured for several different reasons:
 - a) **Illness** (physical, mental)
 - b) **Accident**
 - c) **Separation** (MIA's, POW's, Convicts, etc.)
 - d) **Unlawful divorce** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
 - e) Etc.
20. Argument 19: "**One is to remain in his called state**"
- a. Explanation:
 - 1) Paul said that one was to **remain in the state** in which he was called (1 Cor. 7:17-24)

2) Therefore, when one is **converted** to Christ, he should remain in his **current marriage**

b. Refutation:

1) Paul is talking about things that are **lawful** to begin with, not **ungodly practices**

a) **Circumcision** or **uncircumcision**, **slavery** or **freedom** were all lawful conditions in the eyes of God

b) Paul says: “Brethren, let each one remain **with God** in that *state* in which he was called” (1 Cor. 7:24)

c) Can one **remain “with God”** in a sinful relationship?

2) Paul simply says that one can be a **Christian** whether he is **married** or **unmarried**, whether he is married to a **believer** or an **unbeliever**

3) Paul does not say that one can **remain in a sinful relationship** after he becomes a Christian

4) A Christian cannot **continue in sin** (Rom. 6:1-7; Col. 3:5-10)

a) If this passage taught what some claim for it, then a Christian could **continue in sin**

1. He was **called in sin**

2. He should **remain in the state** in which he was called

3. He should **continue in sin**

b) If so, then:

1. The **thief** could keep stealing

2. The **drunkard** could keep drinking

3. The **idolater** could keep worshiping idols

4. The **homosexual** could keep his partner(s)

5. The **playboy** could keep his “lovers”

6. The **polygamist** could keep his wives

7. The **adulterer** could continue committing adultery

8. Etc.

5) If one is called in an **unlawful state**, he must **leave it**

a) John the Baptist told **Herod Antipas**, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife” (Mk. 6:18)

b) **Onesimus** was **sent back** to Philemon after he became a Christian (Phile. 10-17)

6) Paul is saying that the **gospel call** is for all no matter what their **social, economic, or cultural background**

7) Becoming a Christian **changes one’s life and destiny** but not necessarily his **social position, work, or cultural interest**

21. Argument 21: “**There is no NT example of anyone dissolving a sinful marriage**”

a. Explanation:

b. Refutation:

- 1) There are **examples** of those who were expected to give up **sinful marriage (or sexual) relationships**
 - a) The **remnant** in the days of Ezra divorced their foreign wives (Ezra 10:11)
 - b) In the days of Nehemiah, some Jews had “**married** women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab,” and Nehemiah “**cleansed** them of everything pagan” (Neh. 13:23-30)
 - c) John the Baptist told **Herod Antipas**, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife” (Mk. 6:18; cf. Mt. 14:4)
 1. The only way that Herod could have corrected this unlawful marriage was to “**not have**” his brother’s wife
 2. If it is unlawful to **get married**, how can it be lawful to **stay married**?
 - d) Jesus told the woman taken in adultery to **go and sin no more** (Jn. 8:11)
 - e) Some of the Corinthians “**were**” [imperfect tense] fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, etc. (1 Cor. 6:9-11)
 1. *H. P. V. Nunn*: “Strictly speaking, the Imperfect denotes **continuous action in past time, or action often repeated** in past time....” (Bold emphasis added, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, 23)
 - 2) **Repentance** requires the **cessation** of sin (Pr. 28:13; Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 18:30; Mt. 12:41 & Jon. 3:10; Rev. 9:20-21)
 - a) Those who repent must bring forth **fruit worthy of repentance** (Mt. 3:8; Acts 26:20)
 - 3) There are no NT examples of **polygamists, homosexuals, pedophiles, necrophiliacs**, etc. giving up their sinful relationships, does that imply that these relationships may **continue**?
22. Argument 22: “**Jesus’ MDR teaching was old covenant teaching, and it has no application today under the new covenant**”

a. Explanation:

- 1) Jesus’ teaching on divorce (Mt. 19:9) was merely an **explanation of the law of Moses** regarding divorce and remarriage, and consequently was **not applicable** after His death on the cross. Since this instruction is **not repeated** after Pentecost, it is **not binding** on those now living under the new covenant

2) Syllogism 1:

- a) *Major Premise*: Jesus’ MDR teaching was **old covenant teaching**
 1. *Dan Billingsly*: “The truth is that Matthew 19:3-12 and the ‘ten commandments’ in Matthew 19:16-20, like the Sabbath, tithing, instrumental music, animal sacrifice and all other parts of the Old Testament law of Moses belong in the **same old covenant** that God made only with the nation of Old Testament Israel.” (Bold emphasis added, “What About The 10 Commandments?,” 3)

- b) *Minor Premise*: The old covenant has been **replaced** by the new covenant
- c) *Conclusion*: Therefore, Jesus' MDR teaching has **no application** today
1. *Dan Billingsly*: "Matthew 19 belongs to the **Old Testament** and was for **old covenant Jews only**. There is **no New Testament 'truth'** in the Old Testament teaching of the law of Moses in Matthew 19!" (Bold emphasis added, "What About The 'Ten Commandments' In Matthew 19?," 3)
 2. *Dan Billingsly*: "[W]e must therefore **interpret and apply Christ's teaching of the old covenant law of Moses** in MMLJ/BC to only that **'last generation' of old covenant Jews** and not attempt to **apply that Old Testament law of Moses to men and women of this New Testament 'age.'**" (Bold emphasis added, "Understanding," 4)

b. Refutation:

- 1) First, is it **reasonable** to believe that Jesus **championed** a party position (attempting to settle an "interpretation" of the law) which would only be **valid** for a **few more months**?
 - a) This argument assumes that for 15 centuries the Jews did not know the meaning of the phrase **"some uncleanness"** [*erwat dabar*] (Dt. 24:1), and then Jesus **settles the question** at the last moment, just months before it became a **moot debate**
 - 2) Second, Syllogism 1 is flawed because the Major Premise is not correct
 - a) Jesus taught **something more** than just old covenant teaching (see above)
 - b) Jesus **reinstated God's original intention** for **marriage** which preceded the law of Moses by several centuries (Mt. 19:4-6, 8)
 - c) Jesus' MDR teaching was **different** from Moses' (see above)
23. Argument 23: **"Alien sinners are not amenable to Christ's teaching on MDR"**
 - a. Explanation:
 - 1) There are **three categories** of marriage
 - a) Marriage between **two Christians**
 - b) Marriage between **two people outside the covenant**
 - c) Marriage between **a person in the covenant** and a **person outside of the covenant**
 - 2) Jesus' teaching on MDR applies only to **Christians**
 - a) *James D. Bales*: "This is the **basic argument** in my book, i.e., that **Christ's legislation** in His personal ministry was **for those in His covenant** who were married to one another. Therefore, it is **unscriptural** for us to **extend** it to include **mixed marriages** (Paul did not), or to **marriages of two people outside the covenant.**" (Bold emphasis added, Not Under Bondage, 8)
 - b) Bales' Argument:

1. 1 Cor. 7:12-15 deals with a **mixed marriage** between a believer and an unbeliever
 2. The Lord **did not legislate** on such marriages (1 Cor. 7:12)
 3. Therefore, since the Lord did legislate on the kind of marriages discussed in 1 Cor. 7:10-11, they must be **marriages between two believers**
 4. This means:
 - a. Christ's teaching applies to **two covenant members**
 - b. Paul's teaching applies to a **mixed marriage** between a Christian and a non-Christian
 - c. Neither Jesus nor Paul legislate on **marriages between unbelievers**
- 3) Alien sinners are not amenable to the **internal laws** of the covenant
- a) Chart: "Aliens Are Not Amenable"
- b. Refutation:
- 1) All are **amenable** to God
 - a) God rules over **all men** (Psa. 22:28; 103:19)
 - b) God expects all men to **worship** and **serve** Him (Psa. 22:27; 96:1, 8-9; 100:1; Acts 17:26-27)
 - c) God's expectations for men arise from **His nature** (Psa. 119:137, 142; 96:13)
 - 2) Alien sinners are **amenable to Christ**
 - a) Christ has **all authority** (Mt. 28:18)
 - b) Christ is **Lord** of all (Acts 10:36)
 - c) NT is **addressed** to all men (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16)
 - d) All will be **judged** by Christ's words (Jn. 12:48)
 - e) Those who do not obey will be **punished** (2 Th. 1:8)
 - 3) **Sin** implies **law**
 - a) Sin is the **transgression** of God's law (1 Sam. 15:24; Dan. 9:5, 11; cf. 1 Jn. 3:4 KJV)
 - b) Where there is **no law**, there is **no transgression** (Rom. 4:15; 5:13)
 - c) All men **sin** (Rom. 3:9-10, 23)
 - d) Therefore, all men are **under law**
 - 4) God **gave law** to early man
 - a) Chart: "Explicit Laws For Early Man"
 - b) Chart: "Implicit Evidence Of Law"
 - 5) God **communicated** His will
 - a) **Noah** (2 Pet. 2:5)
 - b) **Melchizedek** (Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:1-10)

- c) **Jethro** (Ex. 3:1; 18:12)
 - d) **Balaam** (Num. 22:1-13)
 - e) **Amos** (Amos 1:3-2:3)
 - f) **Isaiah** (Isa. 13:9, 11)
 - g) **Jonah** (Jon. 3:1-10; cf. Lk. 11:29-32)
- 6) **Sexual sin** implies marriage law
- a) Sin is the **transgression** of God's law (1 Sam. 15:24; Dan. 9:5, 11; cf. 1 Jn. 3:4 KJV)
 - b) Where there is **no law**, there is **no transgression** (Rom. 4:15; 5:13)
 - c) **Sexual sins** must be the **violation of some law**
 - d) What law if not **marriage law**???
- 7) Early man knew about **sexual sin**
- a) **Noah** & his sons (Gen. 9:20-25)
 - b) **Pharaoh** (Gen. 12:10-20)
 - c) **Abimelech** (Gen. 20:3-7, 9-10)
 - 1. Chart: "Abimelech & Adultery"
 - d) **Sodom & Gomorrah** (2 Pet. 2:6-8; Jude 7)
 - e) **Job** (Job 31:1-4, 9-12)
 - f) **Canaanites** (Lev. 18:1-5, 6ff, 24-30)
- 8) The **Gentiles** committed **sexual sin** (Rom. 1:24, 26-27, 29, 31; 2:17-22)
- 9) **Unbelievers** can commit **sexual sin**
- a) Chart: "Unbelievers & Sexual Sin"
- 10) **Unbelievers** can commit **sexual immorality** just like believers (1 Cor. 5:9-13)
- 11) Christ's will is addressed to both **sinners** and **saints**
- a) Chart: "Christ's Law Is For All"
- 12) The **Holy Spirit convicts the world** of sin (Jn. 16:7-11)
- 13) Christ's MDR law **applies to all**
- a) Christ's law **restores** God's original plan for marriage (Mt. 19:7-8)
 - b) Taken at face value, Christ's MDR law certainly sounds like it **applies to all** who marry
 - 1. "**Whoever**" (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Lk. 16:18)
 - 2. "**A man**" (Mt. 19:5-6 // Mk. 10:7, 9)
 - 3. "**A woman**" (Mk. 10:12)
 - 4. "**The woman who has a husband**" (Rom. 7:2)
 - 5. "**All**" (Heb. 13:4)

- c) The only ones to whom the marriage law does not apply are those who **do not marry** (Mt. 19:10-12)
- d) Unbelievers can **violate Christ's marriage law** (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:3-8, 17-19)
- e) Amenability \neq **applicability**
 - 1. Some of Christ's laws are applicable to **certain groups** of people (e.g. husbands, wives, children, servants, masters, etc.)
 - 2. If someone is **not in** one of these groups, the law(s) pertaining to these various groups **do not apply**

14) This view is based on **several inferences**:

- a) Chart: "View Based On Inferences"
- b) Chart: "I, Not The Lord"
- c) Chart: "Kinds Of Inferences"
- d) *Donnie Rader*: "The text **doesn't say** that the Lord's teaching **did not apply** to mixed marriages. To say that the Lord **didn't address** the questions being addressed in vs. 12-16 does not mean that the Lord **said nothing at all** which applies to mixed marriages." (Bold emphasis added, *Divorce And Remarriage: What Does The Text Say?*, 105)
- e) Chart: "Does This Make Sense?"
- f) Chart: "Is This Instruction Different?"
- g) Chart: "Unanswered Questions"
- h) Chart: "What Proves Too Much..."
- i) Chart: "No Sanction For Departing"

24. Argument 24: "**When an unbeliever deserts a believer, the believer is "not under bondage" and therefore free to remarry" (1 Cor. 7:15)**

a. Explanation:

- 1) If an unbeliever deserts a believing mate, the believer is "**not under bondage**" (1 Cor. 7:15)
- 2) "Not under bondage" refers to the **marriage bond**
- 3) If the unbeliever **deserts** the believer, and the believer is not under the **marriage bond** any longer, then the believer is **free to remarry**

b. Refutation:

- 1) This argument stands or falls on whether the "**bondage**" under discussion is the "**marriage bond**"
 - a) If that is correct, then the only logical conclusion is that **the deserted Christian would be free to remarry**
 - b) If that is not correct, then there is no reason to conclude that **the deserted Christian would be free to remarry**
 - 1. 1 Cor. 7:15 does not **explicitly say** that a deserted believer has the **right to remarry**

2. Therefore, any **implicit permission** for **remarriage** in 1 Cor. 7:15 requires *douloo* to refer to the **marriage bond**
 3. But this meaning must be **conclusively proven** not **assumed** and **asserted** without proof
- 2) The word **“bondage”** [*douloo*] (1 Cor. 7:15) is not the word **“bound”** [*deo*] which clearly refers to the marriage bond (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:27, 39)
- a) **“Bondage”** [*douloo* or *doulos*]
 1. *BDAG*: “1. **to make someone a slave** (δοῦλος), **enslave** a people **Ac 7:6**.... 2. **to make one subservient to one’s interests, cause to be like a slave**, fig. ext. of mng. 1....” (260)
 - b) **“Bound”** [*deo*]
 1. *BDAG*: “1. **to confine a pers. or thing by various kinds of restraints, bind, tie** a. of things τὸ *someh.*... b. of binding and imprisoning pers.... 2. **to tie someth. to someth., tie to** an animal.... 3. **to constrain by law and duty, bind** w. dat. of pers. *to someone*: of a wife to her husband Ro 7:2; of a husband to his wife 1 Cor 7:27....” (222)
- 3) In no passage does *douloo* ever refer to **the marriage bond** unless it is in this passage
- a) The word is used **8 times** in the NT to refer to:
 1. Egyptian **bondage** (Acts 7:6)
 2. **Slaves** of righteousness (Rom. 6:18)
 3. **Slaves** to God (Rom. 6:22)
 4. **Bondage** to unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:15)
 5. **Servant** to all (1 Cor. 9:19)
 6. **Bondage** under the elements of the world (Gal. 4:3)
 7. Older women not **given** to wine (Tit. 2:3)
 8. **Bondage** to sin (2 Pet. 2:19)
 - b) *Roy H. Lanier, Sr.*: “Why did Paul use the word **deo** twice in this chapter when undoubted reference is made to the marriage bond, and then change to the word **douloo** in verse 15, unless he wished to leave the impression that he was not referring to the marriage bond? In so short a compass the use of the two different words to refer to the same thing would be misleading. So he makes a conscious effort to impress his readers with the fact that he is not referring to the marriage bond in verse 15. Since the word **douloo**, which is used in verse 15, is never used anywhere else to refer to the marriage bond, we may safely conclude that he is not in this verse referring to the marriage bond. And since in every passage where he undoubtedly speaks of the marriage bond he uses the word **deo**, we may safely conclude that if he had the marriage bond in view in this verse he would have used that word here.” (*Marriage Divorce And Remarriage*, 14)
- 4) Objection: “*Douloo* is **derived** from *deo* (Thayer p. 157-158) thus the ‘**bondage**’ of 1 Cor. 7:15 could refer to the **bond of marriage**”

- a) *Doulos*, the root of *douloo*, is “derived by **most** fr. **δέω** to tie, bind; by **some** fr. **ἄλω** to ensnare, capture...” (Bold emphasis added, Thayer, 157-158)
- b) The fact that **one word is derived from another** does not mean the two can be used as **synonyms**, or that they must refer to the same thing
1. *William A. Heth & Gordan J. Wenham*: “Even if the two words do have a **similar root**, which is **highly suspect**, the test of explanation of words is their **contexts**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus And Divorce*, 142)
 2. Though *koiton* (“a bed-chamber” and translated “chamberlain” Acts 12:20) is derived from *koitee* (“a bed, or couch”) who would say they are **synonyms**, or that they refer to the same thing?
- 5) Objection: The instructions of 1 Cor. 7:12-15 must be **different** than those in 1 Cor. 7:10-11, or Paul unnecessarily **repeats himself**
- a) They are **different**
 1. 1 Cor. 7:10-11 commands married people **not to divorce**
 2. 1 Cor. 7:12-15 instructs a believer to **allow the unbeliever to depart** if he/she so chooses
 - 6) Unless it can be conclusively proven that the phrase “**under bondage**” refers to the **marriage bond**, this verse cannot be used to prove that **the deserted believer is free from the marriage bond** that binds him to the unbeliever
 - a) In other passages when **remarriage is permissible**:
 1. It is **explicitly stated** (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:11, 39)
 2. It is **clearly implied** (Mt. 19:9)
 - b) In this passage, the permissibility of remarriage is neither **explicitly stated** nor **clearly implied**
 - c) *Steven Harper*: “Does the text that says ‘she is not under bondage’ mean she is free to remarry? I want you to keep in mind that **‘free to remarry’ is not found here**, and that itself is significant. It is significant because later, in verse 39, when Paul writes about the wife whose husband dies, he says that **‘if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes.’** This echoes what Paul said to the Romans, telling them if **‘the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband’** and **‘if her husband dies, she is free from that law’** (Rom. 7:2, 3) The point we should note here is that **when God wanted us to know that one is free or at liberty to be remarried, He specifically said so.**” (Bold emphasis added, “Desertion And Divorce”, 2)
 - d) Since this is the only text anyone has ever used to prove that the deserted believer is free to marry again, if it is **not taught here**, it is **not taught in the NT**
 - 7) The phrase “**not under bondage**” is in the **perfect tense** (*dedoulotai*) which may suggest **something other than the marriage bond**
 - a) The literal rendering of the Greek words *ou dedoulotai* is “**has not been enslaved**” (*Nestle’s Greek-English Interlinear*, 673)

- b) “The Greek perfect tense denotes the **present state resultant upon a past action**. There is **no English tense** corresponding to the Greek perfect” (Bold emphasis added, *Machen’s Greek Grammar*, 187, Article 451, 452)
1. **“It is written” = “It stands written”** (i.e. it was written in the past and remains written in the present)
- c) *Eric George Jay*: “The English perfect lays no particular stress on the continuing effects of the past action. The Greek perfect nearly always does.” (*New Testament Greek*, 1958, 254, quoted in Bob Waldron, “Not Under Bondage,” *Is It Lawful?*, 278)
- d) *Dana & Mantey*: “The student must investigate three things in forming his conclusion as to the significance of a particular use of a tense; viz., the **basal function** of the tense, the relation to **the context**, and the significance of **the verbal idea**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1927, 206)
- e) *Dana & Mantey*: “Its **basal significance** is the **progress** of an act or state to a point of **culmination** and the existence of its **finished results**. That is, it views action as a **finished product**....It is best to assume that there is a reason for the perfect wherever it occurs.” (Bold emphasis added, *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1927, 200)
- f) Of the uses of the perfect, there are two which could apply in 1 Cor. 7:15
1. The **intensive** perfect
 - a. *Dana & Mantey*: “It is most in keeping with the basal significance of the tense to place emphasis upon the **existing results**, for it is distinctively the tense of the **‘finished product.’** When special attention is thus directed to the results of the action, stress upon the existing fact is intensified. This is the emphatic method in Greek of presenting a fact or condition. It is the strong way of saying that a thing is [or is not, with the negative, REW]. There is no exact equivalent of this idiom in English. Consequently there is no way to give it in an exact translation.” (Bold emphasis added, *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1927, 202, quoted in Bob Waldron, “Not Under Bondage,” *Is It Lawful?*, 278-279)
 - b. *Bob Waldron*: “The **intensive perfect** would thus **not be emphasizing the continuing effects of past action** (or the negative thereof, as in 1 Corinthians 7:15). In other words the point made by the use of the perfect would be that **the believer is assuredly not under bondage**. If it is the intensive perfect which is used here then the sentence could be translated, **‘The brother or the sister is definitely not under bondage in such cases.’** This usage would fit very well with both the rules of Greek grammar and with the whole framework of this issue. It seems to me that **this is the most likely explanation** of the use of the perfect in the verse.” (Bold emphasis added, “Not Under Bondage,” *Is It Lawful?*, 279)
 2. The **basal** significance
 - a. *Bob Waldron*: “On the other hand, if we take the perfect to have its **common basal significance** of the continuing effects of past action, then we would have to say that the verse

means, **‘Is not now and never has been under bondage in such cases.’** If *dedoulotai* refers to **marriage** then we would have to conclude that if the unbeliever departs, then the brother or the sister is **not married and never has been**. Such a conclusion would be absurd and clearly shows the fallacy of saying that *dedoulotai* refers to marriage.” (Bold emphasis added, “Not Under Bondage,” *Is It Lawful?*, 279)

- b. *Monroe Tharp* [Greek teacher Bear Valley School of Preaching]: “The Greek perfect tense is used here to show the meaning: ‘The brother or sister **has not been enslaved and is still not enslaved.**’ One could not be **released from slavery** who had **never been enslaved.**” (*Your Marriage Can Be Great*, 471, via Warnock, *Searching The Scriptures*, 20:11:530)
 - c. *Wayne Jackson*: “Moreover, interestingly, *douloo* in verse 15 is in the perfect tense form, *dedoulotai*. The perfect tense denotes a **present state** resulting from **past action** and its force here is **‘was not bound and is not bound.’** The sense of the verse then is: ‘Yet if [assuming such should occur] the unbeliever separates himself, let him separate himself: the brother or sister **was not** [before the departure] and **is not** [now that the departure has occurred] enslaved...’ Whatever the ‘bondage’ is, therefore, the Christian **was not in it, even before the alien left**. But the saint was **married** [and is] to him; hence, **the bondage is not the marriage!** Let the reader substitute the word ‘marriage’ for ‘bondage,’ giving the full force to the perfect tense [i.e., **‘has not been married and is not married’**] and the fallacy of viewing the bondage as marriage will be readily apparent.” (Bold emphasis added, “The ‘Pauline Privilege’ -- So-Called, *Caprock Church Bulletin*, Feb. 28, 1985, 17:9:3)
 - d. Thus, the force of the statement in 1 Cor. 7:15 is that she is **not under bondage now** because she has **never been under whatever bondage** Paul has under consideration
- g) How would we **explain** the expression “not under bondage” according to the **two different uses of the perfect tense** that we’ve just mentioned?
1. *Bob Waldron*: “The **intensive perfect** would simply mean that the believer is **definitely not under the necessity of meeting any condition the unbeliever puts upon him**, up to and including giving up one’s faith, and of endlessly resisting the divorce, and of following the unbeliever wherever he goes so that the obligations of marriage can be fulfilled.” (Bold emphasis added, “Not Under Bondage,” *Is It Lawful?*, 279-280)
 2. *Bob Waldron*: “The second explanation of the use of the perfect tense would mean that the brother or the sister **never has been** and is **not now enslaved** to the point that they would have to **submit to any demand**, even that they give up their faith, and that they would not be obligated to uphold a marriage when the unbeliever does not want it.” (Bold emphasis added, “Not Under Bondage,” *Is It Lawful?*, 280)
- 8) If Paul is not talking about the **“marriage bond,”** how is the believer **“not under bondage”** when the unbeliever departs?

- a) The deserted believer need not feel obligated to **abandon the faith** to preserve the marriage (1 Cor. 7:23)
1. *Roy H. Lanier, Sr.*: “Since Paul did not have the marriage bond in mind when he said the believer is not under bondage, what did he mean? He simply means that the believer is not so bound to the unbeliever that he must **give up Christ to hold the unbeliever**. The bond that binds us to Christ is stronger than the bond that binds the believer to the unbeliever. The word *douloos* is used with reference to our being **servants** (Bondslaves) to righteousness and to God (Rom. 6:18, 22). And the noun form *doulos* is used, many times to refer to us as **servants** (slaves) of Christ (Eph. 6:6; Rev. 7:3). **This bond takes precedence over all other bonds**....So Paul is telling the believer to **hold to Jesus** even if it means the **loss of the unbelieving companion**. Though it may mean a life of celibacy, the Lord will not suffer one to be tempted above that which he is able to bear, but will with the temptation provide the way of escape, that he may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13).” (Bold emphasis added, *Marriage Divorce And Remarriage*, 15)
- b) The deserted believer need not feel obligated to **violate his conscience** to preserve the marriage (cf. Rom. 14:23)
- c) The deserted believer need not feel obligated to **fulfill marital obligations** (cf. 1 Cor. 7:3-5)
- d) The deserted believer need not feel obligated to **keep the marriage together** (cf. Mt. 19:6)
- e) The deserted believer need not feel obligated to keep trying to **convert** the unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:16)
- f) The deserted believer need not feel obligated to be a **slave** to mate (1 Cor. 7:23)
- 9) The phrase “**not under bondage**” supports:
- a) “Let him **depart**”
 - b) “God has called us to **peace**”
- 10) This interpretation implies an **unreasonable conclusion**
- a) *Major Premise*: If an unbeliever deserts a believer, remarriage is **permissible**
 - b) *Minor Premise*: If a believer deserts a believer, remarriage is **not permissible**
 - c) *Conclusion*: Therefore, it would be **better for a believer to marry an unbeliever**
 - d) Chart: “Illogical Conclusions”
 - e) Chart: “Marital Circumstance & Exception”
25. Argument 24: “**Those ‘loosed’ (1 Cor. 7:27-28) may remarry**”
- a. Explanation:
 - 1) Paul advises those who are “loosed” **not to marry**

- 2) Those who are **“loosed”** include the never married, the widowed, and the divorced (1 Cor. 7:8, 11, 32, 34)
 - a) Chart: “Unmarried” [*agamos*]
- 3) Paul says that if the **“loosed”** marry, they have **not sinned** (1 Cor. 7:27-28)
- 4) *Dan Billingsly*: “Anyone today in the Lord’s church, including our ‘traditional’ preachers, who attempts to keep and bind the teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage from the Old Testament law of Moses in Matthew 19 on New Testament Christians -- has already **‘fallen from grace.’**” (Bold emphasis added, “What About The 10 Commandments?” 4)
- 5) *Dan Billingsly*: “The New Testament church today must look to and **use only 1 Corinthians 7:27-28** as New Testament doctrine for divorce and marriage.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ibid.*)

b. Refutation:

- 1) In this section of 1 Corinthians 7, Paul is giving instructions to **virgins** (1 Cor. 7:25)
 - a) The term **“now”** marks out new sections in this chapter (1 Cor. 7:1, 10, 25)
 - b) In this section, Paul entertains the **pros** and **cons** of **married life** versus **single life** (1 Cor. 7:32-35)
- 2) His instructions are given in light of **“the present distress”** (1 Cor. 7:26)
- 3) He says, “it is good for a man to **remain** as he is” (1 Cor. 7:26)
 - a) If **“bound,”** do not seek to be **“loosed”**
 - b) If **“loosed,”** do not seek a **wife**
- 4) He says, “even if you do **marry**, you have **not sinned**” (1 Cor. 7:28)
- 5) The proper understanding of this passage hinges upon the meaning of its **key terms**
 - a) What does Paul mean by **“bound”**?
 1. **Betrothed?**
 2. **Married?**
 - b) What does Paul mean by **“loosed”**?
 1. **Unmarried?**
 2. **Divorced?**
 3. **Unbound?** (cf. Rom. 7:2-3)
 - c) *Note*: Paul does not use the terms **“married”** and **“divorced”** in this passage, so we should not necessarily equate **“bound”** with **“married”** and **“loosed”** with **“divorced”**
 1. Chart: “Different Terms”
- 6) Since Paul is giving instructions to **virgins** in this section, **“bound”** likely refers to a virgin who is **betrothed**
 - a) *F. F. Bruce*: “The interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:25ff. (‘Now concerning virgins...’) is debatable, but the passage is best understood

of couples living in a state of permanent but **unconsummated betrothal**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 268, n. 26, quoted in Mike Wilson, “Are You Loosed?,” *Is It Lawful?*, 316)

- b) *J. K. Elliott*: “Are you **engaged** to a woman? Do not **seek a release** (i.e. do not break off the engagement). Are you **free** from a woman (i.e. **single**)? Then do not **seek a woman** (as a wife).” (Bold emphasis added, “Paul’s Teaching on Marriage in 1 Corinthians: Some Problems Considered,” *New Testament Studies* 19, 219-225, quoted in Mike Wilson, “Are You Loosed?,” *Is It Lawful?*, 316)
1. This exegesis **does justice to the context**, which discusses the marriage of **virgins**
 2. It enables one to give **full grammatical force** to the **perfect tense verbs** in verse 27
 3. It does not offer a **speculative** -- and **highly suspect** -- **additional ground** of remarriage to those who have been divorced
 4. It has a **close, extrabiblical parallel** in Achilles Tatius (1:11:2): “I cannot marry her -- I am pledged to another maiden (*alle gar dedomai partheno*), and my father is greatly set on this match.”
- 7) Since Paul is giving instructions to **virgins** in this section, “**loosed**” refers to a virgin who is **unmarried**
- 8) Despite arguments to the contrary, the term “**loosed**” [*lysis*] does not necessarily imply that someone has been **previously “bound”**
- a) *A. T. Robertson*: “**Bachelors** as well as **widowers** are included in *λέλυσαι* [*lelusai*] (loosed, perfect passive indicative of *λυω* [*luō*]).” (Bold emphasis added, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, n.p.)
- b) *BDAG*: “b. fig. *free, set free, release*...*λέλυσαι ἀπὸ γυναικός; are you free from a wife, i.e. not bound to a wife? 1 Cor 7:27 (a previous state of being ‘bound’ need not be assumed*...” (Bold emphasis added, 607)
- 9) Furthermore, the NT clearly indicates **who are “loosed”** by God from a mate:
- a) One who has **never been married** (1 Cor. 7:1-2, 8-9)
 - b) One who’s **mate has died** (Rom. 7:3; 1 Cor. 7:39)
 - c) One who **divorces an unfaithful mate** for fornication (Mt. 19:9)
 - d) One who was formerly **married** to someone who is **bound** by God’s law to another (Rom. 7:2-3 & Implication)
 1. God will **not bind** two people together in an **unlawful marriage**
 2. If someone marries another who is **bound** by God’s law to someone else, they are **committing adultery**
 3. If they **divorce**, why couldn’t the **unbound person marry** another unbound person?
- 10) Despite arguments to the contrary, the term “**unmarried**” [*agamos*] does not necessarily imply a previously married state
- a) Chart: “Unmarried Implies Previously Married”
- b) Chart: “Unmarried (*agamos*)”

- 11) Paul is giving instruction in light of the **present distress**; he is not **expanding the grounds** for divorce and remarriage
- a) *Mike Wilson*: "...Paul is not discussing the **general moral rights of marrying** here. A careful study of the context will show that he is discussing whether or not **certain people should enter into the trials of married life with the 'present distress that is upon us.'** The **marital rights** of the people in view are **assumed**. These are people who already have a **clearly established moral right to marry**. The question is whether they should **get married** under circumstances of **impending trial and persecution**." (Bold emphasis added, "Are You Loosed?," Is It Lawful?, 318-319)
- 12) To interpret 1 Cor. 7:27-28 to mean that any divorced ("loosed") person can **remarry** without sin **contradicts** the clear teaching of other NT passages
- a) Jesus teaches that **some divorced people** do not have the **right to remarry** (Mt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18)
- b) Furthermore, Paul teaches, earlier in this same context, that **some divorced people** do not have the **right to remarry** (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- c) Paul teaches that a woman is **bound** by law to her husband as long as he **lives**, and if she **marries** someone else, while her first mate lives, she is an **adulteress** (Rom. 7:2-3)
1. God **"joins"** (Mt. 19:6); only He can **"loose"** (Mt. 19:9)
 2. Someone who is unscripturally **divorced** and **remarried** to another is **still bound** by God's law to his/her first mate

Conclusion:

- I. **God's law on marriage** is that one man be married to one woman for one lifetime
 - A. **Marriage Is Lifelong**
 - B. **Divorce Is Sinful**
 - C. **Remarriage Is Adultery**
- II. There is **only one exception** to God's law on marriage
 - A. **The Exception Is Not The Rule**
 - B. **The Exception Is Divorce And Remarriage For Fornication**
 - C. **The Exception Is Only Given To The One Who Divorces His Mate For Fornication**
- III. God's law on marriage is a **strict law**
 - A. The **reaction of Jesus' disciples** confirms this fact (Mt. 19:10-12)
 1. If they had misunderstood **God's law on marriage**, no doubt, Jesus would have corrected them
- IV. But His law on marriage is given **for our own good** (cf. Dt. 6:24-25; 10:12-13; 1 Jn. 5:3)

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⁸⁶ As someone who knows virtually nothing about the Hebrew language, this journal article was beyond me; but for those familiar with the language, this article would be helpful.

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Note: Those resources marked with an asterisk (*) were especially helpful even though I would not agree with every point or argument made and would strongly disagree with some.